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Impala 1991-2011: 20 years of ILL in Belgium

Jan Corthouts, Julien Van Borm, Michèle Van den Eynde

1. Introduction

Impala was developed in 1990 by the library of the University of Antwerp (UA) in order to facilitate and improve interlibrary lending (ILL) in Belgium by creating an efficient system of ILL communications. Up to that time Belgium lived under a system so well characterised ten years earlier by the late M. Line (†2010) as unplanned decentralisation with all the negative connotations implied (Line, 1980). Impala has eliminated most of the weaknesses and has since been the backbone of ILL in Belgium by offering a structured system, essential for smooth running ILL activities in the country. English articles on the earlier Belgian ILL scene and Impala in particular have been published in *Interlending review* (Van Borm, 1978), *Scientometrics* (Van Borm, 2000) and the *ILDS journal* (Van Borm, 2003). In 2011 Impala celebrates its 20th anniversary¹. It is time for an overview that gives quantitative and qualitative aspects of the system and its impact upon ILL in the country.

Milestones in the Impala history

1990	Development of the Impala system by the library of the University of Antwerp.
1991	Try out of the system in research libraries mainly in Antwerp.
1992	The National Conference of Chief Librarians of the Belgian Universities adopts Impala as the national ILL document ordering system.
1998	Impala becomes a web application.
2000	A record number of requests: almost 178.000 requests sent to Impala.
2001	Introduction of electronic document supplying facilities (the Virlib tools).
2001	All the public libraries in Flanders become member of Impala.
2005	Integration of Impala into the new Brocade library system.

2. The Belgian context

Impala was created out of sheer necessity and without any initiative or subsidy from the public authorities. This stems to a great extent from the complexity of the structures in the country.

Belgium is one of the smaller European countries with a population of just over eleven million. It lies in the very heart of Europe and is also the heartland of the European Union (EU); it has been a member of the EU and its predecessors since the beginning in 1950 as well as housing the EU Parliament (together with Strasbourg in France), the EU Commission and a great deal of the EU administration in Brussels.

Belgium is a rather young European country. It did not exist as an autonomous state until 1830. After the Napoleonic wars the great powers decided to create a new state: the union of Holland and Belgium. This arrangement was deeply unpopular and soon (1830) replaced 'after some Franco-British friction, by a small permanently neutralised kingdom under a (German) prince of British choice', who married later on Louise of Orleans from France in 1832 - a perfect European solution². A highly centralised state was created of which today's

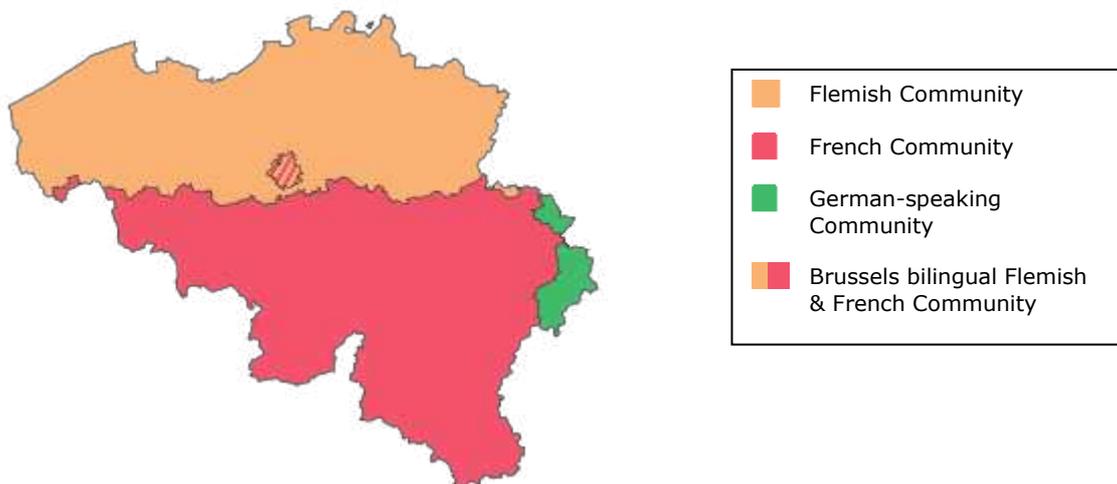
¹ Systems like Impala are the work of many. Instrumental in the creation of Impala were: Julien Van Borm for the idea and initial lay out, dr. Richard Philips for the design of the computer system together with members of his team and Kristine Clara, now head of Library and Archives Service at ITU, the International Telecommunication Union in Geneva, for spreading the news of Impala and the first years of introductions and follow up. Later on Jan Corthouts and Michèle Van den Eynde, both coauthors of this article, took over while R. Philips has continued improving the system up to now.

² Hobsbawm, E.J. (1996), *The age of revolution: 1789-1848*. Vintage Books, 1996, p. 101. (First published by Weidenfeld & Nicolson, London, 1962). The texts in italic are taken from the publication by Eric Hobsbawm. This brilliant British historian made a mistake by calling the Dutch-Belgian union a copy of 'the former Austrian Netherlands'

railway structure converging in Brussels is a good illustration. French was chosen as the language of the new state which was the language of the then ruling class all over the country including Flanders. This central state was contested since the end of the 19th century and increasingly from the 1960s by which time the economic power had shifted from the South to Dutch speaking Flanders. After no less than five constitutional changes since the beginning of the 1970s Belgium today is a federal state with a highly complicated state structure and partly overlapping competences between the federal level and the levels of the communities and regions (Witte, 2009). Communities are language bound (Flemish, French and German). They partly overlap with the regions (see maps in figure 1) which are territory bound with Brussels as a third entity with a highly complicated structure (dominantly French speaking, with a substantial English and Moroccan minority). This complexity is hardly understood by even our closest neighbours and quite often not even by Belgian natives. Moreover checks and balances in order to protect minorities may block almost any decision in the country. It is now understood by the parties in North and South that a leaner structure is required, shifting power and budget to the communities and regions. However, the parties disagree on the extent of this 'Copernican' evolution from the federal to the regional level and the country is currently stalemated. Six months after the June 2010 elections a new government is still not in place and fear grows that the country is heading for new federal elections in 2011 on a single issue: the reform of the federal state with quite different expectations in North and South.

