

NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR RESOURCE SHARING IN TURKEY

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ABSTRACT

In 1998, the Libraries and Publications General Directorate of Turkey commenced resource sharing activities. Legal arrangements for resource sharing were created for print formats only. There is no general on-line national system for ILL at present.

This paper will discuss document delivery services and resource sharing activities in Turkey and the emergence of KITS (Interlibrary Loan Tracking System).

A new national model for resource sharing and document delivery services for Turkey will be suggested.

1. HISTORY OF RESOURCE SHARING IN TURKEY

1.1. Introduction

The regulation for “Interlibrary Loan of Printed Books” has been one of the first attempts to govern the management of ILL services of printed books among public libraries of Turkey [1]. Other work also aimed to prepare regulations or drafts for law bills. An operational work has been carried out by the “Committee for Interlibrary Collaboration Law,” formed by the General Directorate of Libraries and Publications: a draft for “Interlibrary Collaboration Law” has been prepared specifically for university libraries in 1988 [2]. The body of academic library directors has decided to use printed forms designed by this committee for ILL operations between academic institutions. The forms were used until 2008, with the requesting institution sending the printed forms via post or fax, and later email attachment, to the supplying institution for supply via ILL. With the introduction of the standard ILL forms came improvements to processes and increased speed and efficiency in processing. Moreover, advances in communication and computer technology continued to provide opportunities to develop new alternative methods for requesting, as will be described in the following sections.

1.2. Joint Document Supply System (OBES) [3]

The Joint Document Supply System (OBES) project initiated in 1999 by ULAKBIM (National Academic Network and Knowledge Centre), performs document delivery services using its own collection of periodicals and using available resources overseas. In the OBES, the participated libraries called as owners (ULAKBIM, Middle East Technical Univ., Hacettepe Univ. and Gazi Univ.) are sharing their periodical resources with each other. On the national side of the system, ULAKBIM is the main library and it serves all other libraries. For this

purpose, ULAKBIM developed a Union Periodicals Catalog which includes owner library's periodical's bibliographical information. Any library in Turkey can request a copy of the journal articles using OBES and should be supplied within three days. ULAKBIM also provides the National Document Supply System (UBSS) [4]. This article request system, provides copies of original articles from national and international sources.

1.3.Other Initiatives

Between 1998 and 2008 several regional initiatives have been formed to implement resource sharing that aimed to utilize geographical position of the institutions. ADIM (group of 8 universities located in the Aegean and Western Mediterranean region), East Mediterranean Universities Collaboration Initiative (5 universities) and Aegean Collaboration Initiative are among those attempts that could not sustain their operations because the focus on resource sharing could not be preserved in the long term. With the launch of KITS, (explained below) those initiatives have cancelled their resource sharing projects.

1.4.KITS (Interlibrary Loan Tracking System) [5]

KITS is an online system developed under GPL license that centralises all ILL operations and processes in different formats (print, postal, fax, e-mail, computer files etc.). Participating institutions do not need to use custom ways for ILL activities any further. KITS Resource Sharing Guidelines [6] do not invalidate the rules and practices that have been agreed on in protocols on regional or national resource sharing activities. The purpose of the directive is, in effect, to include any other agreements with non-library institutions as well. This directive explains the institution's responsibilities with regard to each other. The aims can be listed as:

- To bring the level of resource sharing service standards to an international level
- To reach 95% internal/external user satisfaction
- To encourage libraries to lend resources at least as much as they want to borrow and to provide new methods for this purpose.

This directive is created for government and private academic libraries' resource sharing applications. It covers only resource sharing activities between libraries, with the commercial provider's activities outside the scope of the directive.

1.5.International Resource Sharing Services in Turkey

OCLC is the most often used international service in Turkey. Besides that, BLDS (British Library) and IFLA Vouchers are other services used for resource sharing.

Table 1 displays statistics about the number of materials borrowed from the libraries abroad and number of materials lent to the libraries abroad in 2008 [7].

