

United by *RapidILL*



**Sharing Content
and Building
Community in
UK Libraries**





Speaker: Kip A. Darling

RapidILL Working Group Coordinator



Formed in January 2024 and made up of volunteers passionate about enhancing the product to meet user needs, the IGeLU RapidILL Working Group serves as a vital link between the user community and Clarivate.

Inter-Library Loans Coordinator



BIRMINGHAM CITY
University

Leading a small, central Inter-Library Loans team, I have 8 years' hands on experience running an effective interlending service. We use RapidILL integrated with Alma Resource Sharing.

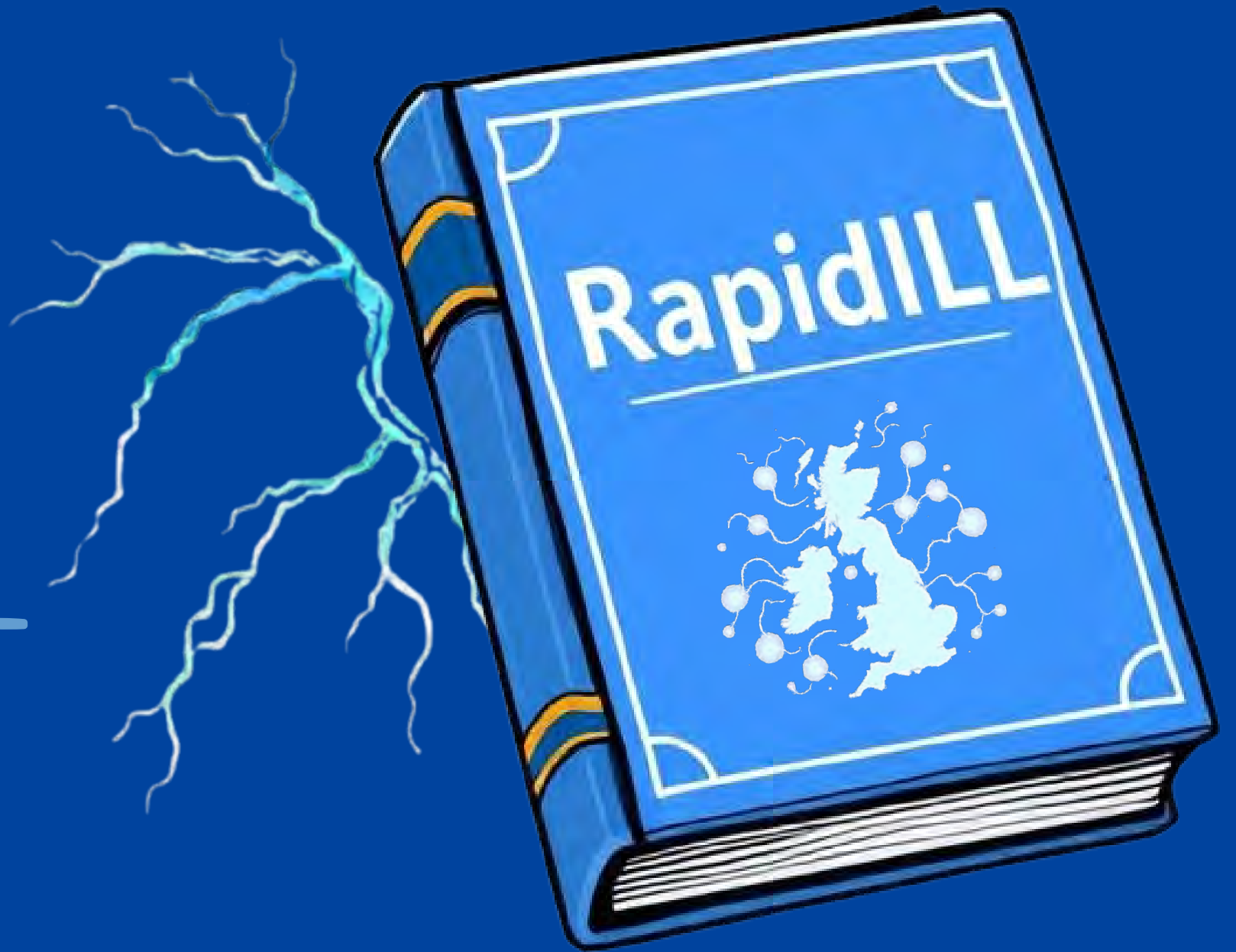
About RapidILL

- Created by Colorado State University following a disastrous flood affecting their main library facility in 1997.
- Originally developed by ILL staff as a speedy document supply solution.
- Consists of groups of libraries (pods) subscribed to P2P sharing without additional transactional fees.
- Features include automatic processing, routing, and load-leveiling to ensure fast, efficient service.
- Acquired in 2019. Now part of the Clarivate suite of products.



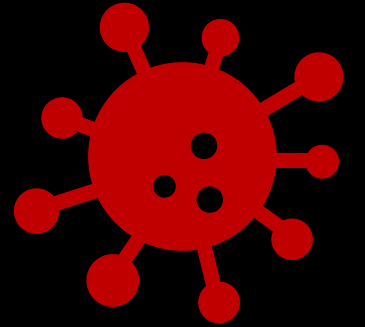
The UK RapidILL Story

Catastrophe to
Community from the
Pandemic to the
Present...



