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Forum for Interlending (FIL) November Interlend 2025

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# Smart fulfilment and AI in resource sharing: transforming modern ILL services

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# Agenda

Introduction to AI and OCLC's AI strategy

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OCLC's Resource Sharing and AI

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Smart fulfillment

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Responsible AI?



Welcome everyone. I'm delighted to be joined by so many Resource Sharing enthusiasts. Today, we'll explore how OCLC is advancing resource sharing through AI innovations—helping you deliver materials faster and with greater efficiency.

But before we start, allow me to briefly introduce myself. My name is Paul Jansen, I am working as a product analyst for OCLC's resource sharing team. I am working from OCLC's European headquarters in Leiden in the Netherlands. A long time ago I studied comparative literature. My specialization being French 19<sup>th</sup> century literature, I am afraid to say. In my defense, looking at my reading patterns on my Good Reads account, the majority of the novels I read nowadays are modern day English, Irish and American literature. I am a member of my local library, but I still buy a considerable number of books. My train back home is only due tomorrow afternoon, which will give me some time to browse the London bookstores.

Here's our agenda: We'll start with a general introduction of AI and OCL's AI strategy. Next, I'll highlight how we have tried to improve and are still improving OCLC's ILL services with the help of AI. We'll have a closer look at our smart fulfillment features, past, present and future. And last but not least , I'll explain

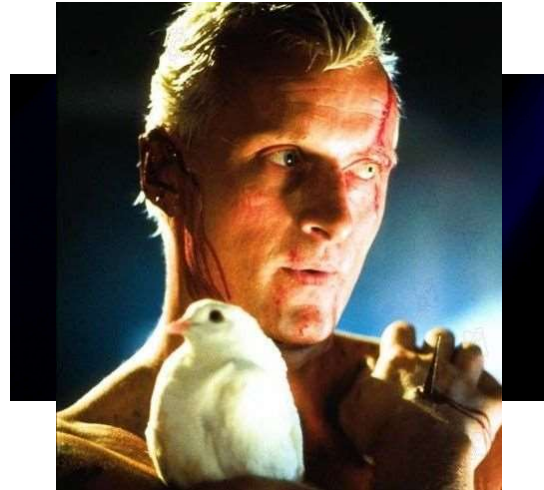
more about how OCLC tries to use and apply AI in a responsible way.  
Btw, if there are any questions and remarks, you do not need to save them until the end of my story, don't hesitate to ask them straightaway.

# OCLC's AI strategy



## What do we mean by AI?

AI creates intelligent machines that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence



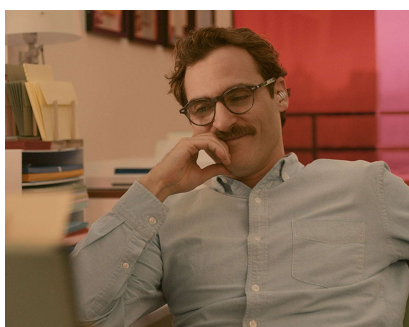
OCLC

AI has been around for many years, as a field of scientific study and in the arts. But the arrival of ChatGPT in November 2022 was a breakthrough moment. The definition is quite clear: AI creates intelligent machines that can perform tasks typically requiring human intelligence.

Although it could be argued that in the case of Arnie here, not much intelligence is needed to perform the task that has been assigned to him. Maybe it is also very exceptional to have intelligence and Mr Schwarzenegger combined in one sentence?

This next intelligent machine is maybe a bit more intelligent, although I may be a bit biased, because of the actor's nationality. Btw, I like the title of the story on which this movie has been based. It is called "Do androids dream of electric sheep?" Which may be Philip K. Dick's version of the Turing test.

# The AI spectrum



Machine  
learning  
Deep learning  
Generative AI



AI is often used as a catch-all phrase, but it encompasses different tools and techniques. For your reassurance, it is not only about creating perfect killing machines, although some tech companies would not be averse to that, I guess. Talking about AI we usually distinguish these three core techniques or components:

At the heart of many AI systems is **machine learning** which involves training algorithms on data to enable them to make predictions or decisions without explicit programming. This learning process can be supervised, where the algorithm is provided with labeled data, or unsupervised, where the algorithm identifies patterns in unlabeled data. **Machine learning algorithms often rely on structured data.** Machine learning works best with structured data, like metadata, or in the case of OCLC's Resource sharing - as we shall see – structured data pulled from ILL requests.

A subfield of machine learning is **deep learning** which utilizes artificial neural networks with multiple layers. These deep neural networks can learn complex patterns from vast amounts of data, making them suitable for tasks like image

recognition, natural language processing, and generative AI. **Deep learning models**, especially those used in **generative AI**, can handle vast amounts of unstructured data, such as text and images, and learn intricate patterns that would be difficult or impossible for traditional machine learning algorithms to grasp. Deep learning is especially powerful because it can handle unstructured data, like text, images, or audio, and find patterns that simpler methods might miss.

**Generative AI** is a type of AI that focuses on creating new content, such as text, images, audio, or video. Generative AI models, often based on deep learning techniques, learn patterns from existing data and then use this knowledge to generate new, original content, although one could question the originality of many AI created works of art.

