

# **FLIN (FLORIDA LIBRARY INFORMATION NETWORK) AND ITS IMPLICATIONS FOR A MARINE SCIENCE LIBRARY**

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## **ABSTRACT**

One of the great barriers to library service is the "gold barrier", the cost of services. Traditionally, interlibrary loan has aided in meeting individual patron's needs while avoiding the purchase items of limited use to the community as a whole.

This paper describes the history and extent of the FLIN network. The protocols involved in interlibrary loan borrowing are explained.

Interlibrary loan statistics from the Library of the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Science (RSMAS), University of Miami, demonstrate the extent of the participation of this special library in FLIN. Since all loan services within the network are free, these statistics allow some conclusions to be drawn as to the financial implications of the network to the RSMAS Library budget.

## **THE NETWORK**

The Florida Library Information Network (FLIN) Manual of Policies, Protocols and Procedures describes FLIN as a state-wide cooperative network for interlibrary loan and resource sharing. FLIN was established in 1968 in order that all residents of Florida would have access to the information and materials of Florida's libraries through an evolving system of formal interlibrary cooperation services and activities. The State Library maintains responsibility for the coordination and administration of FLIN and serves as the network headquarters.

The FLIN system encompasses a wide range of library types. All public libraries may use the system. State agency and institution libraries which do not charge for services and sign a "Assurance of Compliance" of the Civil Rights Act of 1964 also are eligible for FLIN. Similarly, public and private schools and college libraries and some other special libraries which comply with the 1964 Civil Rights Act and sign the "Assurance of Compliance" form with the State Library may also take part in FLIN. It is important, however, to distinguish between FLIN users and

FLIN participants. FLIN participants are libraries that both lend and borrow through the network. FLIN users borrow through the system, but do not lend.

In 1989-90 the total of FLIN participating libraries reached ninety-four. These FLIN participants are divided by types. This division forms the backbone structure of the network and provides the basis of the system protocols. As mentioned, the State Library of Florida is the headquarters and switching center. Five large public libraries serve as regional resource centers. These are: Broward County Division of Libraries (FBR), Jacksonville Public Library System (JPL), Miami-Dade Public Library System (DZM), Orange County Library District (ORL) and Tampa-Hillsborough Public Library System (TNH).

The State University System (SUS) libraries and one private university provide a vital part of FLIN. These are subdivided into two types. The FLIN ARL Libraries consist of Florida State University (FSU), University of Florida (UF), and the University of Miami (UM). Non-ARL SUS libraries are: Florida A & M University (FAMU), Florida Atlantic University (FAU), Florida International University (FIU), University of Central Florida (UCF), University of North Florida (UNF), University of South Florida (USF), and the University of West Florida (UWF).

The remaining types of FLIN members consist of public Libraries, non-SUS academic and community college libraries, and special libraries. Some smaller libraries participate indirectly in FLIN through four large library consortia: CFLC (Central Florida Library Consortium), PLAN (Panhandle Library Access Network SEFLIN (Southeast Florida Library Information Network) and TBLC (Tampa Bay Library Consortium). The locations of these consortia, and the SUS libraries are shown in Figure 1.

## POLICIES

Policies of FLIN are consistent with those of many networks. Participating libraries agree to supply loans and photocopies without cost. The borrowing library assumes responsibility for lost or damaged materials. Restrictions of the loaning libraries such as "library use only" must be honored. Borrowers must return materials in a timely manner. FLIN libraries also agree not to borrow material currently on best seller lists or to use interlibrary loans to fill heavy local demand for popular titles. Libraries must not employ FLIN requests to replace periodical subscriptions or to borrow a book that the requesting library owns but will not circulate.

The State Library may refer requests to other libraries out of the network if FLIN participating libraries cannot fill them. This is done, however, only in the case of public, college or academic libraries and specified special libraries. The borrowing library assumes any costs involved. Elementary and secondary school libraries may submit requests directly to the State Library which will try to fill them

or will refer them to regional resource centers. State institution libraries direct requests to the State Library which supplies them, or sends them to one of the five regional resource centers or to the Strozier Library at Florida State University. FSU Library supports the State Library in completing these types of FLIN requests because it receives a special LSCA Title III grant for this purpose.

FLIN participants using OCLC agree to maintain their bibliographic databases in OCLC and to permit Florida's Division of Library and Information Services to include these records in the state's off-line products. These include COMCAT, a microfiche union list of holdings of FLIN participating libraries, and FULS, the Florida Union List of Serials. Recently, Florida State has provided millions of dollars to form LUIS, an automated union catalog of the nine state university libraries based on the NOTIS software. All of these tools equip FLIN users with the means to verify and locate needed materials.