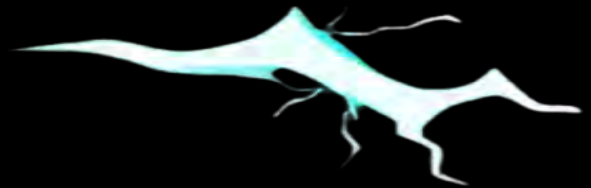


MARCH 2020

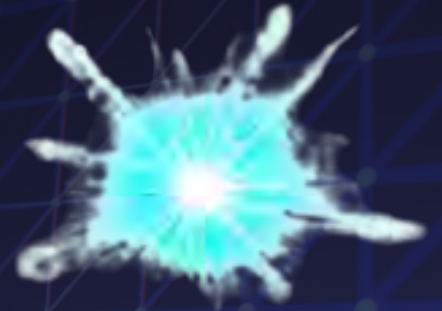


**COVID-19 Pandemic hits.
Libraries close.
ILL services face extinction.**

...Or do they?



APRIL 2020: RapidILL to the Rescue



COVID-19 Pod launches - FREE to all:
"Powerful alone. Better together."

"With many libraries closed and physical resources no longer accessible, electronic alternatives have become even more important. The RapidILL community of libraries has stepped up to help their colleagues by making their electronic resources more widely and quickly available."



"We are members of the RapidILL community, and they've just set up a free Pod open to non-RapidILL members." - **Helen Hall, University of Liverpool**



Many UK Libraries take up the trial. The spark becomes a flame.

OCT 2020 RLUK RapidILL Webinar



RapidILL at Liverpool University: 9-Month Review

Liverpool's Phil Sykes and Helen Hall demonstrate:

- System functionality and practical use
- Service improvements: faster delivery and increased efficiency
- Potential for UK Research Libraries to reduce dependency on expensive publisher deals
- Event Link: <https://www.rluk.ac.uk/event/rapidill-webinar/>

University of Liverpool | Imperial College London | University of St Andrews
University of Manchester | University College London



2021 Leading the pack: top Universities join

The UK RapidILL network awakens

"It really is fast and has helped us immensely" - **Claire Hordern, Manchester**

"The adoption of RapidILL has been transformative... time dropped to just over 12 hours" - **Dr. Rachel Schulkins, Liverpool**

"RapidILL has revolutionized our ability to supply materials... rapidly delivering materials required by our users" - **Peter Dennison, UCL**

2021: Recognising a Pioneer

Helen Hall wins NAG Award for Excellence

First UK institution to launch RapidILL

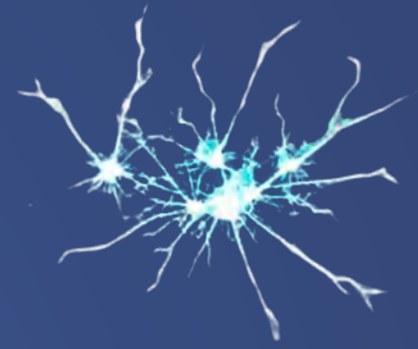
"I have always loved the sense of goodwill in Interlibrary Loan with ILL colleagues going the extra mile to help each other out... The UK Pod goes from strength to strength, and I am thrilled that my colleagues are finding RapidILL as revolutionary as we do at Liverpool."

- 50% cost reduction at Liverpool
- UK Pod creation enables national sharing
- Helen's Webinar 'tour' inspires sector transformation

"Her work allowed the establishment of a new invigorated spirit of collaboration... making it possible to substantially mitigate the effect of a journal Big Deal cancellation"



2021: From Survival to Strategy



Cambridge University inspired by University of Liverpool's 'Plan B' during Elsevier Negotiations...



"We are implementing RapidILL, a document delivery service that enables quick turnaround times... The negotiations therefore offer the opportunity to bring our document delivery services up to date for this and any future negotiations." - **Michael Williams, Head of Collection Development, Cambridge**

RapidILL becomes foundation for:

Enhanced access solutions | Seamless user experience | Future-ready document delivery

DECEMBER 2021: RapidILL in Koha



University of Hertfordshire Case Study *David Peacock, Knowledge & Technology Manager presents on:*

Performance Metrics:

- 12-hour average turnaround time
- 80% of requests via RapidILL
- 95% fulfilment rate

Key Innovation: Custom Koha integration enabling unmediated workflow with real-time verification

"It's a lot easier and our users have placed a lot more interlibrary loans with us"