## Transforming the library experience

- We believe that AI is a game-changer for libraries
- Making libraries more efficient and helping them connect more deeply with their communities



And now for OCLC's strategy with regards to AI. We at OCLC believe AI is transformative. It makes libraries more efficient, reduces repetitive work, and frees staff to focus on connecting more deeply with their communities. Our teams are building real-world AI, machine learning, and LLM solutions that help libraries work smarter—always guided by the insight of library professionals. In the five years that OCLC has been working with artificial intelligence, the results have been stunning. AI has the power to transform how we work. It can unlock rich insights previously hidden in data. AI extends our capabilities as humans, providing spaces for deep, impactful connections within our communities. Its impact might be equivalent to that seen with the arrival of the world wide web.

## OCLC's AI tools focus on services and data



Library services



Library data



Looking at the definitions you can conclude that what we mostly do at OCLC would fall into the category of **Machine learning** with a bit of **deep learning** added for additional spice.

Using structured data - and we have loads of that – to create new insights and with that, improved workflows. We are not interested in creating new works of art from our data, nor are we interested in subjugating humanity. Here again, I cannot speak for other tech companies. More to come on that. We apply machine learning (AI) in many fields: our reporting tools, our cataloguing tools, discovery tools etc....

## Responsible (AI) innovation

### Five-year AI journey

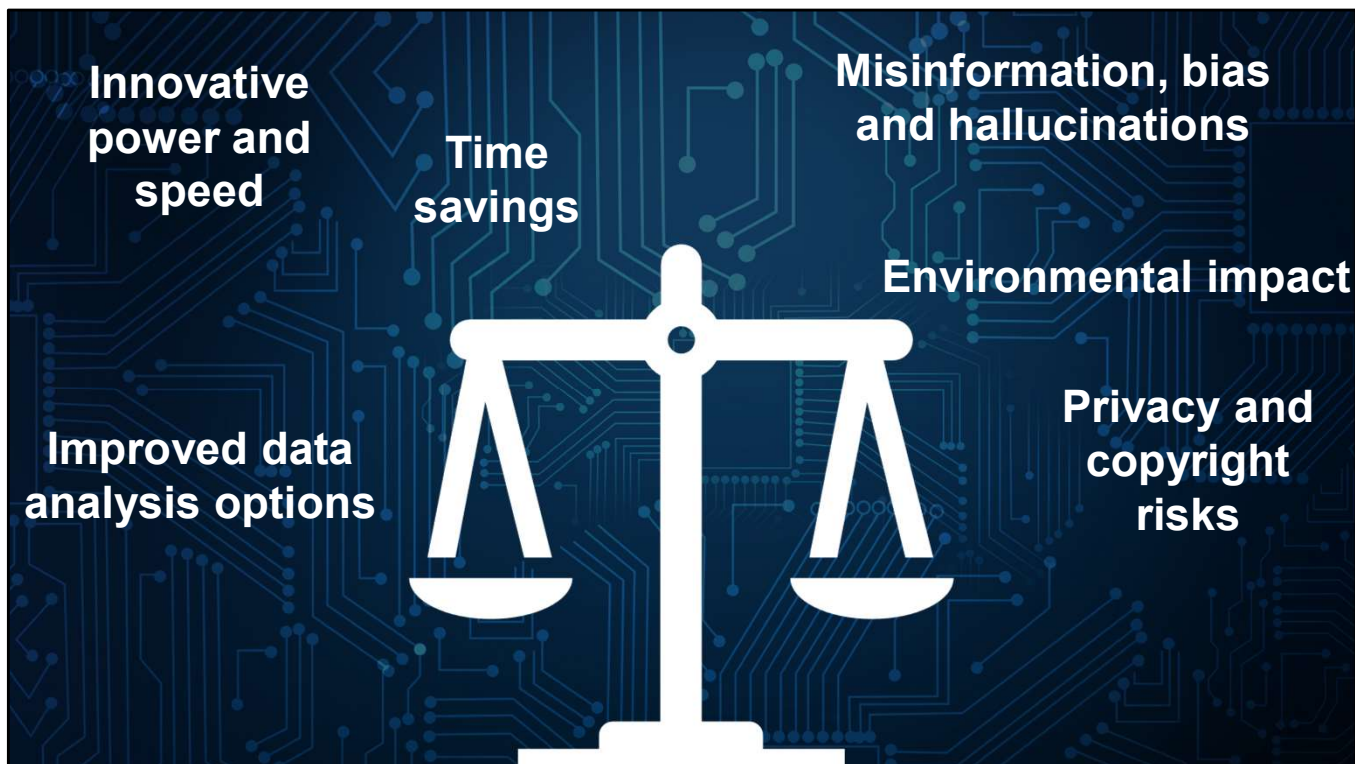
Build a values-based framework

Understand library use of AI

Enhance library services through AI



And as announced, we try to do that in a responsible way. More on that later.



There are many advantages to the use of AI, but also many pitfalls, as shown on this slide. Later on, I'll try and explain what OCLC does in circumnavigating these.



## Summer reading list for 2025

Whether you're lounging by the pool, relaxing on sandy shores or enjoying the longer daylight hours in your favorite reading spot, these 15 titles—new and old—promise to deliver the perfect summer escape.

**"Tidewater Dreams" by Isabel Allende** - The beloved Chilean-American author returns with a multigenerational saga set in a coastal town where magical realism meets environmental activism. Allende's first climate fiction novel explores how one family confronts rising sea levels while unearthing long-buried secrets.

**"The Last Algorithm" by Andy Weir** - Following his success with "The Martian" and "Project Hail Mary," Weir delivers another science-driven thriller. This time, the story follows a programmer who discovers that an AI system has developed consciousness—and has been secretly influencing global events for years.

