

Objective

The National Library of Medicine (NLM) and the Pacific Southwest Region of the National Network of Libraries of Medicine (PSR NN/LM) encourage the use of the University of Connecticut's Electronic Fund Transfer System (EFTS) for billing and payment of Interlibrary Loan transactions. As of June 1 2006, 142 active members in the Pacific Southwest Region have joined EFTS. Approximately 82 of those EFTS members belong to the Medical Library Group of Southern California and Arizona (MLGSCA). As the MLGSCA's Interlibrary Loan Committee, we would like to join NLM and PSR NN/LM in encouraging the use of EFTS throughout our library group. The objective of this study was to determine methods for promoting the use of the Electronic Fund Transfer System throughout the Medical Library Group of Southern California and Arizona.

Methods

In order to determine possible methods of promotion of EFTS throughout the MLGSCA, the Interlibrary Loan Committee conducted two surveys: one for current EFTS users and another for those who are not yet using EFTS. We conducted our surveys using SurveyMonkey, a subscription based online survey tool. The EFTS user survey included questions regarding the initial set-up of EFTS from technical and administrative viewpoints, the use of ILL management software, DOCLINE routing preferences, as well as the opportunity to offer advice and comments. The EFTS non-user survey included open ended questions meant to establish the causes which prevented MLGSCA members from joining EFTS and their willingness to join. Instructions for completing the survey were sent via the MLGSCA Discussion List to all members. The instructions included directions for the Library Director or person in charge of handling Interlibrary Loans to complete the survey.



Results

We asked the 264 MLGSCA members at approximately 174 institutions to submit one completed survey per institution, and received a total of 61 responses. 48 of the respondents were EFTS users, 13 respondents were not participating in EFTS. The majority of the respondents in the EFTS user group (68.8%) and the EFTS non-user group (100%) were the library director or solo librarian. Of the EFTS users, most respondents have been using the system for over a year (78.3%). The process of joining EFTS was overwhelmingly rated "easy" (82.8%) with the majority noting that the process took one week to one month for completion (52.2%). Most users had changed their Docline routing tables to borrow heavily from other EFTS participants (57.7%). The majority of EFTS users stated they were not only paying but billing through the EFTS system (75.6%) and found this process to be "easy" (72.5%).

We solicited comments and suggestions regarding successful techniques that librarians can employ when approaching management for EFTS membership approval. Several comments illustrate that a bit of research and a well planned presentation prove most effective when dealing with administration. One librarian commented, "I learned the cost to process each invoice at my institution was \$30 to \$40. We estimated the number of small invoices submitted by the library per year, did the math, and it immediately became a no-brainer to my VP." Forty-one EFTS users offered advice to those librarians considering whether or not to join EFTS. These comments focused on the system's efficiency, "EFTS has been a fantastic time-saver!" and ease of use, "EFTS makes life and work so much easier."

Of the 13 EFTS non-users responding to our survey, their reasons for not yet joining EFTS were varied. Several respondents indicated they would like to join EFTS but have not yet found the time to do so. Others feared the application process would be too time consuming, were satisfied with the coupon and invoice billing system, or felt they would encounter resistance from their supervisor or administration. 10 EFTS non-users indicated they would be willing to join EFTS if they had a mentor to assist them with the process and answer any questions they may have. The other 3 respondents stated they would not be joining EFTS at this time.

Conclusions

This survey identified that the majority of respondents already using the Electronic Fund Transfer System found that EFTS offers an efficient, easy, and cost-saving method of managing the billing and payment of Interlibrary Loans. Many of the respondents not yet using EFTS indicated that they are interested in joining the system. Given this wealth of information, the Interlibrary Loan Committee will be able to clearly focus on one of its main objectives for the 2006/2007 year, promoting the use of EFTS and providing assistance and guidance to MLGSCA members who have yet to join EFTS.