- **Watch the full presentation:**

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XvBSgdX4_2o

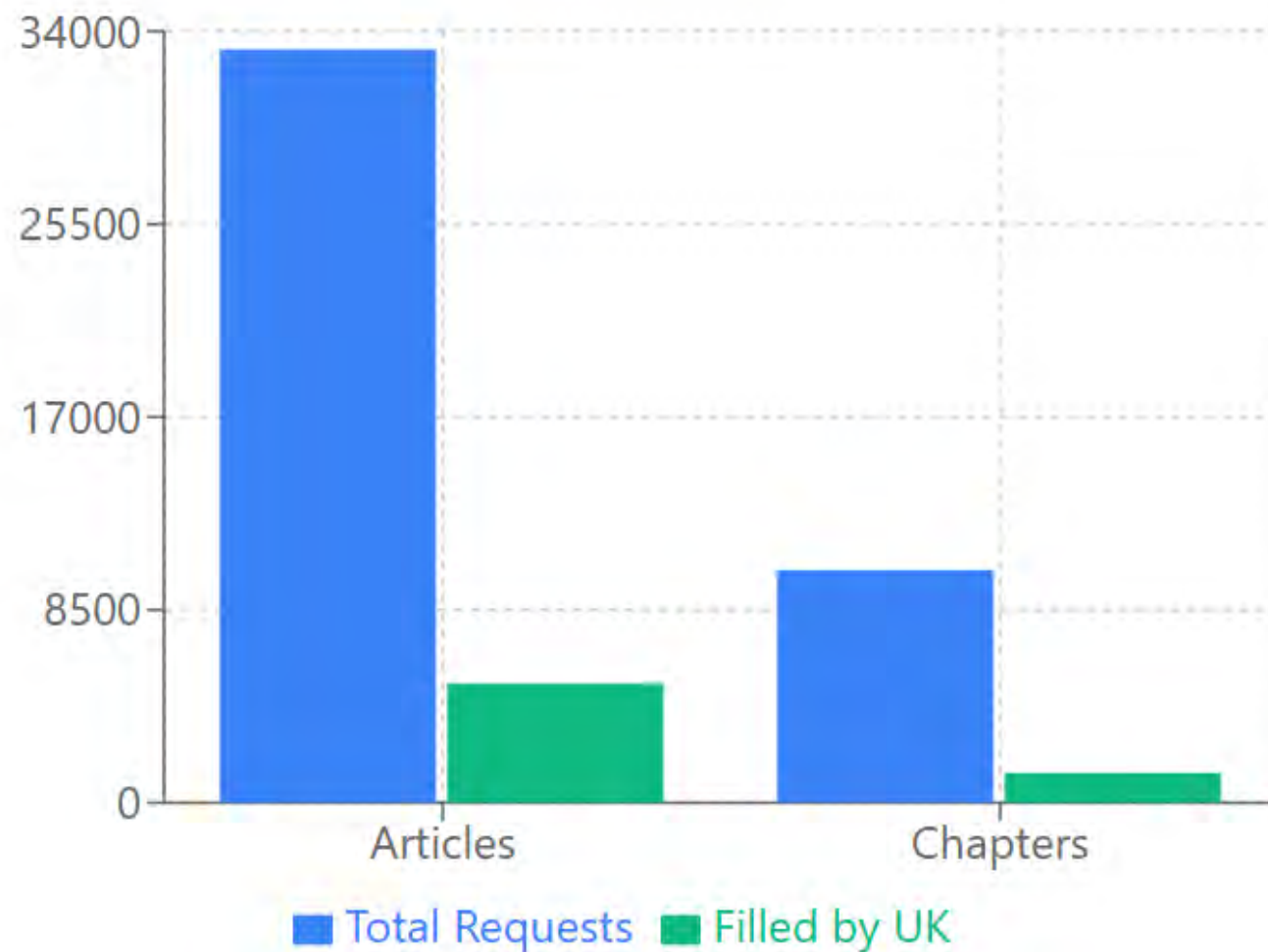
2021: UK RapidILL Stats

Total Requests
43,458

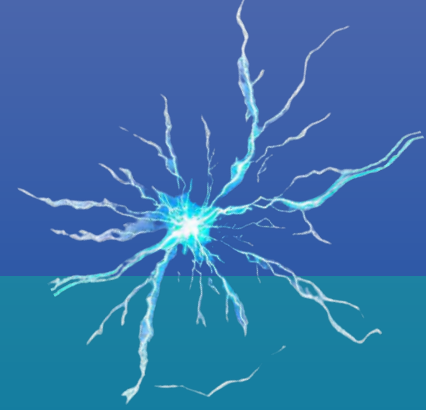
Filled by UK
6,574

15.1%

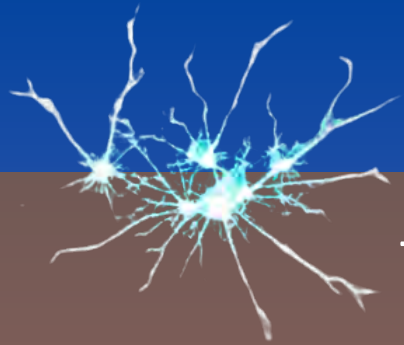
Articles vs Chapters Breakdown



2022: VALIDATION & POWER



NHS England publishes a market review and options appraisal for resource sharing with RapidILL at the top of the list for document supply solutions.



RapidILL as resilient infrastructure

The **N8 Consortium** of research-intensive Northern universities produces a strategy case study demonstrating the power of RapidILL in combination with UNSUB to fight back against journal publisher price hikes.



2022: Rethinking Document Supply at Cardiff

Systems Librarian Bronwen Blatchford, Cardiff University presents on RapidILL Implementation Benefits:

- Self-ownership verified by RapidILL (not ILL staff)
- Direct-to-borrower delivery enables out-of-hours fulfillment
- Staff time freed up for complex requests

Performance Improvements (2021 vs 2022):

- Average supply time: **4.97 days → 2.54 days** (49% faster)
- RapidILL requests: **2.21 days average** (86.4% of all digital requests)

+ Alma integration configuration guidance generously shared!

Full presentation: <https://igelu.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/10/WHELF-peer-to-peer-interlending-and-implementing-RapidILL.pdf>





2022: Continuous Community Sharing

Forum for Interlending: Interlend 2022

RapidILL Workflows

(Carl Jones, **University of Edinburgh**)

- Carl shares his team's experience joining RapidILL as part of the N8+ test group
- Demonstrates their integrated Alma workflow (with plans to adopt a fully automated workflow)
- Even without full automation, a turnaround time of 13.5 hours (average) is achieved
- Fulfilment jumps from 52.6% pre-RapidILL to 93% with RapidILL!

RapidILL and WorldShare

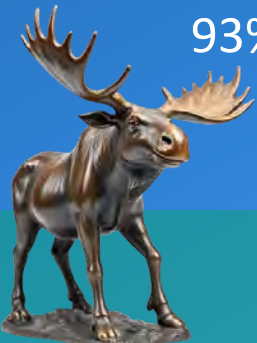
(Alison Dyer, **University of East Anglia**)

- UEA upgrades WorldShare (OCLC) by adding RapidILL to achieve "A faster, more efficient service with less barriers for users"
- Implementing RapidILL helps safeguard against rising journal costs.
- End to end automation provides 24/7 access for library users
- Alison notes the staff time costs saved.