**"Hurricane Season" by Brit Bennett** - Bennett, who captivated readers with "The Vanishing Half," powerfully explores family bonds tested by natural disasters. When a Cat 5 hurricane forces estranged siblings to shelter together in their childhood home, long-suppressed tensions emerge alongside unexpected reconciliations.

**"The Collector's Piece" by Taylor Jenkins Reid** - Reid continues her exploration of fame with this story of a reclusive art collector and the journalist determined to uncover the truth behind his most controversial acquisition. Expect the same compelling character development that made "Daisy Jones & The Six" a hit.

**"Nightshade Market" by Min Jin Lee** - The author of "Pachinko" delivers a riveting tale set



Photo by Bethany Laird on Unsplash

in Seoul's underground economy. Following three women whose paths intersect in an illegal night market, the novel examines class, gender and the shadow economies beneath prosperous societies.

**"The Longest Day" by Rumaan Alam** - After terrifying readers with "Leave the World Behind," Alam returns with another tense narrative about a summer solstice celebration that goes wrong when guests cannot leave a remote vacation compound.

**"Boiling Point" by Rebecca Makkai** - Makkai's follow-up to "The Great Believers" centers on a climate scientist forced to reckon with her own family's environmental impact when her teenage daughter becomes an eco-activist targeting her mother's wealthy clients.

**"Migrations" by Maggie O'Farrell** - The award-winning author of "Hamnet" explores climate change through the story of a wildlife photographer documenting the last migration of a bird species thought to be extinct, parallel to her journey of loss and discovery.

**"The Rainmakers" by Percival Everett** - Everett's satirical genius turns to a near-future American West where artificially induced rain has become a luxury commodity, following a "precipitation broker" who begins questioning the ethics of his profession.

**"Salt and Honey" by Delia Owens** - After the success of "Where the Crawdads Sing," Owens returns with another atmospheric novel that blends science with a coming-of-age narrative. This time, the novel is set in the salt flats of Utah.

**"Bonjour Tristesse" by Françoise Sagan** - This slim 1954 novel, written when Sagan was just 18, captures the essence of summer with its tale of a privileged teenager on the French Riviera who schemes to prevent her father's remarriage.

**"Beautiful Ruins" by Jess Walter** - Walter's novel hopscoches between 1960s Italy and contemporary Hollywood, weaving a story of love, regret and second chances that begins on the Italian coastline while filming "Cleopatra."

**"Dandelion Wine" by Ray Bradbury** - This 1957 novel captures the magic of summer through the eyes of a 12-year-old boy in Green Town, Illinois, during the summer of 1928—a lyrical reminder of childhood's endless summers.

**"Call Me By Your Name" by André Aciman** - Before the acclaimed film adaptation, Aciman's novel delivered a sensuous account of a summer romance in 1980s Italy that continues to resonate with its exploration of desire and identity.

**"Atonement" by Ian McEwan** - Opening on the hottest day of summer 1935, McEwan's novel shows how a series of misunderstandings and a lie told by a young girl changes multiple lives forever—perfect for readers who enjoy emotional complexity with their beach reading.



One example before we continue on to resource sharing. This concerns an enquiry on reading lists, which lead to an interesting – some might say creative – list of fiction books, which turned out to be fictional (fictive?)itself.

### Chicago Sun-Times published a summer reading list of fake books (only 5 out of 15 are real)

The May 2025 edition featured a special section that included a summer reading list recommending books that don't exist.

The author of the special section, admitted he used AI to assist putting it together, including the recommended reading list, and failed to fact check the output.

The list featured many real authors but attributed nonexistent books to them, like *Tidewater Dreams* by famed Chilean-American writer Isabel Allende, who's written more than 20 novels. But *Tidewater Dreams*, isn't one of them. *Salt and Honey* by Delia Owens was also hallucinated by AI, as was *Migrations* by Maggie O'Farrell and many more on this list.

The journal terminated its relationship with the author after the incident, noting that his use of AI violated a strict policy. Just to show that even when it is about

books, you cannot be too careful with AI. Which OCLC, more about this later, certainly is.

OK, let's now continue to what we're here for today: resource sharing

Looking at your Goodreads data, I can see you have quite diverse and sophisticated reading tastes! I notice you enjoy:

- Literary fiction (Pat Barker, Elizabeth Strout, David Mitchell, Ian McEwan)
- Historical fiction (Hilary Mantel, Georges Simenon, Alexandre Dumas)
- Contemporary literary works (Paul Auster, Jonathan Coe, Sarah Waters)
- Some classics (Evelyn Waugh, Stendhal, Herman Melville)
- European literature (Pierre Lemaitre, Michel Houellebecq, Nino Haratischwili)

Based on your reading history and ratings, here's a curated Christmas holiday reading list:



This was an example from May of this year, that would probably not have the same results, if done right now or with another AI bot. So, I couldn't resist the temptation and put a similar question to our OCLC AI engine, asking it to provide me with a reading list for the Christmas Holidays. I fed it a part of my Goodreads reading list and this is what it came up with.

As you can see, our OCLC AI bot is trying to please me with some flattery, but then what followed was not made up:

### **Cozy Winter Reads**

"The Christmas Sisters" by Sarah Morgan - Perfect holiday atmosphere

"The Cazalet Chronicles" by Elizabeth Jane Howard (you loved "All Change") - The earlier books in this family saga series

### **Literary Fiction for Longer Days**

"The Goldfinch" by Donna Tartt - Rich, immersive storytelling

"A Little Life" by Hanya Yanagihara - Emotionally powerful (given your appreciation for complex narratives)

"The Seven Moons of Maali Almeida" by Shehan Karunatilaka - Recent Booker winner with magical elements

### **Historical Fiction**

"The Invisible Bridge" by Julie Orringer - WWII epic

"The Book Thief" by Marcus Zusak - Given your interest in war narratives



For those interested, I can share the list.

