

OhioLINK Libraries Share Books

MATTHEW DEUTSCH
Assistant News Editor

Need a hard-to-get piece of information? Looking for a certain book that's almost impossible to find? Well, now your search will be made much easier.

Recently, YSU's Maag Library, along with eight other state universities, has entered into an inter-library electronic loan system that will allow students and faculty to assemble information more readily. The process is made possible by OhioLINK (Ohio Library and Information Network), a growing computer network of libraries and electronic information resources.

Under the new loan system, if students can't find what they're looking for in the Maag Library holdings, they can search the combined holdings of all the participating libraries through OhioLINK. If they find the infor-

mation or book they're seeking in another university's holdings, and it's available, they can request the item using the computer terminal.

Once the request has been made, students will be required to input the institution they are attending, their name and their library bar code number. The computer then does an automatic background check on them in order to make sure they do not have any overdue books or outstanding fines. If the student's record is clean, the item is checked out to YSU in the student's name and is sent here to the University.

After the item has been received by YSU, students will receive a notice in the mail indicating that their inter-library loan has arrived. All items are to be picked up at Maag Library's circulation desk and returned there as well. The maximum time allotted for checking out an item under the loan system is 21 days.

The unique facet of this new process, however, is that it does not have to be initiated at Maag Library exclusively. Requests can also be made through OhioLINK from home or office terminals, providing library patrons with a great deal of convenience.

Dr. David Genaway, Maag's University librarian, is enthusiastic about the increased response time that the new loan process allows.

"This system cuts the transportation time for inter-library loans from seven days down to between two and five days," said Genaway. "It saves students time and makes books more readily available to them."

According to Genaway, 18 schools will eventually be a part of the loan system, including Ohio State University. OSU will in all likelihood be the last institution to join, mainly because of the large number of volumes in its library

collection.

The statistics back up the need for a system such as this. Out of nearly three million bibliographic records in the OhioLINK system, 60 percent are owned by one institution, 17 percent by two, and nine percent by three. More important, however, is the fact that *only 600 bibliographic records are owned by all nine participating institutions.*

"This will increase access to unique collections and make nearly all resources in all universities available to YSU students," said Genaway.

The loan process does have some drawbacks. "The fine for overdue books is fifty cents a day per item," said Debbie Beronja, Maag's public service circulation librarian. "If you lose a book, it may cost as much as one hundred fifty to two hundred dollars."

Although the system has been in operation for only two weeks,

business has been brisk. So far, YSU has made 99 requests for inter-library loans, and there have been 114 requests made of Maag Library. For all the participating universities, 1600 requests have been made, 500 the first week and 1100 the second.

The universities involved in the loan system to this point are as follows: Akron, Bowling Green, Case Western Reserve, Central State, Cincinnati, Medical College of Ohio, Miami, Wright State, and YSU.

"Nobody's going to drive to these places," stated Beronja, pointing out the obvious advantage of the loan process. "With this system, we're providing a better service to our students."

Students who have questions about the new inter-library loan system or want to learn how to use it can go to the reference or circulation desks at Maag Library for assistance.