"RapidILL has already achieved a lot to bring ILL communities together and, hopefully, we can build on that in the future.."

More info available at FIL

forumforinterlending.org.uk



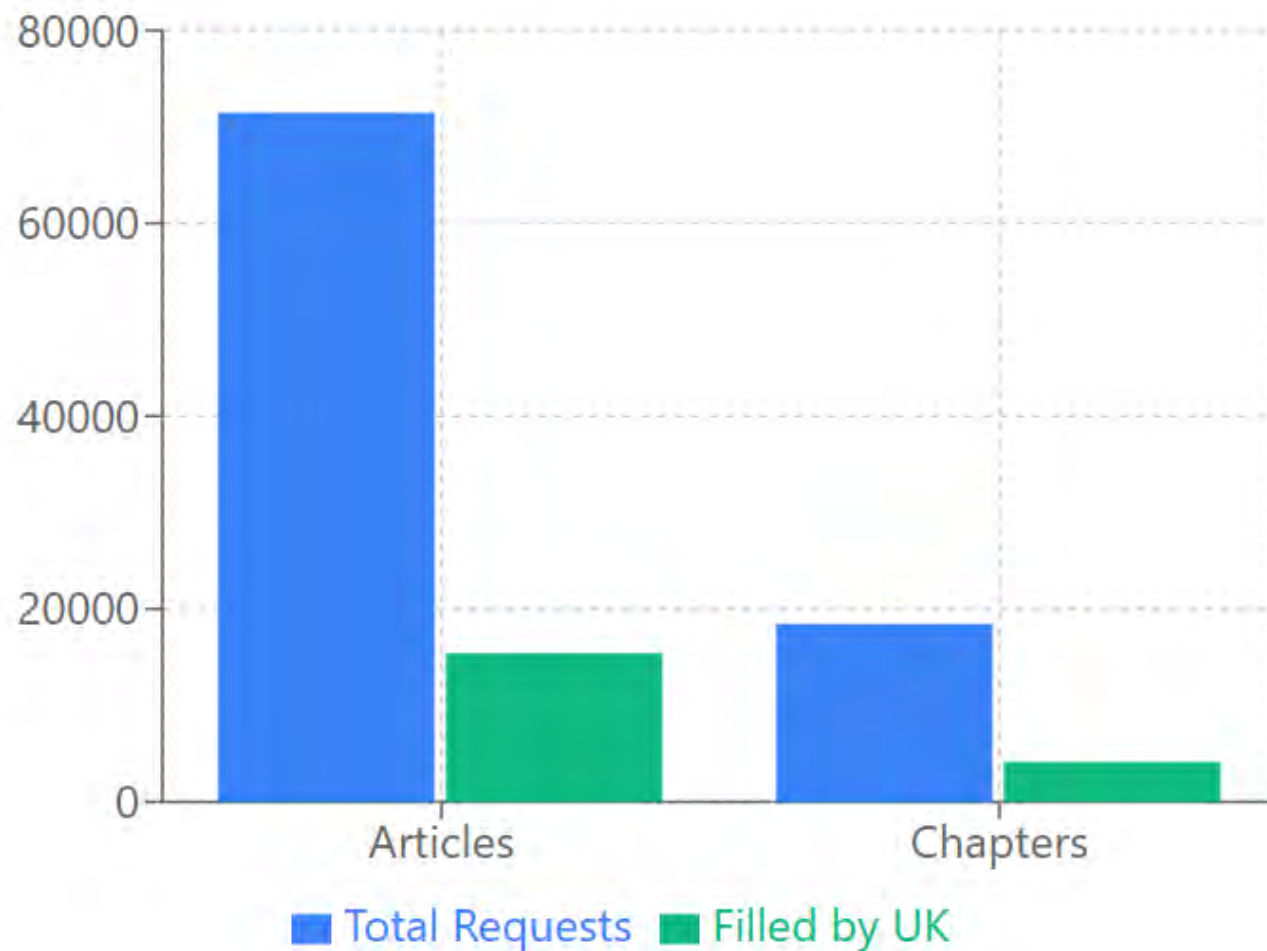
2022: UK RapidILL Stats

Total Requests
89,927

Filled by UK
19,560

21.8%

Articles vs Chapters Breakdown



2023: Lightning Strikes

RapidILL UK Community News Stories

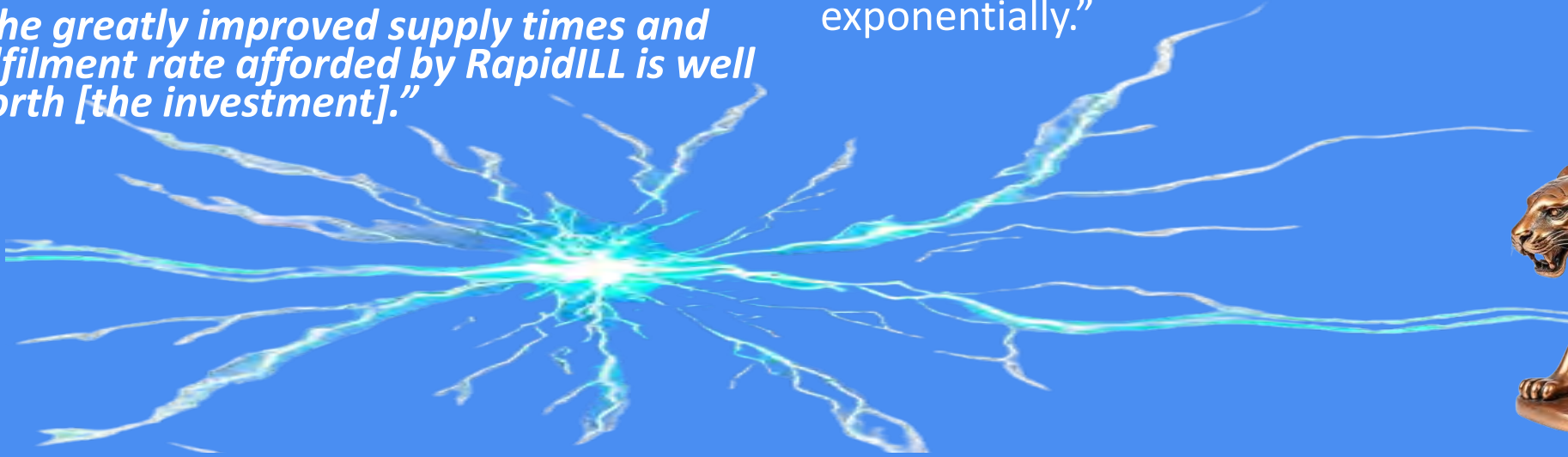
“April 15, 2023: University of Huddersfield increase User Satisfaction with lightning-fast ILL turnaround times”

“RapidILL has decreased our turnaround time from a matter of days to a matter of hours. Prior to this, our average turnaround time for articles was somewhere between 2-5 days, now according to our statistics reports, they are coming in around 9 hours. That’s absolutely brilliant from our point of view.”

“The greatly improved supply times and fulfilment rate afforded by RapidILL is well worth [the investment].”

“July 5, 2023: Birmingham City University cuts 85 percent of annual resource sharing expenses and invests the savings back into the collection.”

“RapidILL has been a real game changer for Birmingham City University’s Library & Learning Resources department, helping us to “Go Go Go” and meet our customers’ Inter-Library loan needs while saving money, time, and increasing our network exponentially.”



Community Reflections



“One of the things that struck me when we went through our own RapidILL implementation at BCU back in 2021 was how helpful colleagues from already established libraries were when I had queries. Special thanks must go to Helen Hall (University of Liverpool) and Helen Faulds (University of St Andrews) who patiently answered my questions, and I'll never forget those kind and generous moments of information sharing as we rushed to set up our system for the go live date. Alongside the support from the Clarivate team, the help from our community was indispensable.”
– Kip A. Darling, Birmingham City University

“We don't really know where we'd be without Rapid! And I definitely echo your comments on the support we've had from UK libraries already using Rapid during our setup.”