All this has had a profound effect on libraries in the country. With a few exceptions, for example the Royal Library being Belgium's national library, libraries depend on the cultural communities as do education and research. It should be no surprise that library cooperation reflects the organisational divisions of the country. There is no longer an organised dialogue between the major research libraries in the country - all this occurs at the cultural level. This does not, however, exclude the creation of some tools highly important for interlending and document supply: the Antilope union catalogue for periodicals, the Impala document ordering and supply system and soon to come, UniCat, the new online union catalogue of books in Belgian libraries.

The cultural communities



The regions

instead of the former Spanish Low Countries. Belgium indeed is also historically a very complex part of Europe!

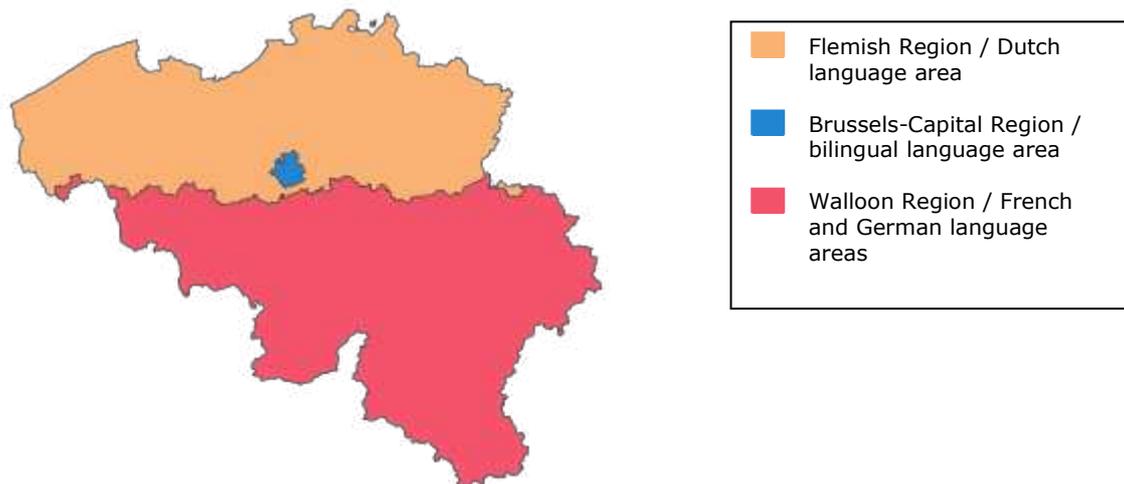


Figure 1. Maps of Belgium: cultural communities and regions

3. The Impala model

As for other national ILL systems the core of Impala³ consists of a series of basic functions:

- Identifying documents through union catalogues
- Online ordering of books and periodical articles
- Follow up of the requests
- (Electronic) document delivery
- Clearing house for cost accounting
- A series of statistics (numbers, delivery times etc.)

By implementing these functions the emphasis has always been on openness, efficiency, reliability, simplicity and low costs.

4. Openness

4.1. Open to all types of libraries

Every type of library can affiliate with Impala and at the same time decide upon the role it wants to play in the system: requester, supplier or both. In 2010 no less than 620 libraries had an Impala affiliation. Among these are the Royal Library in Brussels, all Belgian university libraries, all libraries of the Flemish schools of higher education, all Flemish public libraries, a series of (federal) government libraries, documentation centres, corporate libraries, special libraries, libraries of international institutions such as the European Parliament and several libraries of the European Commission in Brussels

³ Impala stands for *Instant Mailing Procedure for Automated Lending Activities*. The name has been chosen to match with the already existing Antilope union catalogue of periodicals - two animals out of the same region running for library provision in Belgium.