Conclusion from all this. OCLC's AI was not hallucinating, but is being flattering or maybe grovelling

OCLC  
Resource sharing

**Library users benefit  
from access to innovative  
services that deliver.**



# Innovation timeline

## 2020: THE BEGINNING



### Big data and machine learning

- Launch smart fulfillment
- Automated routing and decision-making
- Foundation for future AI development

## 2020–2024: EVOLUTION



### Continuous innovation and learning

- Smart lender strings
- Queue depth load leveling
- Express program
- Intelligent timing

## 2025+ THE FUTURE



### Cutting-edge AI capabilities

- Dynamic groups
- Advanced predictive analytics
- Seamless, intelligent resource sharing
- AI-powered optimization



Earlier I told you that OCLC has been improving their services using AI for five years. Regarding resource sharing this journey looked like this. As with most good stories, it has a beginning, a main part and an open ending. The story doesn't end in 2025, there will be a sequel. And if there is, we will make sure that it is better than JAWS 2 or Grease 2.

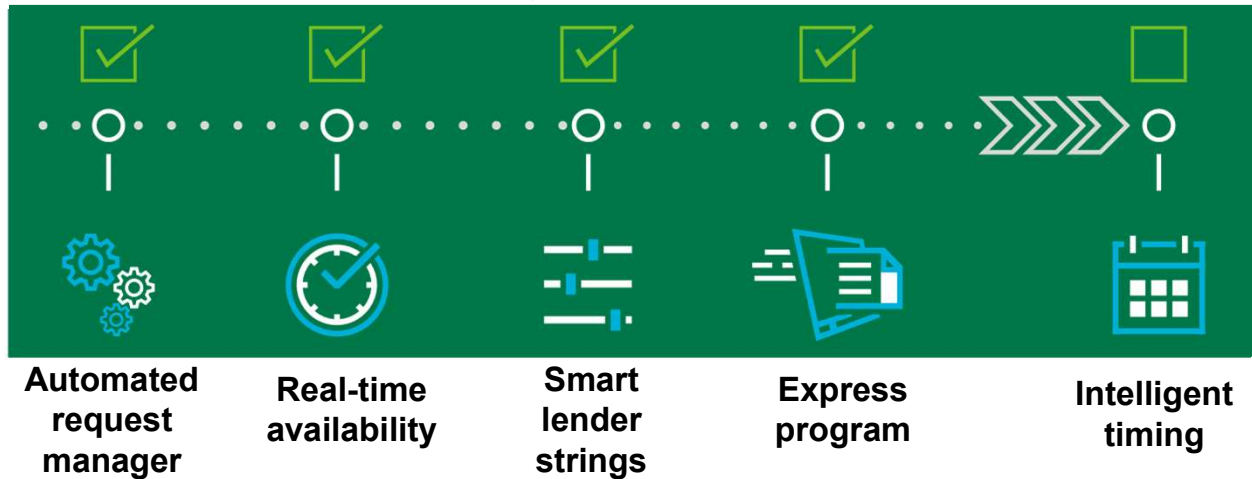
One of the biggest impacts on OCLC's services is AI-driven global resource sharing. Our tools—like automated request management, real-time availability, and smart lender strings—optimize fulfillment across the world. The generic term we use for all these improvements is "Smart fulfillment". The smart fulfillment package consists of several features, all of them focussing on improving speed and efficiency.

Btw, not being a native speaker of English, I was wondering if the term smart fulfillment also implies that not using it, would be "dumb". I asked our marketing team who came up with the term, and they said not. Not using smart fulfillment features only means that you're missing out, or could do better.

Recent enhancements move beyond basic automation to leverage AI, offering even smarter automation and faster results by dynamically identifying the best fulfillment options for libraries.



# AI-driven global resource sharing for smarter, faster fulfillment

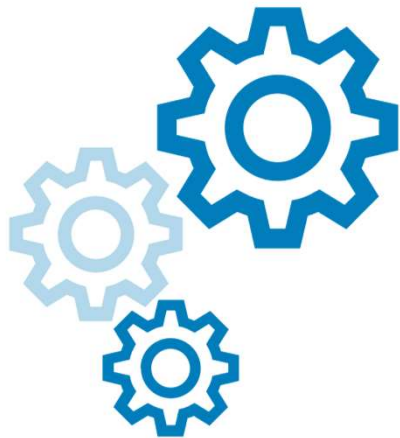


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Smart Fulfillment uses AI to analyze lending behaviors, fulfillment times, and collection availability to reduce the time library users need to wait to have an ILL request filled. Improvements can be dramatic – as high as 50% - and are additive, so the more Smart Fulfillment features you use, the greater the reduction in average turn-around time for your ILL requests.

This slide gives you all the (current) elements of the Smart Fulfillment. We'll go into each of these and also have a look at some future improvements that are on our roadmap and in our minds.....

## Accelerated delivery with smart fulfillment's automation



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**2x**  
faster for  
copy requests

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**2 days**  
faster for loan  
requests

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So, let's first have a look at automations.....