– Kenny Whyte, University of York



2023: Lightning Strikes Twice

More RapidILL UK Community News Stories

July 7 2023: The University of East Anglia Library reduces monthly interlending fees

We asked Alli Carroll, Electronic Services Manager at the University of East Anglia (UEA), in Norwich, England, what helped the library manage the resource sharing budget better. She shares:

“With one annual subscription fee, rather than having to reconcile individual transaction payments, RapidILL helps us manage our interlending budget more easily as well as saving staff time. “



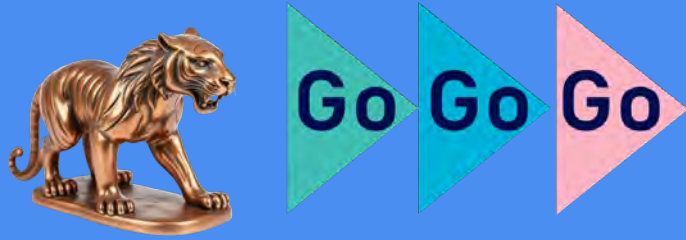
July 21 2023: Manchester Metropolitan University unlocks unlimited borrowing capacity

“Will Grady, Collection Services Librarian at MMU ... reveals how the library cut its turnaround time by 70% while allowing unlimited borrowing.

“RapidILL not only optimises staff time through its automated workflow, which speeds up how we process new borrower requests, but our users can now expect to receive the majority of their urgent research articles and chapters in 24 hours or less.”



2023: Community Sharing Continues



How RapidILL activated a virtuous cycle at **Birmingham City University**, UKI resource sharing meeting presentation, Sep 20, 2023.

“RapidILL helps you:

▶ **Go Farther** ▶ **Go Faster** ▶ **Go Cheaper**
than ever before”

– Kip A. Darling, ILL Coordinator

“I’m impressed by how seamlessly RapidILL integrates with Alma, making it a very low maintenance but high-value solution.”

– Laura Percival, Systems, Access & Discovery Team Leader

Our Road to RapidILL – Progress and Potholes - September 26, 2023 (**London School of Economics**, Free NAG Event)

“The Acquisitions team at **LSE** implemented RapidILL in 2020, as part of a larger project to combine interlending and purchase requests into one service. Jo Adams-Lingwood describes the process of setting up RapidILL... highlighting how to make the most of the product and how it complements other services and processes, problems encountered along the way, and reflecting on the impact and value it represents, three years down the line.”

