DOC DEL IS DEAD! LONG LIVE ILL!
Helen Balfour & Kael Driscoll, University of Western Australia, WA

With the emergence of new web technologies and increased access to online information, the future relevance of Document Delivery and Interlibrary Loan services (Docdel & ILL) have been questioned. This paper postulates that the emergence of these tools and resources has instead caused Docdel & ILL services to flourish. However, even though overall activity is on the rise, it is the loaning of original printed material that is showing the greatest growth.

Researchers will always need access to monographs and other physical materials not held in local collections, particularly in the disciplines of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences. More books are being published than ever before, but budget cuts mean fewer items can be bought. This presents a quandary for all libraries, and in this environment ILL remains vital for academic research. The current climate also has implications for collection development and libraries developing unique collections.

Access to online journals, catalogues, Amazon, and Google exposes researchers to a wider range of bibliographic information than ever before, resulting in increased requests for ILL. OpenURL systems also allow users to search databases, and then seamlessly generate requests from citations. With these improved interfaces clients are more inclined to use Docdel & ILL services, and the number of requests has substantially increased.

ILL can help academic libraries locate gaps in their collections and aid with collection development policies. Future trends point towards increased collaborative resource sharing, and innovative integration of vendor-direct purchasing with borrowing workflows.

Document Delivery may decline over time, but Interlibrary Loans will continue to prosper.