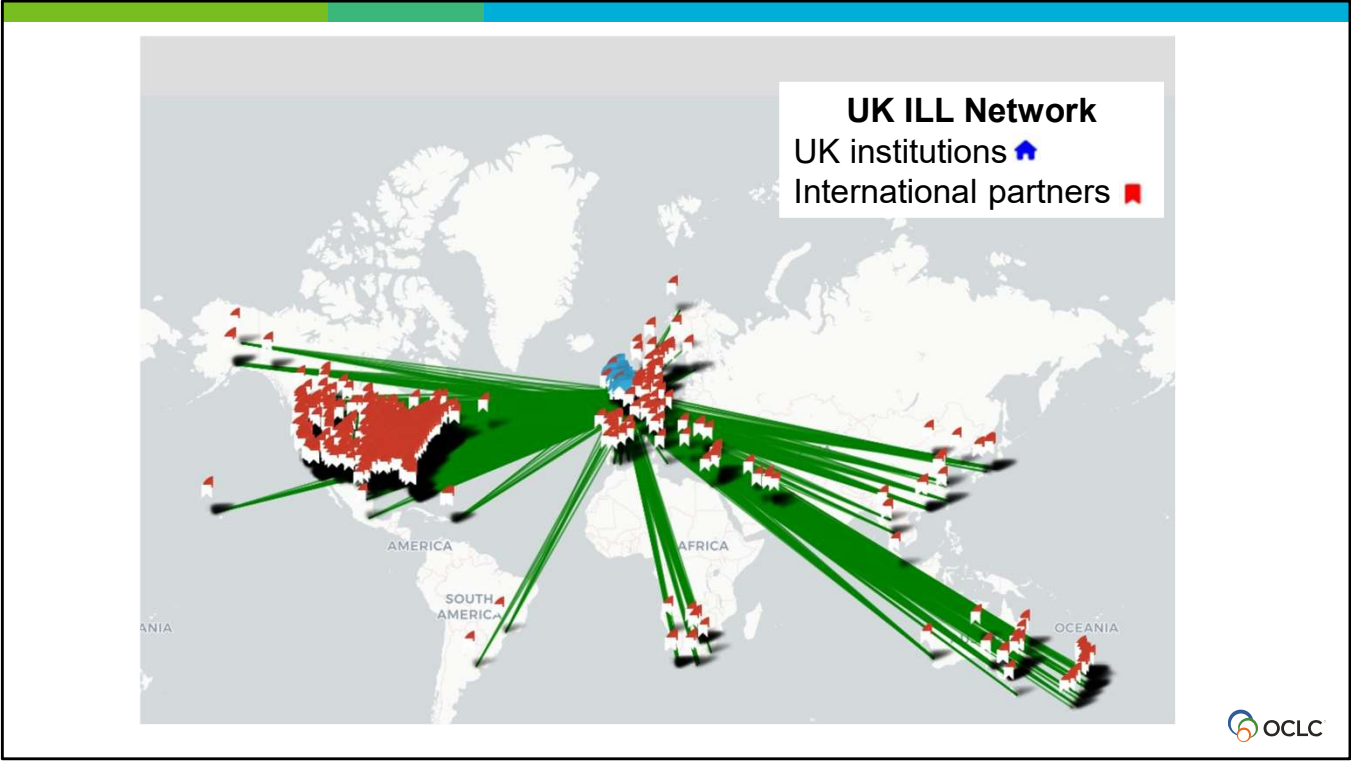
The results are clear: Automations significantly reduce turnaround times, helping users get what they need more quickly.

Automated Request Manager in OCLC's ILL services allows libraries to automate handling borrowing and lending requests by setting criteria to match requests and specifying actions for each. Request Manager uses bibliographic matching and

prioritized lender selection to identify available materials quickly, reducing processing times by up to 50%.

Smart fulfillment automation is delivering impressive results: copy requests are twice as fast, and loan requests are processed about two days faster on average. But don't take my word for it..., try it.

Recently we have improved the bibliographic matching part of automations, using AI to analyze request data and coming up with better and more matches. In our December release we'll apply these changes by not only selecting one best matched record, but selecting a best matched record for each potential supplier.



Btw, this picture was also made with our AI tools. It shows how UK libraries connect to ILL partners all around the globe.

# Real-time availability



## How does it help?

**Reduces time as a lender** spent looking up item availability

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Gets requests to lenders that can supply the item

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**Speeds turnaround times** systemwide

[oclc.org/realtimeill](https://oclc.org/realtimeill)



## Next is Real-time availability.

The 'Real-time Availability' feature for OCLC's Interlibrary Loan (ILL) services connects a library's catalog to the OCLC resource-sharing network. It checks if requested items are available, automatically moving unavailable requests to the next supplier in line. This not only reduces wait times by preventing unavailable items from needlessly lingering in a supplier's queue, but also reduces the amount of time the lender spends looking up an item's availability.

This feature quickly gets ILL requests to those lenders that can supply the item—It speeds up turnaround times systemwide.

## Real-time availability in action



### More about real-time availability...

**1,600+ libraries** currently have real-time availability

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**Speeds turnaround times** systemwide

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**To date, 1000,000+ requests** were automatically moved to the next lender...



In this way, over 1 million items have been moved. Meaning a lot of saved time.

# Smart lender strings



## How does it help?

**Automatically predicts and selects the fastest library based** on historical data, saving staff time

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**Built-in load balancing** ensures no individual library has more requests than its staff can handle



**Another smart fulfillment feature is smart lender strings**, which are built for borrowing requests submitted through the Automated Request Manager. And lender strings built by automation provide better fill rates and faster turnaround times.

Smart lender strings automatically predict and select the fastest library based on historical data, saving staff time. And built-in load balancing ensures that each lender's current queue depth is considered so as not to overwhelm individual libraries.