– Jo Adams-Lingwood, Assistant Librarian for Acquisitions, London School of Economics

<https://nag.org.uk/event/road/>



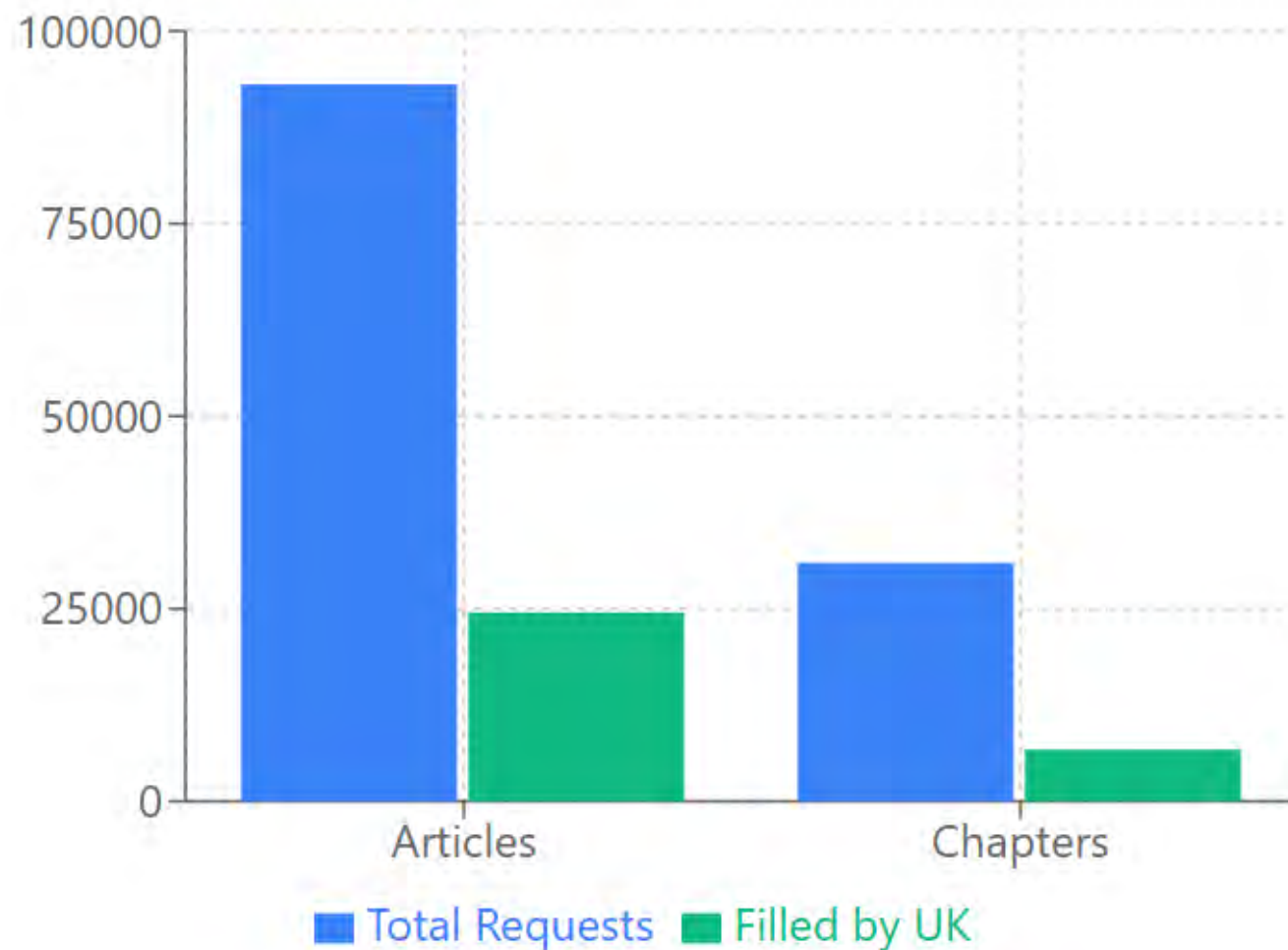
2023: UK RapidILL Stats

Total Requests
124,042

Filled by UK
31,222

25.2%

Articles vs Chapters Breakdown





2024: Further thoughts from FIL

Sep 4, 2024

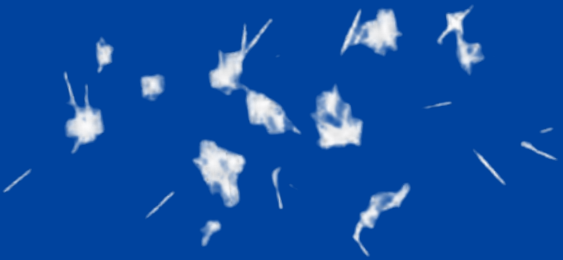
One Form to Rule Them All... Update

*“We started getting compliments (particularly from lecturers) about how simple and fast the new service was. **Part of this will be because we automated RapidILL, so article requests with sufficient information would be shunted into RapidILL without any ILL staff intervention and supplied direct to the user at any time of the day or night. For these requests we effectively have a 24/7 service, rather than 9-5pm, Monday-Friday.** Cutting out the time the requests languished in the triage team email will have helped dramatically.”*

- Judith Walton, Durham University



Community Reflections



“I first came across RapidILL when we were in COVID lockdown and I got permission from our senior managers team to trial RapidILL and request items through their COVID pod. I’m hugely grateful to all the international libraries that supplied scans to us that summer, while the UK was in chaos.

RapidILL is supplying a large proportion of our article and chapter requests and I’m confident that it will be doing so for years to come ... as our first port of call for article supply.

Joining RapidILL showed us that reciprocal lending can work and is nothing to be afraid of... Our students appreciate the speed of supply of items via RapidILL and once we moved to Alma (where RapidILL could be integrated and supply of documents automated) then it has streamlined the process even further and made article supply to other libraries a doddle.”