	Borrowings				Lendings			
	Number of demands met				Number of demands met			
	Total # of demands	Total # of demands met	# of materials borrowed from	# of demands (titles) met with a copy material to take place of original material	Total # of demands	Total # of demands met	# of materials lent	# of demands (titles) met with a copy material to take place of original material
Total	1597	1386	483	1139	392	376	402	14
Public	1338	1164	363	1037	311	300	329	11
Foundation	259	222	120	102	81	76	73	3

Table 1: Statistics of international resource sharing, in 2008

2. ANKOS – KITS

2.1. About ANKOS (Anatolian University Libraries Consortium)

“Consortiums provide significant good especially for libraries with insufficient budget and/or printed sources. Even though consortium activities started for more than 40 years ago in North America and Europe, the first attempt to form a consortium in Turkey occurred in 2000 by the collaboration of four libraries (a state university and three private universities) signing an agreement to subscribe to two databases offered by Ebsco. This agreement has been the first step to form ANKOS (Anatolian University Libraries Consortium)” [8]. ANKOS has currently 136 member libraries, and it provides access to a total of 83 databases. ANKOS consortium has allowed its users from many university and research libraries with limited budget and insufficient collections, to access electronic resources. In this way, ANKOS has been a significant factor in the development of research activities of Turkey. ANKOS also provides a forum for librarians to facilitate professional and personal communication besides its function to allow economic online access to knowledge by means of contemporary information technologies. To support these aims, ANKOS follows advances in information technologies and related activities from around the world. ANKOS attends to national and international scientific events represented by its several working and research groups [1].

2.2. About KITS (Interlibrary Loan Tracking System)

ANKOS Collaboration Research Group was founded in September 2006 to focus on the three subjects: Staff Exchange Program for ANKOS members; National Resource Sharing Guideline and a program to manage all interlibrary loan processes between university libraries. Interlibrary Loan Tracking System, abbreviated as KITS, is produced by ANKOS Collaboration Research Group. It is a multi-user, online application to track processes related to resource sharing between libraries/information centres of higher education institutions. The software infrastructure of the application is being developed by the expert Librarian Zeki Çelikbaş, employed at the ITU (Istanbul Technical University) library. As an online application, KITS centralises all ILL operations and processes in different formats (print, postal, fax, e-mail, computer files etc.). Participated institutions can manage all resource sharing activities on-line. According to the decision taken at the ANKOS workshop in October 2008, KITS has been opened to the use of all libraries/information centres of higher education institutions of Turkey for test purposes. For now, KITS has become a permanent platform, as can be seen in Figure 1 and Figure 2 that display the development of KITS platform.