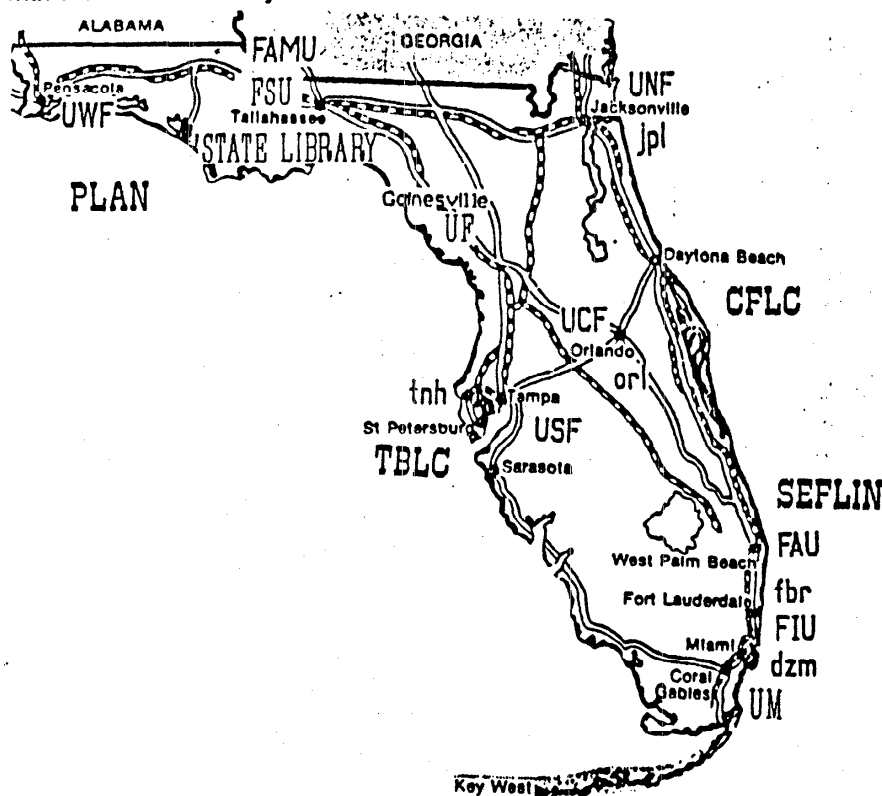


Figure 1. The State of Florida showing the locations of the State Library, SUS and ARL libraries along with the regional resources centers and the core constoria. Explanations for the abbreviations are found in the text.

Requests from FLIN libraries are channelled in the network using strict protocols. A title found in OCLC may have locations for libraries of different types. When this happens the order of the lender request follows a tier sequence depending on the type of library. For example, the protocol sequence for a SUS and ARL library appears as in Figure 2. The first choice would be Non-ARL SUS libraries followed by ARL libraries, the State Library, regional resource centers, public library systems, non-ARL academics and special libraries. Similarly, the protocols for community college libraries would read: community college libraries, the State Library, regional resource centers, public library systems, non-ARL academics, ARL libraries, and special libraries (Figure 3). FLIN public libraries follow the requesting order given in Figure 4: the State Library, regional resource centers, public library systems, Non-ARL academics, ARL libraries, and special libraries. Special libraries use the tier sequence: special libraries, the State Library, regional resource centers, public library systems, Non-ARL academics, and ARL libraries (Figure 5).

<b>PROTOCOLS FOR FLIN SUS &amp; ARL LIBRARIES</b>
<p style="text-align: center;">           NON-ARL SUS            ARL            STATE            REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS            PUBLIC LIBRARY CENTERS            NON-ARL ACADEMICS            SPECIAL         </p>

Figure 2: The protocols for FLIN SUS and ARL libraries.

<b>PROTOCOLS FOR FLIN COMMUNITY COLLEGE LIBRARIES</b>
<p style="text-align: center;">           COMMUNITY COLLEGE            STATE            REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS            PUBLIC LIBRARY CENTERS            NON-ARL ACADEMICS            ARL            SPECIAL         </p>

Figure 3: The protocols for community college libraries.

<b>PROTOCOLS FOR FLIN PUBLIC LIBRARIES</b>
STATE REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS PUBLIC LIBRARY CENTERS NON-ARL ACADEMICS ARL SPECIAL

Figure 4: The protocols for FLIN public libraries.

<b>PROTOCOLS FOR FLIN SPECIAL LIBRARIES</b>
SPECIAL STATE REGIONAL RESOURCE CENTERS PUBLIC LIBRARY CENTERS NON-ARL ACADEMICS ARL

Figure 5: The protocols for FLIN special libraries.

The use of these protocols result from the fact that libraries of the same type ask members of their peer group first for loans. Each month FLIN participating libraries must consult their statistics to adjust their within-tier borrowing sequence so no one library is overburdened and the workload is evenly distributed. The reader will notice that there is no geographical component to these protocols. The FLIN manual does stipulate, however, that local reciprocal agreements for resource sharing take precedence over FLIN protocols. Thus, the Rosenstiel School of Marine and Atmospheric Sciences (RSMAS) Library would ask local SEFLIN members for loans before invoking the FLIN protocols.