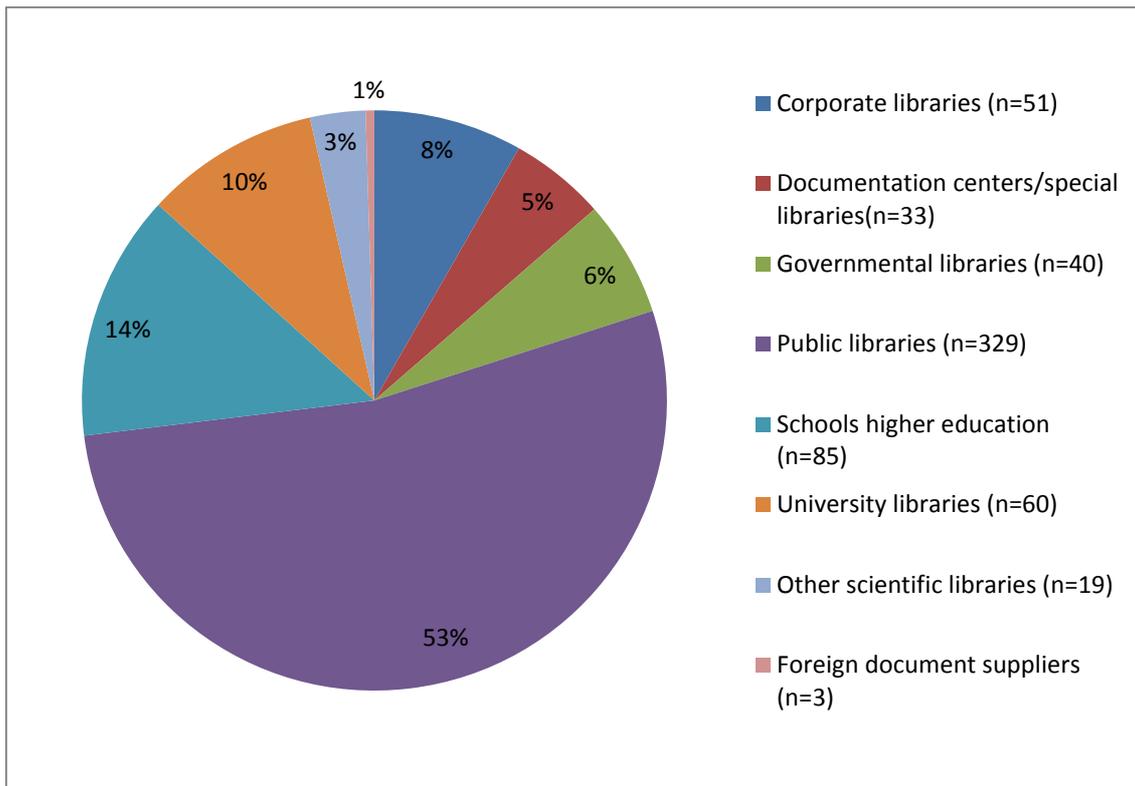


Figure 2. Impala members by library type

By affiliation, the public Libraries form the largest group of Impala members (53%), followed by the libraries in schools of higher education (14%), the universities (10%) and research libraries (8%). The public libraries and the university libraries are the main suppliers in the system. Together they total no less than 89% of all supplies. With 80% of the requests these two types are by far the most active group in Impala. Impala has also links to the major document suppliers in Europe.

4.1.1. Open to all types of documents

Books, periodical articles and all sorts of audiovisual materials can be ordered via Impala. Ordering e-books through Impala is not (yet) possible. A first service of this kind is offered by CISTI, the Canadian document supplier, offering worldwide service in combination with Ingram's MyiLibrary (Woods, 2008). In most cases copyright and contractual regulations will make this kind of activity impossible for 'classic' document suppliers.

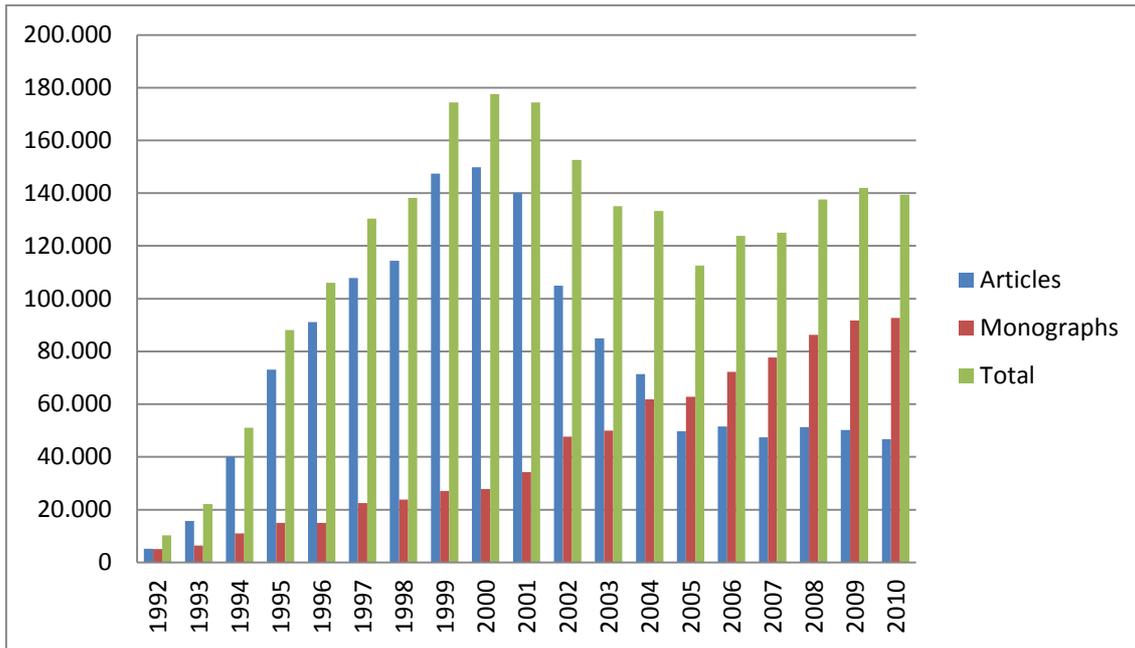


Figure 3. Number of requests submitted to Impala

In the first four years the growth of Impala requests was quite spectacular: a doubling every year proving in itself that a modern electronic document ordering system was urgently needed in the country. In the following years together with the number of affiliated libraries the number of requests went up to the maximum in 2000 with 177,458 requests. Thereafter by the advent of the e-journal resources (commercial and Open Access) and the big deals the numbers declined steeply until 2005 with only 112,531 requests. Thereafter, the arrival of the public libraries made up for the previous losses with predominantly loan requests for books. This book trend goes on until today, while the number of article requests has fallen to just below 50,000 per year. During the last three years the total number of requests has levelled out at ca. 140,000 requests.