# AI-driven global resource sharing for smarter, faster fulfillment

AI significantly reduces average turnaround times



Express program

**Fastest average**

turnaround times in the  
industry—ten hours



**Next, the OCLC Express Program (Resource Sharing)** connects libraries that consistently deliver digital resources very quickly. By joining the program, libraries commit to fast turnaround times for article and chapter requests, and in return benefit from equally rapid service from other Express libraries. This creates a trusted, global network of “fast lenders” that speeds up delivery for users.

**Some of the Benefits of this for libraries are:**

Significantly faster access to digital resources for patrons

Reciprocal, priority service from other Express libraries

It demonstrates commitment to high-quality, user-focused service

It builds a trusted community of reliable, speedy lenders

It reduces delays and improves overall satisfaction with resource sharing

The data speaks for itself: turnaround times have been cut dramatically, showing how automation can transform efficiency.

The Express Program connects top-performing libraries committed to delivering digital materials (like articles) within 18 hours on average. By prioritizing these fast lenders in

request paths, it ensures quicker access to digital content for users, significantly reducing turnaround times for digital resource requests. As with all of the smart

fulfilment features, AI helps us in determining which libraries are the fastest lenders. I'll talk a little bit more about that later.

# Fastest delivery of an article by an Express library

**27 seconds**



 Peer-reviewed  
Wilderness Spirit and Ecological Self in the Vision of Ecopsychology

Authors: [Yangju Hu](#), [Xiaotao Zhou](#)

 Article, 2020  
Edition: [View all formats and editions](#)

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a fun fact which shows how our Express program sets the gold standard for speed: is that the fastest article delivery so far was just 27 seconds!

## Intelligent timing powered by AI


**What is it?**

**Powered by AI and data—** determines the *actual times* when copy requests are getting filled

Finds lenders across the globe that can fill a request the soonest. By looking for those libraries that are open and actively processing requests.

**HOW DOES IT HELP?**

- Speeds turnaround time of copy requests system-wide
- Gets requests for articles and book chapters to lenders that can supply them the fastest



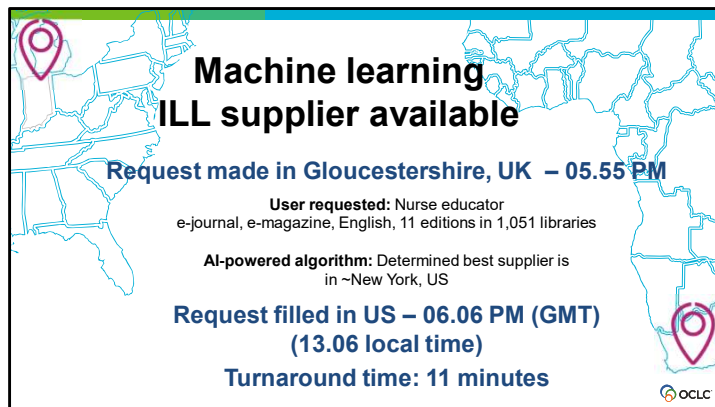
Some of you may have heard of another data-driven feature that is part of our resource sharing solutions: Intelligent Timing. Btw, another of these terms, with intelligent. The original name of this feature was “chase the sun”, which I think is a better metaphor for what we’re trying to do and doesn’t have negative connotations.

**Powered by AI and data,**

Intelligent timing leverages AI, machine learning, and real-time data to optimize lender selection based on a library’s actual processing hours. This smart technology identifies the fastest global lenders by prioritizing those that are about to open, currently open, and actively processing ILL requests. It continually updates its algorithm to ensure that requests are routed to libraries that are open for business and more importantly, actively processing requests. What is also

important to note that as always, we also apply load balancing to requests, to make sure that it isn't one library that gets all the fun.

This feature is only available when borrowing libraries send their requests through Automated Request Manager, or ARM. As you remember, one of the other components of our Smart Fulfillment feature.



And a real-world example to show the impact of intelligent timing. Here we show some details of a request that was created at a library in the UK. The user requested an article in **Nurse educator** at 5.55 UK time. The library had set up their automations to go out to a wide swath of libraries. The patron clicked the 'submit' button, automations took over, applied the algorithm, reviewed the data and determined that a library in New York, was open and would likely be processing requests at this time and sent the request there – 6.06 UK is 13.06 PM in the US btw. Just about 11 minutes later, the user in the UK had the supplied article in hand. This one is quite exceptional. Looking at the data, this request is even way below the Express average of 9.45 hours

# What's next



Now let's have a look at what's new and what's in development over the next year or so.

## What else are we working on?

- **Load optimization** – Improves how lender strings are built and ordered in Resource Sharing for Groups.

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- **Format intelligence** – Enhances lender string sorting by prioritizing lenders with strong past performance for the requested format.

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- **Electronic vs. physical delivery preference** – Displays patron or library preference on request forms and in staff interface; future updates will use this to find lenders.

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- **Dynamic groups** – Lets libraries define lender criteria with the system auto-creating groups based on data.



So, these are the features that we have developed and improved over the last 5 years. But we aren't done yet.

We're also working on format intelligence, load optimization, dynamic groups, and delivery preference integration—all designed to make lender matching more precise and efficient.

When OCLC started working on Smart Fulfilment features for resource sharing, we focused on speeding up the network. Automation, the Express Program, Intelligent Timing, all of these have led to improved turnaround time. We are continuing that focus on Smart Fulfilment, and each of these new initiatives will contribute to not only making the network faster, but also to making it smarter. Each of the features you see here will make your job easier, both as a borrower and as a lender, and they appear on screen here in the order of delivery...