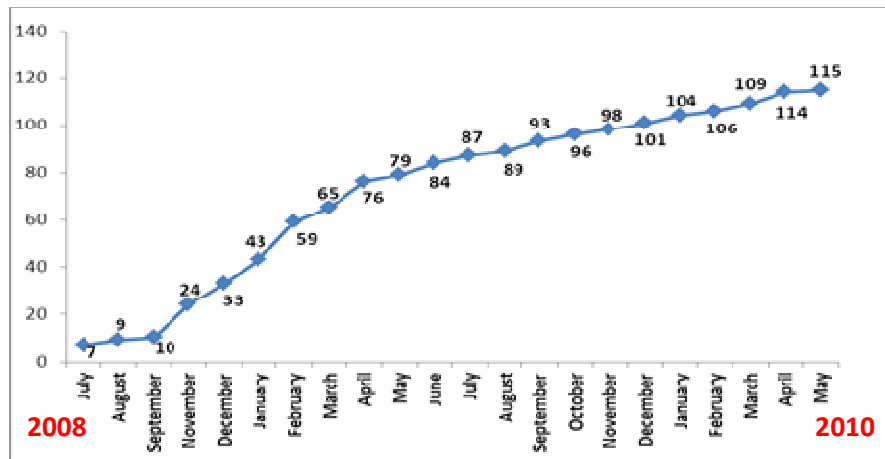


Figure 1: Number of KITS members

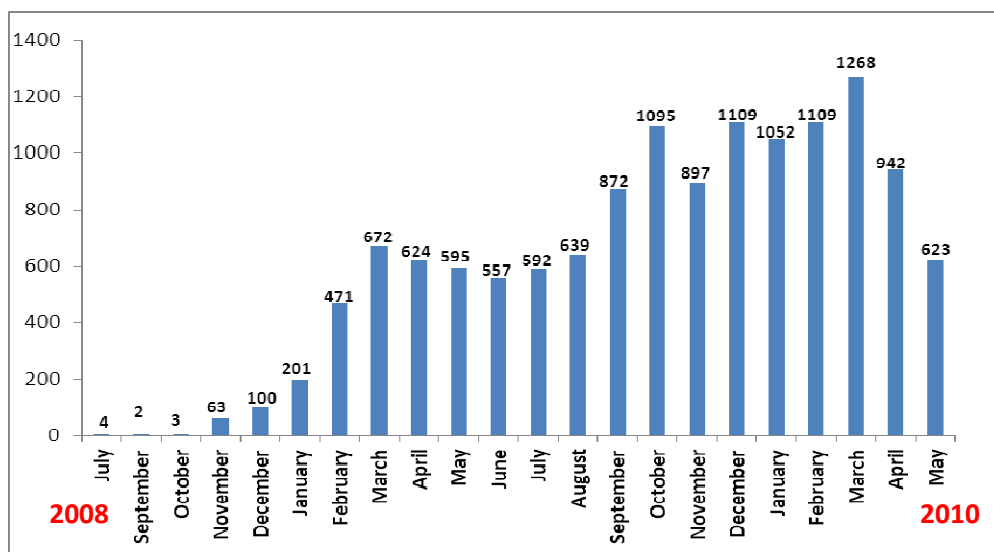


Figure 2: Number of monthly requests in KITS

2.3. General characteristics of KITS [9]

KITS platform has an on-line filing system and there are many useful tools for librarians; it is very easy to use, and easy to get detailed statistics. It is possible to measure service quality using the detailed statistics that are available for book/article requests. Users can add special notes at any stage of the request, and if necessary, those notes may be sent as an e-mail to the librarian's mailboxes. When needed, it is possible to send detailed information about the requests to the requesters. Sample statistics about requests are displayed in Figure 3 below.

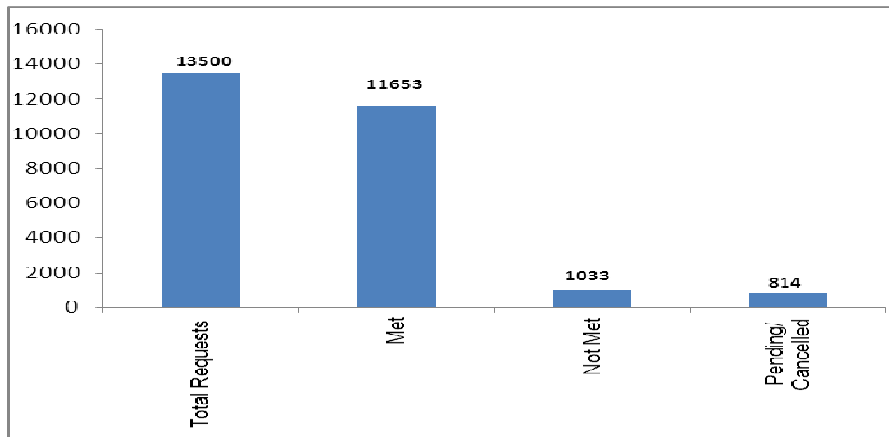


Figure 3: Sample snapshot of total operations in KITS

National Academic Resource Sharing Workshop [10]