Until 2000 the university libraries were the main suppliers of periodical articles. That changed quickly when the public libraries in Flanders joined Impala. By 2010 the share of periodical articles in Impala had dropped by 50% in ten years. In the same period the number of loan requests for books rose from ca. 30,000 to 92,000. The requests to public libraries outnumber in 2009 the ones to university libraries by 61% against 39%.

Year	Books	Articles	Total
1994	9.337	27.344	36.681
1995	12.548	50.037	62.585
1996	12.210	61.899	74.109
1997	19.302	71.852	91.154
1998	20.241	77.478	97.719
1999	22.720	101.383	124.103
2000	23.660	110.896	134.556
2001	22.662	101.629	124.291
2002	22.093	77.082	99.175
2003	20.729	63.601	84.330
2004	19.635	52.151	71.786
2005	16.666	36.299	52.965
2006	17.229	37.408	54.637
2007	16.909	34.768	51.677
2008	15.066	40.613	55.679
2009	14.589	43.252	57.841
2010	13.282	41.182	54.464

Figure 4. Number of requests submitted through Impala to university libraries

Year	Books	Articles	Total
2001	8.082	625	8.707
2002	27.035	923	27.958
2003	33.963	1.211	35.174
2004	50.202	1.252	51.454
2005	57.192	1.113	58.305
2006	68.271	1.086	69.357
2007	73.065	1.294	74.359
2008	84.410	1.269	85.679
2009	90.177	1.132	91.309
2010	90.981	1.175	92.156

Figure 5. Number of requests submitted through Impala to public libraries

4.2. Open: Linking with Union catalogues

An instrument such as Impala can only work properly and efficiently when locations of the requested items can be found easily. This is where the union catalogues come in. Impala has always tried to integrate as many union catalogues as possible. The linking with the union catalogues is done through the OpenUrl specifications⁴.

Antilope

Antilope is the union catalogue of periodicals in Belgian research libraries. Developed from a local Antwerp printed union catalogue of current periodicals in 1973 it became from 1981

⁴ The technical OpenUrl specifications are available at <http://anet.ua.ac.be/bvv/2092>

onwards a national union catalogue first in print and later online. Nevertheless the product has kept the original name from the Antwerp period of origin, a true acronym in Dutch: *Antwerpse Inventaris van Lopende Periodieken*. The catalogue has been produced by the library of the University of Antwerp for nearly 40 years without any subsidy apart from the start in 1981 as a national union catalogue. Antilope currently contains almost 300,000 titles present in some 200 libraries.

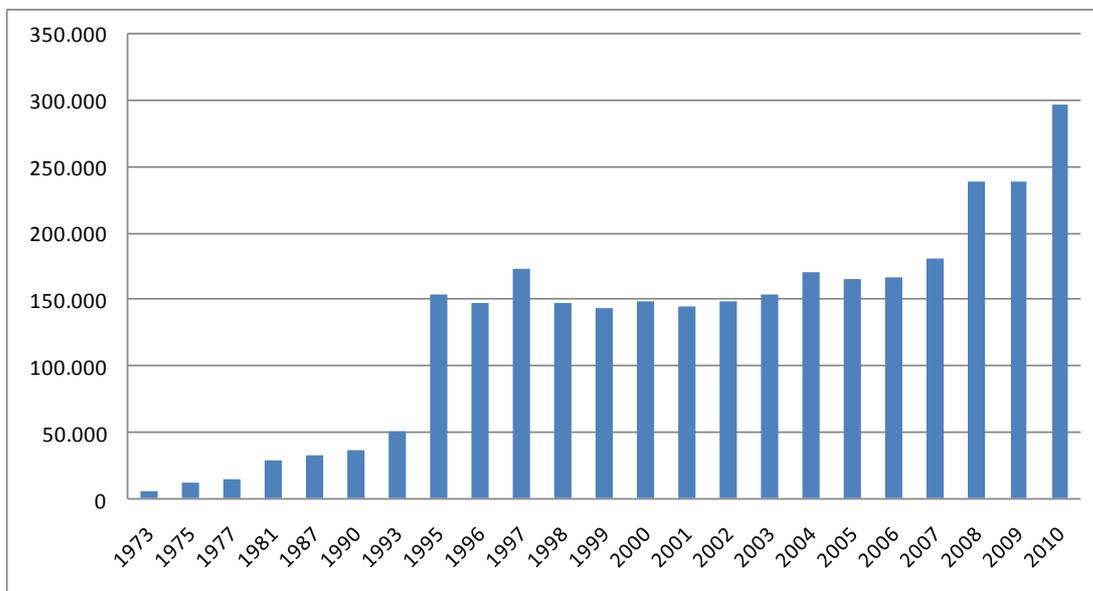


Figure 6. Number of records in Antilope

Libraries willing to integrate their periodical holdings in Antilope contact the Antilope service in the library of the University of Antwerp. Smaller collections are integrated manually by the UA-library (often duplicates of titles already present in the database). Bigger collections are uploaded automatically in MARC-format (xml) or in csv-format⁵.