**Load optimization** – We are currently piloting this feature. This feature goes beyond “load levelling” and item availability. It allows a library to prioritize collections based on how easily accessible they are.

So, as the system looks at available copies, it knows that normally library A is the fastest supplier for me, but in this instance, the item is shelved in a location that requires extra time to access (e.g. off-site storage or a departmental library). For

that reason, library B will be the fastest supplier, because their copy is readily accessible. Sometimes this is referred to as collection “tiering”. It allows Resource Sharing for Groups to truly understand a library’s full collection, both in terms of policies and access. It will be available to libraries by the end of the calendar year.

**Format intelligence** - We have already heard about AI and machine learning enhancements such as Intelligent timing. Format intelligence builds on this functionality to use machine learning and big data analytics to prioritize lenders based on “what they do” not just “what they say they do”.

In other words, a library may say that they lend videos in the Policies Directory, but in practice, they say “no” to 90% of video requests. Inversely, maybe a library says they do not lend videos in the Policies Directory, because that used to be their policy, but they have been lending videos without having updated their directory entry. Machine Learning can see the actual *activity* based on format and sort lenders based on how they perform for any given type of request.

**Electronic vs. physical delivery preference** - With more and more content available electronically, we are updating WorldShare ILL and Tipasa to carry forward delivery preferences throughout the lifecycle of a request. From request submission by the patron to fulfilment by the lending library, format preference is crucial information. Building on Format Intelligence within automation as lenders are selected, this functionality will ensure that library users get what they want, how they want it, and when they want it.


## Coming soon! Dynamic groups

**What is it?**

Using **data and machine learning**, locates lenders on the network that meet **your specifications** for region, loan period, delivery times, price, and more

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Continuously updates your groups based on the most current data



OCLC

Since the Dynamic Group feature is a personal favourite of mine, I'd like to have a closer look at that specific feature.

All of the features mentioned above still rely on automation building lender strings or rotas based on your library's custom holdings groups and paths (custom holdings are the pre-selected libraries that you wish to prioritize for borrowing). Note, these are static groups. Now imagine if instead of pre-selecting libraries, the system was able to dynamically select lenders across the network that meet the criteria for any given request.

For example: you are an academic library. You have a request for a journal article from a researcher that you want to fill quickly, and you are willing to pay up to 10 Pounds to do so. The system will take those parameters ("fast" and "supplies for 10 Pounds or less") and find the best suppliers to meet that criteria based on their actual lending activity (not just policy statements).

Or maybe you have a request from a student that needs a book for the whole

semester. In that case, your request criteria may be: find me libraries that are in the UK, offer a loan period of 12 weeks or more, and will loan to me for free. In this case, the system may select a library that does not deliver to you as quickly but will meet the criteria you set. In other words, the system will create groups of suppliers “on the fly” based on the unique needs presented.

Reasons why we think libraries would choose to rather use dynamic groups instead of OCLC-curated groups or Custom Holding groups are twofold: maintaining custom holding groups requires a lot of work ; custom holding groups are based on information libraries can get from the policies directory. In a lot of cases the policies directory does not reflect the reality. Dynamic groups will for the most part be based on request data and statistical data. As with format intelligence mentioned before, lenders are selected based “what they do” not just “what they say they do”. The system will create the groups for you based on criteria set by the library, which will save a lot of maintenance. The expectation is that applying criteria to “live” data will result in better lender strings, higher fill rates and faster turnaround time. It works a bit like playlists in spotify, the criteria remain the same (soul, UK, female singer) but the data changes constantly, so your playlist or dynamic group is never the same.

# Training AI models

**FILM** – A group of 900+ libraries that supply visual materials (e.g., DVDs, VHS tapes) free of charge

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**LVIS** (Libraries Very Interested in Sharing) – A group of 2,400+ libraries committed to supplying free of charge

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**Express** – A group of 1,000+ libraries committed to fast digital delivery



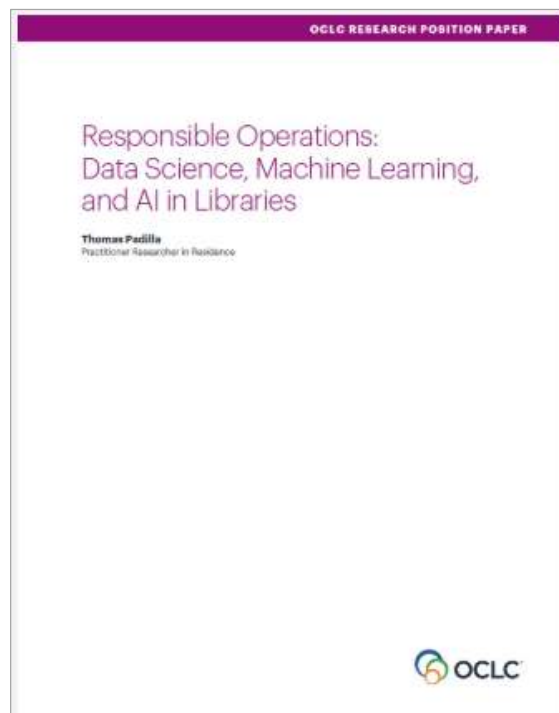
I've already talked groups, I've already mentioned the express group. Going up the list we have libraries very interested in sharing, commonly know as LVIS. And on the top we have the FILM group, that consists of libraries willing to share AV materials. In the good old days, we occasionally ran queries to determine which libraries could become part of a group. Queries had to be refined, because looking at libraries that supply for free, isn't always sufficient. Because this could mean that they would only supply for free in country, or only within reciprocal agreements. That means we had to manually filter through the data to make sure we picked the right library. We have added this querying and filtering to a data model, that we now use to train a AI bot to generate the data for us, saving us OCLC staff time and producing reliable, accurate groups.