#### **FLIN AND A MARINE SCIENCE LIBRARY**

The question remains: What does FLIN mean to a marine science library? Without a doubt, the network is a large one. In the year July 1989 to June 1990, some 148,914 items were supplied through FLIN. Figure 6 describes the percent participation by the different types of libraries. The State Library of Florida provided 23.7% of the loans. 9.8% came from Florida State University under their LSCA Title III grant as well as their participation through OCLC. The other SUS

libraries contributed 24.0%. Regional resource centers gave 25.7% of items loaned in the network. Lesser percentages were provided by private academics (8.7%), community colleges (2.4%), public libraries (4.3%) and special libraries (1.4%). Figure 7 demonstrates that among the Special Libraries, RSMAS ranked third in its supplying of loans behind the University of Florida Health Center Library and the Charles A. Dana [Law] Library of Stetson University. All of the above figures are provided by Mr. Bob Gorin in the FLIN Statistical Report of July 1989 - June 1990.

### FLIN SYSTEM TOTALS ITEMS SUPPLIED JULY 1989 - JUNE 1990

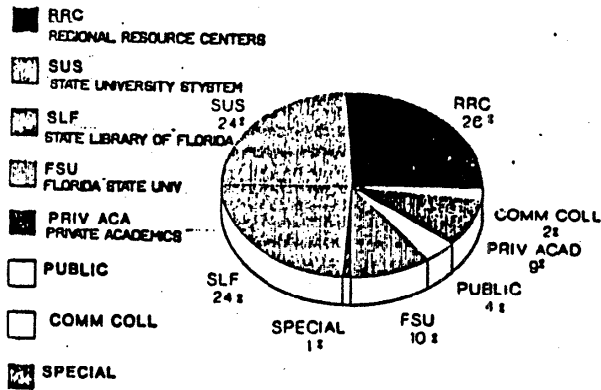


Figure 6. The percentage of loans supplied by different types of FLIN libraries supplied from July 1989 to June 1990 (modified from Gore 1990).

### FLIN LENDING STATISTICS SPECIAL LIBRARIES

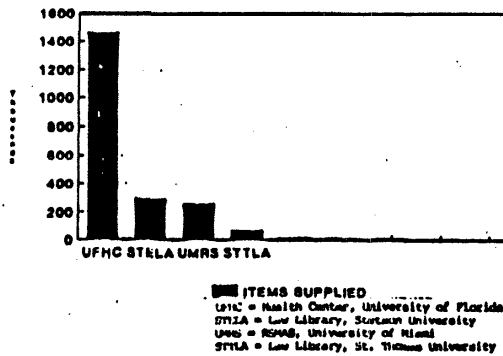


Figure 7. The FLIN lending statistics for special libraries supplied from July 1989 to June 1990 (modified from Gore 1990).

To understand what FLIN means to the RSMAS Library, a brief background of the library's interlibrary loan needs is necessary. In 1989-90, 58% of its requests were provided through intralibrary loan with the University of Miami Libraries; Richter Library in Coral Gables and Calder Memorial Library at the Medical School Campus. In interlibrary loaning, RSMAS provides about as many items as it borrows. In 1988-89, 742 items were loaned and 648 borrowed. Similarly, in 1989-90, 845 items were loaned and 845 borrowed.

An examination of the borrowing statistics for RSMAS over the past two years indicates that FLIN has been a great boon to the library. In 1988-89, FLIN libraries filled 55% of the interlibrary loans requested by RSMAS. Similarly, in 1989-90, 54% of interlibrary borrowing was supplied through FLIN. Although a dollar figure on this cannot be calculated, obviously having over 50% of interlibrary loans provided free must have an enormous budgetary impact. FLIN membership has not proven a burden to RSMAS. Over 1988-89, 35% of the items loaned by RSMAS were sent to FLIN libraries and in 1989-90, this figure amounted to 28%.

Another question that this study sought to investigate was the types of libraries to which RSMAS was lending. Although FLIN classes RSMAS as a special library, as one of the University of Miami Libraries, it maintains close ties with the SUS library system. The type of materials needed are primarily for academic research and teaching. Therefore, the RSMAS Library follows the protocols for FLIN SUS and ARL Libraries. The type of libraries to which RSMAS lends reflects the proportions expected from the FLIN protocols described in Figure 2. Over a one year period, 63% of the materials loaned through FLIN were sent to SUS libraries. Some 23% were loaned to other academics. Public libraries received 9% of the loans and 5% were requested by the State Library for distribution.

## CONCLUSIONS

Membership in FLIN has proven to be a benefit to the RSMAS Library. The system has provided the library with over 50% of its interlibrary loan needs. Loans supplied by FLIN libraries are provided free, thus aiding RSMAS in holding down costs and overcoming the "gold barrier". RSMAS also makes contributions to FLIN by providing materials, particularly to those types of libraries from which it borrows, SUS and other academics.

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A panel discussion on the interlibrary loan and document delivery followed the presentation of this paper. Panel participants were:

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