From CCB to UniCat

The CCB Union catalogue of books in Belgian research libraries goes back to the middle of the 1980s and was by then an initiative of the Conference of University Librarians. It was first published on COM-microfiches under the acronym CCT (*Catalogue Collectif par Titre*) and in the latter years on CD-ROM under the acronym CCB (*Catalogue Collectif Belge*). The last edition, including the Antilope periodical titles, dates back to 2002. These CCB data have been integrated into Impala.

The UniCat project (2001-2003) financed by the Belgian Federal Science Policy Office was designed to be the online successor of the CCB. UniCat was to create an infrastructure for submitting library records to the harvesting machine where they would be indexed and made searchable and retrievable via a web portal by end users and librarians alike. The project has delivered a workable prototype but failed to produce a good and applicable business plan and was therefore stalemated for several years. In 2010 it was decided by the Belgian university libraries to abandon the subsidy claim and to create UniCat in 2011 with financial contributions by the data supplying libraries and the users of the yet to be acquired infrastructure. The new partner for technology and infrastructure will be SemperTool from Denmark⁶ and just recently the Royal Library has decided to join the new union catalogue. As soon as Unicat becomes available it will be connected to Impala.

⁵ Procedure and formats are described at <http://anet.ua.ac.be/2110>

⁶ SemperTool is a Danish software development company specializing in building digital library technologies and solutions. <http://www.sempertool.dk/>

bib.belgium.be

Since 2008 the libraries of some 30 federal public services and the federal research institutions have created a common search environment for their three million records that can be reached via <http://bib.belgium.be> (Goedeme, 2009). Important research libraries take part in this project among others the Royal Library which is the project leader. The catalogue is updated four times a year. The project is funded until 2011 but might well be continued.

Public libraries in Flanders

The public libraries in Flanders have been organised in five provincial networks. These networks offer via a web portal a provincial union catalogue. All Flemish public libraries are free to use these portals for their ILL requests through Impala. Unfortunately no similar organized structure exists in the poorly financed public libraries in French speaking Belgium.

4.3. Open to other ILL systems

Not all Belgian ILL requests are channelled through Impala. Many requests first pass through a local ILL document ordering system, part of a global library management system. This is the case for most of the universities. Requests that cannot be fulfilled by the local ILL system may be forwarded to Impala. The local requests are transmitted to Impala via the so called e-mail gateway⁸, whereby the metadata of an ILL request are put into an XML-structure and via e-mail sent to impala@lib.ua.ac.be. Incoming requests of such kind are surveyed and transformed into standard Impala requests that will be forwarded to supplying libraries in very much the same way as an original Impala request. This email gateway is two way so that Impala messages about the status of the requests are forwarded automatically to the native ILL system of the other library.

4.4. Open to foreign suppliers



Right from the start Impala interlinked with the major European document suppliers: BLDSC (UK), INIST (F), TU Delft (NL), Wageningen University (NL) and NIWI (NL). The latter two were withdrawn from the list in 2005 since they do not have document supply to other libraries in their mission statement. To foster these European requests the holdings of these libraries have been added to the Antilope catalogue. In the very beginning these requests were sent out via fax. Later on the standard e-mail gateway has been used after thorough technical discussions with the European partners.

⁸ Technical specifications see <http://anet.ua.ac.be/desktop/impala/static/sgml/impala.dtd.html>