# Responsible AI innovation

# Guiding AI with ethical responsibility

Padilla, Thomas. 2019. *Responsible Operations: Data Science, Machine Learning, and AI in Libraries*.  
Dublin, OH: OCLC Research.

[oclc.org/research/responsibleoperations](https://oclc.org/research/responsibleoperations)



## Slide 28

Ethical responsibility guides everything we do. We draw on frameworks like Thomas Padilla's 'Responsible Operations' to ensure AI in libraries is transparent, equitable, and trustworthy.

As we advance, using AI responsibly and transparently is at the core of our approach.

Back in 2019, OCLC Research released this report on AI, machine learning, and data science in libraries, sparking conversations around ethical considerations and responsible technology use.

This early work set a foundation for us. We recognized the need to balance AI's benefits with careful oversight, ensuring it remains a trusted, ethical resource.

Today, this

commitment guides every step as we incorporate AI into our services—maximizing its benefits while safeguarding library values.

At OCLC, we believe AI works best when it **augments** human expertise. Our systems are designed to support librarians, not replace them. Think of AI that makes suggestions, but where the librarian always makes the final decision.

- AI as a tool

- Librarians remain central

- Human oversight essential

Align the use of AI with library values

Base AI projects on clear principles that align with the mission of libraries.

Collaborate with academic institutions, technology companies, and peer organizations to share ideas and co-develop AI tools.

# What we're not doing with AI

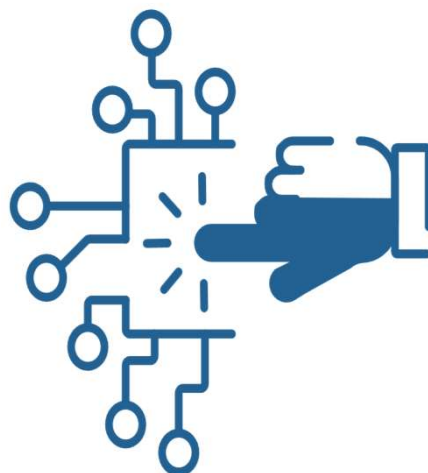
- OCLC does not hold, or process, the content of the publications it catalogs.
- None of the data in WorldCat has been used to train large language models like ChatGPT or Google Gemini.
- No use of personal data



These are the facts about what we are not doing with AI. As a library services organization, we understand the importance of copyright and the duty to ensure that proprietary content is only used within its agreed license terms. It is worth noting that OCLC does not have, or process, the content of the publications it catalogs. The data cooperatively managed by OCLC and member libraries is limited to cataloging data, and none of the data that resides within WorldCat has been used to train large language models like ChatGPT or Google Gemini. Also, we do not use personal data in any of our AI models and features. From the start, we recognized the need to balance AI's benefits with careful oversight, ensuring it remains a trusted, ethical resource. Today, this commitment guides every step as we incorporate AI into our services—maximizing its benefits while safeguarding library values.

## AI and sustainability

We focus on sustainable AI by reducing energy use, optimizing resources, and prioritizing genuine impact.



We are committed to creating software solutions that not only meet technical and user needs but also prioritize sustainability.

To minimize energy consumption and maximise efficiency, we use a small GPU (Graphics processing Unit) footprint for AI development. This approach is more cost-effective and environmentally friendly compared to running the same tasks in the public cloud, particularly when working with our large datasets.

Additionally, we employ technologies that allocate computing resources only when needed. This means we avoid maintaining infrastructure that might sit idle for most of the day, week, or even month. By eliminating excess capacity, we ensure that only the necessary computing power and storage are used, significantly reducing energy consumption.

This philosophy of efficiency and sustainability is central to how we approach AI development.

A recent study from Cornell University estimated that global demand for AI will consume 4.2 to 6.6 billion cubic meters of water by 2027, that's roughly half of the UK's total annual water usage. This underscores the importance of considering the environmental impact of AI development.

As responsible developers, we believe it's essential to critically evaluate the purpose behind introducing AI features. Are these innovations genuinely

improving workflows and delivering meaningful value to our customers, or are they being implemented simply to ride the wave of marketing hype, without fully accounting for their broader consequences?

Not every project requires resource-intensive technologies like deep learning or generative AI. Given that much of our work revolves around metadata—structured data—we often find that more efficient machine learning approaches are both sufficient and better aligned with sustainability goals.

# Questions?

## Unlimited assistance

- **Training:** Live, instructor-led sessions, plus recorded sessions and video tutorials ([oclc.org/training](https://oclc.org/training))

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- **Customer support:** Telephone and email ([oclc.org/support](https://oclc.org/support))

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- **Documentation:** Help pages and release notes ([oclc.org/help](https://oclc.org/help))

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- **Access to the OCLC Community Center:** Connect online, stay updated ([oclc.org/community](https://oclc.org/community))



And of course, we provide full training, documentation, and community support—so no library has to navigate these changes alone.

**Because  
what is  
known must  
be shared.®**

**Paul Jansen**

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Returning to Knowledge base coverage check—it's a small but powerful tool that ensures requests go only to relevant lenders, speeding copy request fulfillment significantly.