- Judith Walton, Durham University

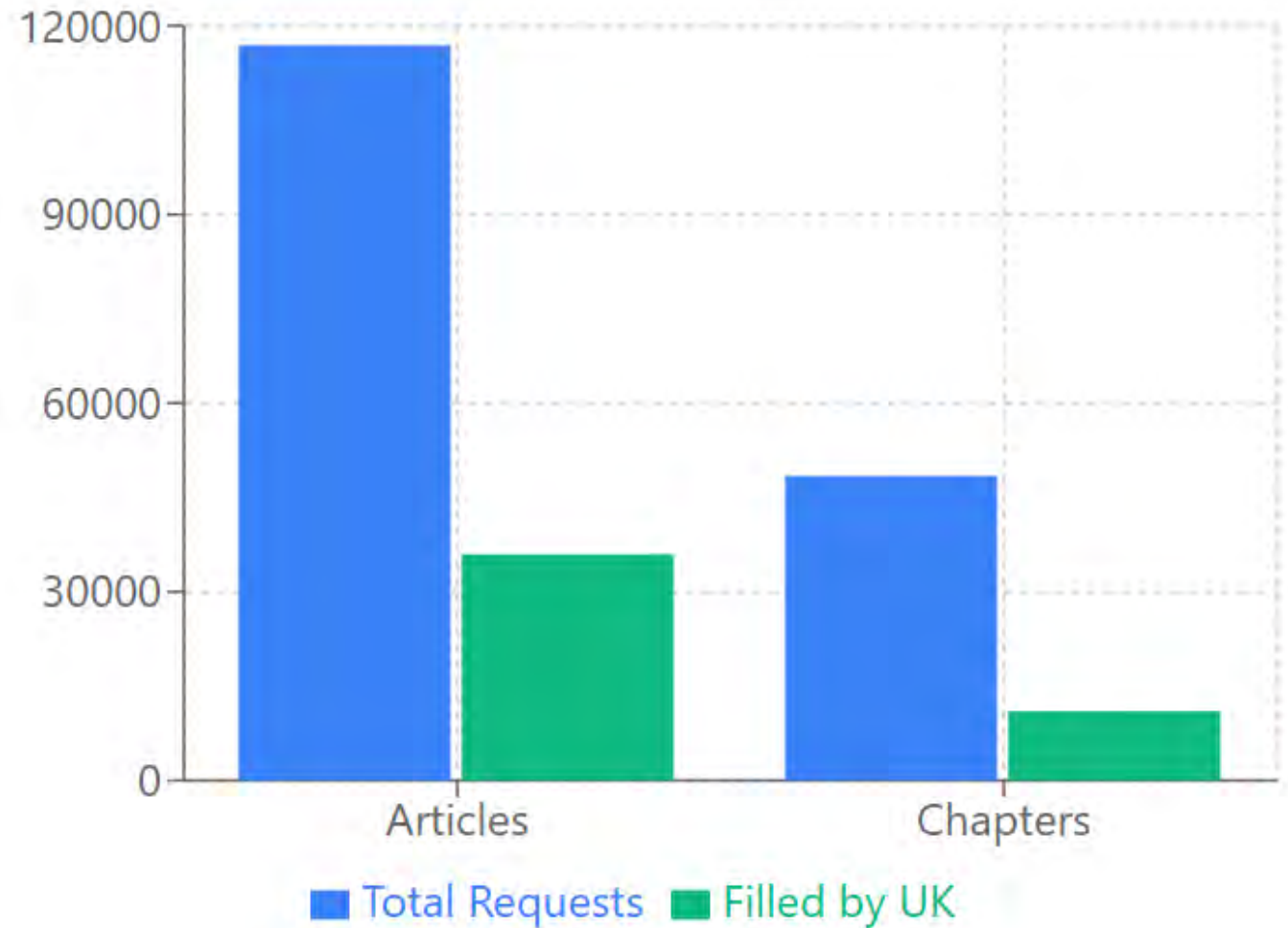
2024: UK RapidILL Stats

Total Requests
165,296

Filled by UK
46,954

28.4%

Articles vs Chapters Breakdown



2025: EPUG UKI Conference Sharing

University of Leeds case study

Beth Parry, Senior Operations Manager presents on WHELF+ and RapidILL

Key Innovation: Tiered Workflow Integration

- WHELF+ Consortium prioritized for books and available content
- **RapidILL** embedded for articles/chapters beyond WHELF+ portfolio
- Mediated ILL for specialized requests (OCLC Shares, UK libraries, British Library, IFLA)

RapidILL handles 28% of total ILL volume at Leeds
(breakdown by type of request not known)

- Demonstrates successful complement to regional consortia, with strategic optimization: each service tier handles appropriate content types.
- Smart workflow design leverages strengths of both regional and international networks

Watch the full presentation: [starts 23:08]
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oTwUwWJ51Zs>



Flashback...

2021-2024

422,723

Total UK RapidILL Borrowing requests

“Around 75% of UK borrowing requests are filled by lenders outside of the UK”

- **Mike Richins** | Director, Product Management

104,310

Filled by UK

24.7%



Flashback...