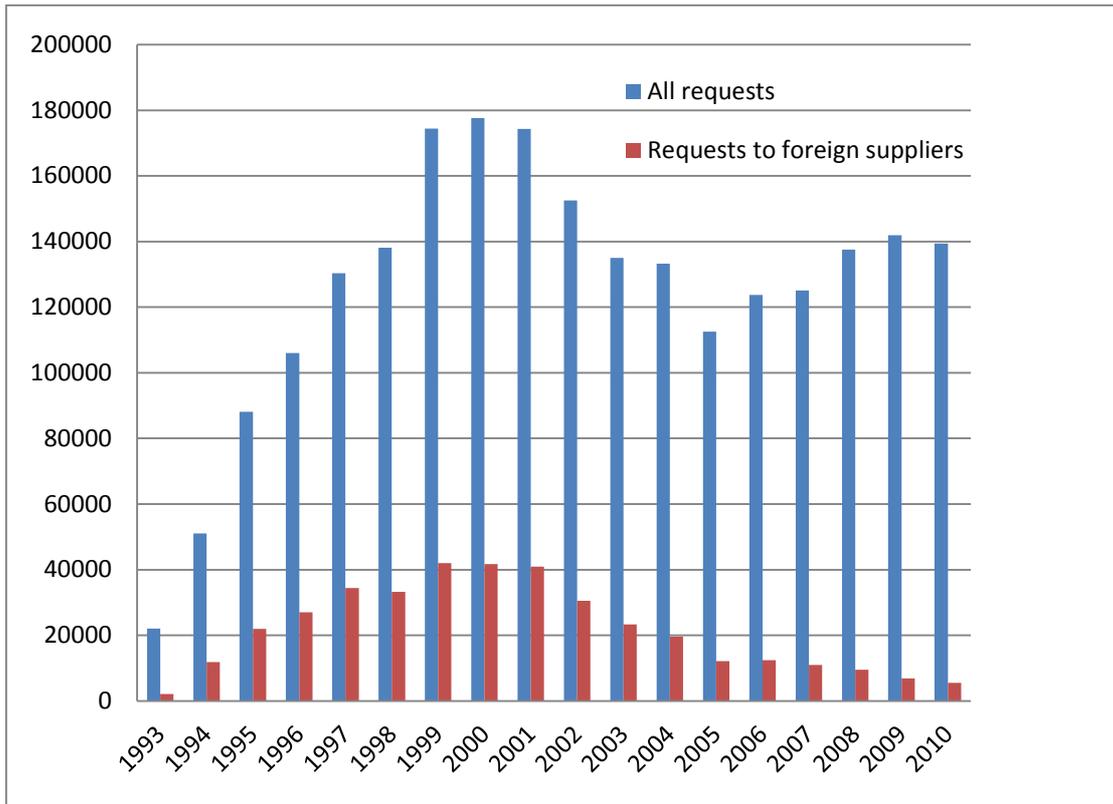


Figure 7. Number of request sent to foreign document suppliers

The number of requests to foreign document suppliers, once over 40,000 per annum, declined steeply after 2001 to 5,500 in 2010. Moreover libraries try to indentify cheaper suppliers than the ones mentioned above and find them in Germany (Subito) and the Netherlands. With an initial subsidy of Sabido, the Dutch-Flemish library, archives and documentation working group of the Dutch Language Union, has set up a simple link between Impala and the Dutch national NCC/ILL system⁹. This link has been operational since October 2004 whereby requests are sent directly to the Dutch system, which then will take care of the request. By doing so the burden upon the Dutch libraries, which happened to be of some concern to ILL departments in the Netherlands, has been reduced since the requests come in through the Dutch union catalogue and are handled in very much the same way as the standard NCC/ILL requests, including the price setting and billing. But relatively few libraries (just over 20) make use of this link, mostly for requesting books.

⁹ Sabido
http://taalunieversum.org/literatuur/samenwerkingsverband_archief_bibliotheek_en_documentatie/

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010
Number libraries	18	19	18	26	23	24
Number of requests						
Books	880	1.119	1.208	1.098	1.159	1.401
Articles	698	1.019	817	684	584	679
Total	1.578	2.138	2.025	1.782	1.743	2.080
Success rate						
Books	87	87	87	89	90	83
Articles	82	78	84	81	89	82
Total	85	83	85	86	89	83

Figure 8. Number of requests sent by Impala to the NCC/ILL-system

Foreign projects

Impala has played a minor role in temporary projects of the University of Liège in Benin, Africa (document delivery) and was instrumental in the European Union Tempus/Tacis project Copeter for several universities in St.-Petersburg, Russia (Van Borm, 2004).

5. Efficiency, speed and success rate

Efficiency, speed of supply and the success rate are the key elements for a successful ILL system. The omnipresence of the e-resources, available in an easy way 24/7 has had a tremendous impact upon the expectations of ILL clients. Ideally ILL has to be in line with the supply of e-resources: just in time, instant, 'free' and available at any place that suits the reader. This ideal cannot be reached through ILL services. Nevertheless the supplying libraries and Impala have done their utmost to come as close as possible to these ultimate goals by using modern ICT tools in the design of the system and by a continuous attention of the supplying libraries to the need for a speedy answer and supply on incoming requests.

5.1. Speed

At various stages in the ILL process the speed of transactions is encouraged

- Documents are ordered electronically for a maximum of five potential suppliers. Only the first one indicated gets the request. If that library cannot supply the item the request is immediately and automatically forwarded to the next one on the list.
- An email notifies the supplying library of incoming requests.
- Supplying libraries are urged to reply to incoming requests within 48 hours.
- Impala takes note of the closing periods of supplying libraries and does not send out requests in that period.
- The statistical module is very active with clear status information on every outstanding request. Moreover Impala supplies daily updated information about the number of requests and the delivery times. Every library can evaluate its own performance and is able to find the best suited library when sending out requests.

In spite of all these measures the speed of response (success or fail) and the delivery of items depends ultimately upon the supplying libraries and not all follow the 48 hours rule.

Figure 9 gives per year the median supply times for articles and books expressed in hours for all supplying libraries from launching the request to the reception of the item in the requesting library. All hours are accounted for (24/7) even the ones at night and during weekends and closing periods of the libraries. The same information is available for intermediate steps in the requesting process:

- from initiating the request up to the response success or fail
- from request until the actual sending of the item

- from request until the arrival of the document in the requesting library

year	median supply time - article	median supply time - book
2005	71	140
2006	52	126
2007	48	118
2008	45	118
2009	45	119
2010	48	118

Figure 9. Median supply times

The median supply time for a photocopy of a journal article in Impala in 2010 was 48 hours. This is the positive result of electronic document delivery. It should be no surprise that such a result is impossible for returnables that have to be sent by post or the university courier service that operates but twice a week. Moreover books may be on loan in the solicited library. In that case the request will be passed on to the next library on the list of possible suppliers which makes the delays longer. The average supply time for books in 2010 was 118 hours or five calendar days.

5.2. Success rate

Year	Article Success Ratio	Monograph Success Ratio	Overall Success Ratio
1992	86%	78%	82%
1993	89%	77%	85%
1994	90%	72%	86%
1995	90%	71%	87%
1996	90%	70%	87%
1997	91%	74%	89%
1998	92%	73%	89%
1999	92%	73%	89%
2000	92%	72%	89%
2001	91%	71%	87%
2002	91%	76%	86%
2003	90%	77%	85%
2004	89%	78%	83%
2005	88%	79%	83%
2006	89%	81%	84%
2007	88%	82%	84%
2008	88%	84%	86%
2009	89%	84%	86%
2010	87%	85%	86%

Figure 10. Success ratio

The success rate for periodical articles is very high and year after year is just under 90%. Surprisingly requests for books are almost as successful as requests for articles: 85% in 2010. These high success rates stem from the use of the union catalogues by public libraries. Moreover, in order to improve the ILL service for books public libraries verify the loan status in the provincial union catalogues. If after verification it turns out that the book is on loan another library will be approached.