85 librarians from 37 different regions and 60 different institutions participated in the National Academic Resource Sharing Workshop, April 2010 in Istanbul. It was the first national meeting for academic libraries about resource sharing and document delivery in Turkey. During the workshop, all aspects of resource sharing applications, policies and future plans were discussed. A survey was sent to participants for feedback. According to the results of the survey, the participants' opinions can be summarised as follows:

85% find KITS to facilitate all processes;

100% accept that KITS is very useful,

86% evaluate KITS to be reliable,

80% think that KITS meets standards,

96% agree that KITS meets expectations,

and everyone agreed that the workshop was necessary, and it should be repeated in the coming years.

3. OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

3.1.Opportunities

3.1.1.New Collaboration Opportunities (National - International)

After KITS, traditional ways started to be questioned and many academic libraries immediately started to use it. On the other hand, international institutions and companies (OCLC and similar ones) have asked for more information about KITS and they have requested to find out possibilities for collaboration. This shows that KITS is a very significant application for Turkey and it can be used for further national and international operations.

3.1.2.International Evolution and Awareness

The presentation of KITS at IFLA 2009 conference has been a good opportunity to promote Turkish resource sharing activities on international scale. It seems that this opportunity was used well because after the IFLA Conference, an article about KITS [11] was published in January – March 2010 issue of Interlending & Document Supply Journal allowing KITS to become well known at an international level.

3.1.3.Standardisation

It has been prompted the creation of new standards about resource sharing and document delivery services for academic libraries. It is expected that these standards will be the first step towards national standards.

3.1.4.Confidence in KITS

Many KITS participants are using its statistical data for their official reports and sharing with each other. Participants were happy with the reliability of KITS records, which has encouraged the developers to think of the possibility of KITS being accepted as a national initiative.

3.1.5.Lower Costs

Transportation companies offer special discounts depending on the amount of circulating materials for document delivery services. Increased discounts would be expected for nationally based operations.

3.1.6.Created Interest, Awareness, and Motivation

KITS members informed the application developers, that they are using their collections much more efficiently now. Some libraries having smaller collections have carried out their first ILL operation over the KITS platform. Specifically, turnaround time (Figure 4) and net lending data create a competition between the KITS members.

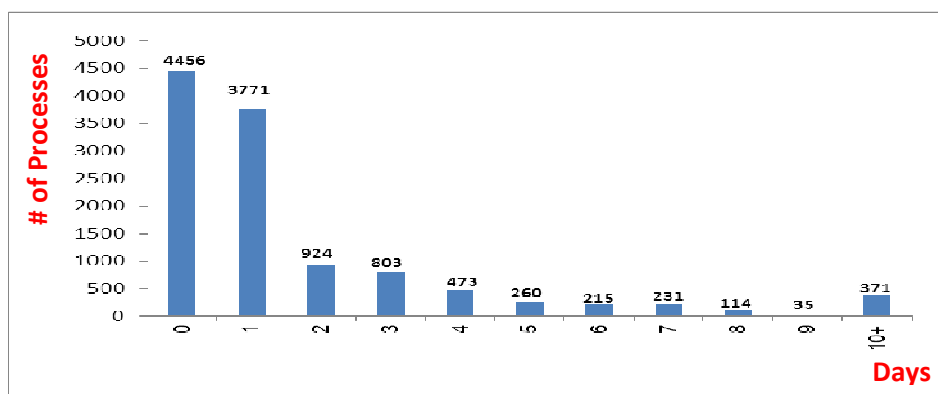


Figure 4: Turnaround time (in days) using KITS

3.2. Challenges

3.2.1.National Union Catalog (TO-KAT)

There have been attempts to implement a union catalog but none of them have as yet succeeded. One of them is TO-KAT which is produced by ULAKBIM and is still under development. Unfortunately, many institutions are not participating in this system yet. In addition to this, KITS developers are organising meetings with library automation software (already used by libraries) vendors to make integration between different automation systems possible.