2021-2024

Articles

314,624
Total requests

81,129
Filled by UK

25.8%

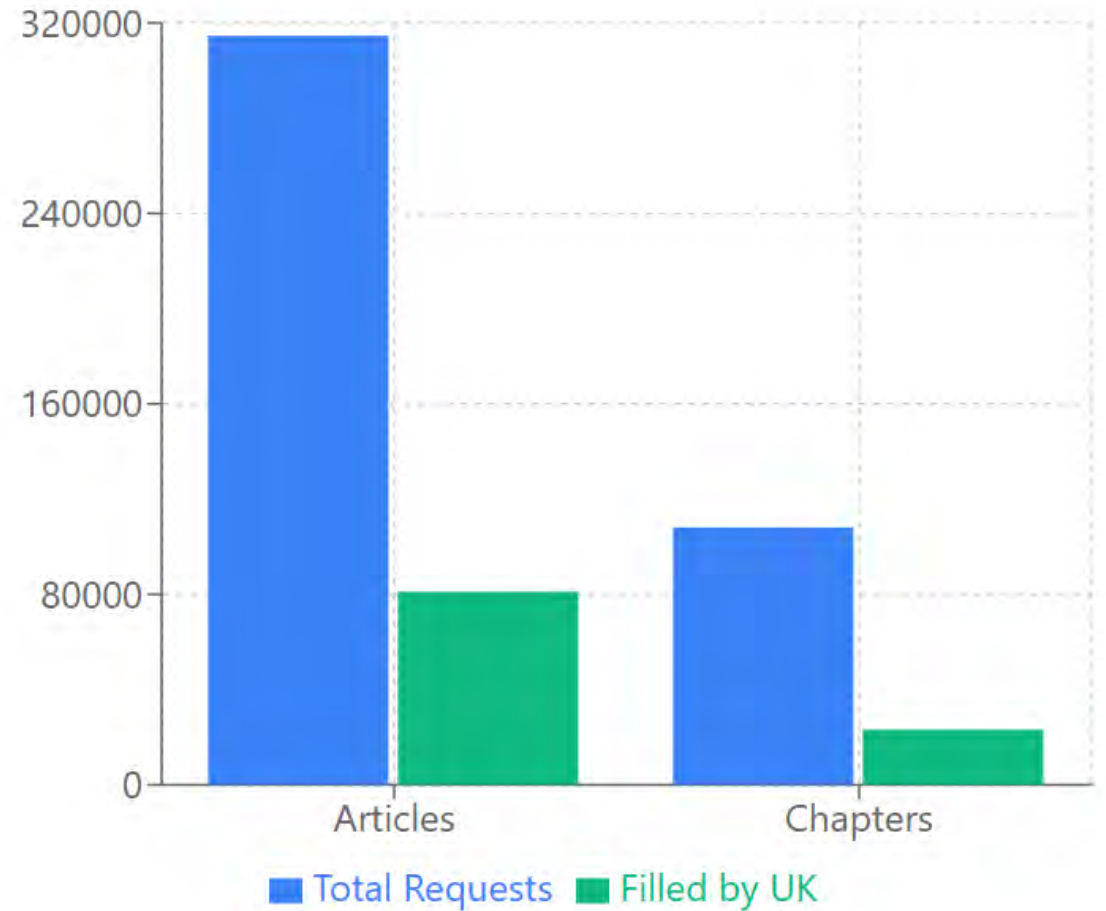
Chapters

108,099
Total requests

23,181
Filled by UK

21.4%

Articles vs Chapters: Total Requests vs UK Filled



Community Reflections

"At Glasgow Caledonian University (we) benefited hugely from the generosity of colleagues. In particular, I'd like to thank Helen Hall at Liverpool — her insights made a real difference.

I'd also like to mention Bronwen Blatchford at Cardiff, whose direct and honest advice was hugely appreciated and helped us navigate key decisions with clarity and confidence.

Resource sharing in academic libraries seems to be one of those rare areas where we're genuinely great at sharing our homework. There's an openness that's really special — colleagues willing to lift the lid on their workflows, offer advice, and help troubleshoot, even while juggling their own busy schedules."

- Roana Mourad, Glasgow Caledonian University



2025: What comes next for *RapidILL*?



“The big project we have coming up is “Defining Work Week permanently””

- The goal here is to allow libraries to better define when they receive most of their lending requests.
- This will reduce the time requests are pending at lenders waiting for fulfilment leading to faster turnaround times.
- The IGeLU RapidILL Working Group has helped with information/scoping of this functionality and will be involved with design review as we move forward.”

- **Mike Richins** | Director, Product Management

Alma Analytics for RapidILL Users

Upcoming webinar - 26 June 2025



New RapidILL Analytics Dashboard & Reports

- A comprehensive analytics dashboard and report suite, developed with community input, launches in July 2025. These customizable reports work independently or alongside existing Resource Sharing analytics.

Content:

- Dashboard overview and new report features
- Institution-specific customization options
- Creating additional RapidILL-focused reports

Presenters:

Yoel Kortick (Clarivate) & Dr. Lynne Porat (University of Haifa, IGeLU RapidILL Working Group)

Alma 2025 Roadmap Webinar Series | Link: <https://shorturl.at/Vlfzd>

RapidILL | Rapido CERV Cycle 2025

The 2025 CERV (Community Enhancement Request Voting) cycle gives you the opportunity to directly influence the future development of RapidILL.

2 June -3 July 2025 (*the election closes at midnight, so effectively 2 July*)

Primary Voting Round – Your chance to support the enhancements that will most improve your daily workflow and user experience

✓ **Voting is now open**

- Your institution's IGeLU representative received an email from ElectionBuddy Elections. The ballot link is in that email. If the email has not been received or you are uncertain about who is designated as your institution's representative, please contact Elections Ex Libris Users at elections@exlibrisusers.org



IGeLU 2025: Siena, Italy



Conference Theme: Celebrating 20 years of community

The Conference will run from Monday to Wednesday, 15 to 17 September 2025, including the IGeLU RapidILL Working Group Open meeting. Developers Day and the Clarivate Knowledge Day sessions will be held on 18 September 2025.

Thanks for listening

Any Questions?

Contact me:

DarlingKip@gmail.com

[igelu.org/
rapidill-working-group/](http://igelu.org/rapidill-working-group/)