5.3. Electronic document supply

The availability of the Virlib tools (Virlib project 1995-2003) made it possible to start with the electronic document delivery of journal articles (Corthouts, 2000). Most libraries use the Ariel application for the scanning of the originals and the packaging of the electronic images. Digitised items are sent to an appropriate e-mail address. Impala links this e-mail address to the request number. Thereafter it is very simple for the requesting library to retrieve the scanned article from a server. This can be the local server or the central Virlib server. Figure 11 shows that the move to e-document delivery has been very fast. 2010 saw the percentage of e-documents via the central Virlib server almost double since 2009. This sudden jump is the direct result of Virlib tools becoming part of the standard service of Impala. Previously, partners in Impala had to pay extra for this service. Libraries with local document servers report an even higher percentage of e-documents. So it may be said that nearly three quarters of journal articles are now being delivered in e-form.

year	e-supplies	total articles	percentage
1999	3.150	136.218	2%
2000	7.954	137.884	6%
2001	7.300	128.075	6%
2002	10.260	95.327	11%
2003	16.011	76.722	21%
2004	18.338	63.264	29%
2005	16.970	43.821	39%
2006	19.431	45.877	42%
2007	17.705	41.589	43%
2008	18.820	45.294	42%
2009	19.033	44.540	43%
2010	29.797	40.709	73%

Figure 11. Electronic document supply

5.4. End users

Impala is a system for document ordering between libraries. The end user is not directly involved. And it is not the intention of Impala to change that stand. Indeed, some Impala libraries have a document requesting service in their local library system, including such items as ordering, reporting and billing for end users, e.g. the University of Antwerp (Corthouts, 1997). The system comprises the following functions:

- User identification
- Sending requests (via the UA-catalogue, SFX or free non verified requests)
- Validation of the requests by the local librarians (mediated service)
- Feed back to the user on the status of the requested items via e-mail and the library website
- Forwarding of delivered items to the user

- Payment by cash or on faculty budgets

In the University of Antwerp and the University of Hasselt, using the Antwerp library system Brocade, up to 96% of all requests come in over the local ILL module for end users and are from there sent to the Impala application. The same happens in other universities.

Year	Number submitted by		Percentage submitted by	
	end user	library	end user	library
2005	6.597	4.163	61%	39%
2006	8.129	3.389	71%	29%
2007	10.690	831	93%	7%
2008	9.561	426	96%	4%
2009	9.854	412	96%	4%
2010	9.048	333	96%	4%

Figure 12. End user requests

6. Critical success factors: simplicity, reliability, cost and cost accounting

A recent study on ILL in the University of Ghent says it loud and clear: compared to other systems they have to work with, librarians find Impala easy to learn and simple in practice. Moreover it is reliable and saves time and thus costs in the participating libraries (Van Borm, 2010). They are the critical success factors of Impala.

Simplicity

Initial Impala training takes no more than 2 hours. Thereafter new users can start immediately working on the system. The system is well documented in a user manual available in French and Dutch. In case of occasional problems a help desk is available on working days between 9 and 17h.

All the users need is a standard browser to connect to (<http://anet.ua.ac.be/impala>). Language options are Dutch, French and English. Online status information is available on the various segments of the request:

- from launching the request to the reply of success
- from launching the request to the reply fail
- from sending the item to the reception to the requesting library

Based on this information users can be informed about the whereabouts of their requests. This status information may be linked to the local ILL system and from there automatically passed on the end user.

Reliability

Apart from regular maintenance and rare telecommunication problems Impala is available 24/7 throughout the year.

Cost

The onetime cost for becoming a member of Impala is rather low: € 250, which basically covers the cost of the initial training, the installation of the new library in the system's registry and the documentation supplied. There is no annual fee to be paid. Costing is done on the number of transactions on a no fill no cost basis. Failed requests, though they might use more of the system's resources, are not accounted for. The cost per successful transaction in 2010 is € 0,59 (the equivalent of a standardised letter sent via the Belgian Post).

Clearing house

On top of the cost to be paid to Impala the supplying libraries have to be paid for their activities. Research libraries follow the prices set a long time ago by the Conference of University Libraries. Public libraries in Flanders do not charge each other for the borrowing of

books. A clearinghouse system in Impala takes care of the costs whereby credits are obtained for every item supplied through the system and debits are registered for every item received. Participating libraries receive one single invoice or credit note per trimester for all their transactions in Impala which saves a lot of time. Impala receives the payments of the libraries having a negative balance and distributes this money to the net lenders.

7. Copyright

Though Belgium is a droit d'auteur country the more common and easier going term copyright will be used in this article¹⁰.

Belgium being part of the European Union has to comply with the rules of the union. These emerge through directives that must be implemented in the national legislation of the member states. Two directives determine interlending and document supply in the EU:

- **Directive 2001/29/EC** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 22 May 2001 on the harmonisation of certain aspects of copyright and related rights in the information society¹¹.
- **Directive 2006/115/EC** of the European Parliament and of the Council of 12 December 2006 on rental right and lending right and on certain rights related to copyright in the field of intellectual property¹², a codified version after several changes in the Council Directive 92/100/EEC of 19 November 1992 on rental right and lending right¹³

Directive 2001/29/EC allows copying on paper and on any other medium (for personal use and education and research purposes) under certain conditions provided the right owners receive fair compensation and in so far as this does not jeopardize the legitimate interests of these rights owners. This so called three step test is included in Article 13 of TRIPs (Trade-Related aspects of Intellectual Property rights). It reads, *Members shall confine limitations and exceptions to exclusive rights to certain special cases which do not conflict with a normal exploitation of the work and do not unreasonably prejudice the legitimate interests of the rights holder*¹⁴. Directive 2006/115/EC allows lending activities with different rules for rentals and for lending; this latter being the non-profit activities of libraries.

