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## IFLA Document Delivery and Resource Sharing Section

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### Recommendations for Interlibrary Loan Response Codes

#### Summary

IFLA addressed challenges in interlibrary loan communication by creating a [standardized list of 28 response codes](#). These codes, assigned to reasons for non-supply, aim to overcome language barriers and promote international understanding in interlibrary loan systems. Insights from librarians worldwide, representing diverse regions, contributed to this effort. The plan is to translate the code list into various languages, beginning with the six IFLA languages, to facilitate effective communication and support international interlibrary loan processes. Contributions for translation into additional languages are encouraged to broaden the accessibility of this standardized approach.

**Key words:** interlibrary loan, document delivery, document supply, resource sharing, languages

#### The problem

Where interlibrary loan requests cannot be satisfied immediately by the supplying library, a response is required in order to inform the requesting library of the reason for non-supply.

Often, the responding library uses a set of standardised responses consisting of phrases or comments written in their own language. Many different sets of responses are in use around the world, and the same response may be written in many different ways, and of course in many different languages. The use of different languages or even alphabets can result in the requesting library not being able to understand the response given.



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It is important that the requesting library fully understands the reason for non-supply, and the use of coded replies not based on natural language is one way in which the language barrier can be overcome.

### The solution

The IFLA Office for Universal Availability of Publications (UAP) and International Lending was asked to create a comprehensive list of responses which might be given in response to interlibrary loan requests. A code, not reliant on natural language, would then be assigned to each response, in order that they are understood by all and used internationally. The use of a single list of codes will help to overcome the language barrier to effective interlending and document supply.

To create the comprehensive list, existing response codes were studied and compared, and the opinions of interlibrary loan librarians sought and analysed. There was a good response from colleagues worldwide with very useful and relevant information coming from the USA, UK, Estonia, Macedonia, Sweden, Denmark and Russia. The response codes used by the British Library Document Supply Centre and the ISO ILL Protocol were also consulted.

When the different response code lists were compared it became apparent that many of the responses were common to them all, although they may be expressed differently. Some codes used are unique especially if the library using them specialises in certain materials.

### Conclusion

The IFLA list of recommended response codes for interlibrary loans has 28 responses which will allow libraries to communicate their information in a precise and standard format. The plan now is to offer the list of response codes in many different languages, beginning with the five IFLA languages. We would be delighted to hear from anyone who is able to translate the list of coded responses into their own language, in order to extend the usefulness of the list, and to support effective international interlibrary loan.

Comments or feedback on the use of the IFLA List of Response Codes should be sent to [ifla@bl.uk](mailto:ifla@bl.uk).

### The Codes



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To view a complete list of the ILL Response Codes in another language, please click on one of the languages listed here. To obtain a translation of one of the numeric codes, please click on the code in the English table below.

### Translations

Czech translation of Recommendations for Interlibrary Loan Response Codes  
<https://ipk-en.nkp.cz/>

### *Under Construction*

French List

German List

Danish List

Group Code	Message
A. Not yet available	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• In Process, the item has been received but is not yet ready for use</li><li>• The item is on order, but has not yet been received</li><li>• Title owned but requested part/issue not yet received</li></ul>
B. Held but Temporarily not for supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The item requested is currently on loan or in use by a reader</li><li>• The item is at bindery</li><li>• The item is on course reserve and not available for loan</li></ul>
C. Held but not for supply	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The item has been lost from stock</li><li>• The item is non-circulating (we hold the item but it is not available for loan)</li><li>• The item is missing from stock, but may be available in the future.</li></ul>



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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The item can not be loaned because it is damaged and/or in poor physical condition</li><li>• Copyright regulations do not permit this item to be copied</li></ul>
D. Not held	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The title or item is not held</li><li>• The part required is not held</li><li>• Item not held, Name and address of a potential supplier to follow</li></ul>
E. Conditions of supply <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Financial</li><li>• Time</li><li>• Delivery</li><li>• Use</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• The cost of the ILL is greater than the maximum cost indicated on the request form. If this cost is acceptable, please reapply.</li><li>• Payment required before ILL request is processed</li><li>• Being processed for supply</li><li>• Preferred delivery time not possible</li><li>• Request does not include indication of copyright compliance</li><li>• Unable to send via the type of delivery method requested</li><li>• Client signature required</li><li>• The supplied item may only be used within the requesting library</li><li>• Supplied item only to be used under the supervision of a librarian and/or in the special collections department</li><li>• Supplied item not to be photocopied and/or reproduced</li></ul>

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F. Not found	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Unable to trace the item with the information quoted. Please check your reference</li><li>• No locations have been found</li></ul>
G. Others	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Other</li><li>• Library closed</li></ul>

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