3.2.2.Finance and Human Resources

KITS is being developed by a group of dedicated volunteers to coordinate the resource sharing activities between academic libraries. But all these efforts are not enough for a national application; it is necessary to dedicate more manpower and financial support.

3.2.3. No legal arrangement

There are some attempts for legal arrangements but none of them is clear and usable enough. There must be legislation especially prepared for resource sharing. The “Academic Resource Sharing Guidelines” should only be the infrastructure for the new legislation.

3.2.4.Centralisation and coordination

Centralisation and coordination are the most critical issues for national based resource sharing activities. All processes will be getting faster and the records will be processed in the same format with the establishment of a central initiative.

3.2.5. No reliable statistics except KITS Application

In the KITS application, all the operations are online and uniquely formatted. This means that real time statistics are available when needed. But there are some problems related to the consistency and reliability of national statistical data. Institutions are collecting their statistics using many different ways that are not participating in the KITS platform. Another problem about the statistics is the delay to get this information.

4. CURRENT SITUATION AND SUGGESTIONS

Right now there is an online platform for resource sharing activities in Turkey. It can be regarded as the basis for the first attempt at a national system. This 2 year old platform has succeeded in centralising and coordinating resource sharing between academic institutions. But, a nationwide platform is needed in Turkey and there are many things to do in the future.

Here are some results of the KITS project and suggestions for the future:

- KITS is a common and successful implementation on a national level
- New standards are created for academic resource sharing
- Centralisation has succeeded for academic institutions and union records
- More reliable statistical data are available
- New synergy is provided for national initiatives
- National and international initiatives should be maintained
- Financial support should be provided
- Legislation should be prepared for resource sharing
- Different policies should be determined for different types of libraries
- National integration should be ensured
- Training programs should be provided for librarians and library users

5. NEW MODEL FOR NATIONAL RESOURCE SHARING

1. KITS application will be adapted for different types of libraries (School, Public, Special etc.) KITS developers will produce a similar application like KITS for this type of libraries and will determine the rules.
2. First of all, similar types of libraries (school–school, public–public) will implement the application among themselves for 6 or 12 months as trial. Reported problems will be solved based on the feedback received from participants.
3. The new application will be executed for one year trial between different types of libraries (school-public-special).
4. End users could make any resource requests directly from the lender libraries after checking moderators.
5. All the nationwide resource sharing activities will be planned by an independent non-profit initiative (UKPG: National Resource Sharing Initiative). UKPG will not participate to the operations actively but it will determine the national resource sharing policies, the necessary hardware and software to improve the infrastructure and it will manage the whole resource sharing system. UKPG is assumed to make suggestions regarding the operation of the processes. On the other hand UKPG will bring suggestions and recommendations for interlibrary disputes. The initiative will organise educational and promotional meetings that will bring the parties involved in resource sharing together. Last but not least, the initiative will conduct studies to improve the service quality.
6. Resource sharing activities will be operated directly by requester and lender libraries. When the institutions accept to support the independent initiative (UKPG) it means that they have accepted all the regulations set by this initiative.
7. The logistics of resource sharing will be provided by logistics companies which have sufficient knowledge and experience in this area. These companies will provide a certain standard of service, and specially prepared materials (shipment slips, special packing etc.) will be used for transportation.
8. UKGP will create a fund to cover software, hardware, training and similar expenses. This fund will be supported by the logistics companies where the company will transfer a certain amount of processing fee to this fund. As other financing resources, training and conference participation fees and sponsorship revenues are foreseen.

6. CONCLUSION

Library budgets have been negatively affected by the latest global economic crisis as with many other sectors, highlighting the importance of resource sharing. The aim of this paper is to convey information about resource sharing activities and the latest situation in Turkey. In the past, some attempts were made, but there is not an effective national model yet in Turkey. Hence the librarians and other partners have to spend much more effort to create and to develop a new national model. This paper aims to propose a national model to facilitate further discussion and to raise awareness about the national resource sharing studies.

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