Both directives have been implemented in the Belgian copyright legislation. Directive 2001/29/EC of 22 May 2001 was implemented exactly four years later on 22 May of 2005¹⁵. Articles 21 and 22 contain the exceptions for education and research, including e-copies from paper originals. However Articles 59 and 60 make it perfectly clear that these exceptions on the monopoly of the rights owners can only be used when they receive fair financial compensation. Thus Belgian universities (student population: 116,000) paid to Repobel, the rights collecting agency for paper copies and lending rights, a negotiated flat fee of € 450,000 per annum for the period 2007 to 2010. On top of that a onetime fee has to be paid for every copier. The amount depends on the speed of the copier and one pays more for colour copies than for black and white. Repobel collected € 24,206,000 in 2009 for royalties on reprography¹⁶. No payment could be made so far for paper copies from electronic sources since the Royal decree that should fix rules and prices has not yet been published and cannot be published until a new government is in place. The paper copies from some e-originals might therefore be illegal¹⁷. Moreover the three step test has been implemented partially in Belgian law. It is up to a judge to rule one way or the other. Happily up to now no case has been brought to the courts. Some argue that sending e-copies to end users has to be seen as communication to the public and hence forbidden under Article 3.1 of the European

¹⁰ http://fr.wikipedia.org/wiki/Droit_d'auteur

¹¹ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CONSLEG:2001L0029:20010622:EN:PDF>

¹² <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:32006L0115:EN:NOT>

¹³ <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=CELEX:31992L0100:en:NOT>

¹⁴ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Berne_three-step_test

¹⁵ A coordinated French and Dutch version of the present Belgian copyright law (01.04.2010) is to be found on the website of SACD/SCAM.

French. <http://report.sacd.be/Report/20100625%20Loi%20coordonnee%20Fr.pdf>

Dutch. http://www.themastering.com/sacdscam/NL/pdf/010_auteurswet_1994.pdf

¹⁶ <http://www.reprobel.be/fr/repro/index.htm>

¹⁷ Risk limited to paper copies from e-originals that are not covered by a contractual license.

Directive. In the meantime e-copies are regularly used in document supply between research and educational institutions replacing photocopies.

The directive on lending activities of 1992 was implemented late in Belgian law through the Royal Decree of 25 April 2004. It makes lending activities possible for all types of libraries. Belgium made good use of the option in the EU-directive to exempt certain (but not all) types of libraries for compensation payment. Public libraries in Belgium pay royalties for their lending activities: € 1 per person above 18 and € 0.50 for those younger who make use of the lending facilities. In 2009 Repobel collected € 1,602,000 as compensation for lending activities by the libraries¹⁸. Repobel is still claiming compensation for the late implementation of the EU-directive on lending rights and has brought this before the courts (no judgment yet). Repobel has asked the EU-Copyright Office whether the amounts fixed in the Belgian royal decree are a satisfactory compensation for the losses through the lending activities of the libraries and the same goes for the exemption of the libraries in research and educational institutions (no reply). And above all, Repobel sees every book taken from the shelves as a loan. Copyright - a never ending story! It tends to extend both in time and coverage to the detriment of the free flow of information for all as to be found in article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UNO 1948)¹⁹, afterwards repeated in several other solemn declarations. Moreover these extended copyrights limit the creativity for which protection the system was created (Van Borm, 2009). Was the protection of patents in the pharmaceutical sector in the interest of all not reduced some years ago to 20 years?

8. Conclusion

Impala has good reasons to celebrate its twentieth anniversary in 2011. Right from the beginning in 1991 it has structured the rather chaotic interlending scene in Belgium. Impala stands nowadays for a high quality service with a high success rate and short delivery times. This is in the first instance the result of the daily efforts of the 620 participating Belgian libraries for which efforts the authors of this article wish to thank them cordially. But it is also the result of the sober and innovative design, reliability and the cost-efficiency of the system.

Impala has survived up to now in an information landscape that has been changed drastically in the past 20 years by the advent of electronic information resources, easily accessible for the end user and with no formalities (apart from paying the bill which is usually done by the organisation). The number of article requests has dropped significantly since 2001, but the number of lending requests from the public libraries in Flanders has made up partially for this loss. However, it is clear that the future will be less glamorous: the availability of even more electronic journal resources also in the humanities and social sciences, all sorts of Open Access publications and book digitising initiatives (not the least the Google book Search that produces searchable versions of older books) and e-books will make users less dependent on ILL. Document supply will be further reduced and new, stricter regulations of copyright might be instrumental in that reduction. Lending of books will continue for some time at least for the generation that has learnt how to read in the traditional printed books. The role of Impala is going to be reduced but for some time it still has a role to play. Or to say it in humanistic Latin from good old England *Tempora mutantur, et nos mutamur in illis*²⁰. Times change and we change with them.

¹⁸ <http://www.reprobel.be/fr/repro/index.htm>

¹⁹ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Universal_Declaration_of_Human_Rights

²⁰ Quoted in Harrison. *Description of Britain*, 1577, Pt III.Ch. iii.

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