

Elements for Cross-Border Resource Sharing:

SCUT ILL Stories with USA and Italy

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**Abstract**

**Purpose**—By reviewing two international resource sharing cases among Chinese, American and Italian libraries, this paper aims to seek the elements of barriers and success on cross-border resource sharing and to explore the paths to achieve international resource sharing development.

**Design/Methodology/approach**— The paper describes two cases to study international resource sharing.

**Findings**— Benefiting from the Internet, there are some successful elements to achieve the cross-border resource sharing all over the world, such as librarians with global vision and professional skill, catalog system worldwide, copyright agreement and IFLA VOCHER, etc.

**Originality/value** —This is one of the few papers to explore the successful elements to achieve international resource sharing by libraries in China, involving a case requesting for business use only from Copyright Clearance Center in USA. The other case reveals that cooperative library could be the path within cross-border resource sharing, which took place among 3 libraries between China and Italy, between university and public libraries.

**Keywords** international resource sharing, Cross-border, Element, copyright, IFLA VOCHER, China

**Paper type** Case study

Due to the Internet, it becomes increasingly convenient to connect the world as global village and to share cross-border resources sharing. Following the digital publishing growing trend, the document delivery has come true, because of its fidelity, speediness and convenience. In theory, international resource sharing is not too difficult to implement in the era of big data. However, few libraries have used international resource sharing for their customers, whatever public, academic, special or national library in China till now. When librarians received overseas ILL request, it is seldom to accomplish in time. On the other hand, we sometimes had to give up connecting oversea colleagues directly even though when requested a piece of badly needed material to support our users, instead, we search an agent to cross-border.

What happened? What elements have impacted the success of cross-border resource sharing? How can we solve the problems so as to achieve international resource sharing widely?

**Problems: Hindering International ILL Development**

Although international resource sharing has been developing for several decades, different languages are still a big barrier that separates us to cross-border. To understand what has happened is the first step for resource sharing, especially it is just the job about communication & exchange of human being and resource. As cross-border resource sharing, it is impossible to respond and accomplish the client request if a librarian has little professional skill to communicate with oversea colleague. It is well known that there are so many different countries own and use their local languages in the world, but popularity rate of librarians on mastering one or more second foreign language is not high, whose skillful use is probably even lower. How to promote useful languages and professional ability for librarians to carry out international activities? To solve the

communication gap is important for cross-border resource sharing development.

Different copyright clearance manner is another big barrier hindering international resource sharing development. Today copyright is so hot, more and more to be mentioned while resource sharing. In practice, many librarians don't know how to face the problems of copyright agreement. It seems that few people clearly understand what copyright rules are. More lively the resource sharing, more complicated copyright disputes, especially in cross-border cases. At the same moment, it showed that the developed country picks up faster than others, and pays more emphasis on copyright clearance. In recent years, more and more copyright damage cases appeared and were charged. Due to risk management, some librarians choose to refuse to develop international resource sharing. As a result, cross-border resource sharing becomes difficult to continuously develop.

Kinds of charges & forms of payment are problems for cross-border resource sharing. International resource sharing is paid service. Therefore we have to face different payment modes from different countries. Some would like to pay with US dollar, and some offer to pay with credit cards, and some show their IFLA vouchers, etc. Take SCUT ILL as an example. In case oversea colleague want to pay with \$12 for exchange a piece of journal article, SCUT librarian needs to treat complex process with university financial management. It means extra cost of service fee, time and energy for that. In most cases, IFLA voucher would be better, what brings about a good result of simpler and cheaper payment mode. But sending &receiving IFLA voucher in post is a long time waiting. In addition, a few international request have disappeared when this payment is in practice.

The popularity of cross-border resource sharing concept is the biggest problem in its development. In spite of continuous growing on international interlending and document supply, not many librarians understand how important and how to share their collections for oversea users. There will be no worst thing than the leader of a library ignores to develop international resource sharing service. To enhance the popularity of cross-border service concept, more efforts should be devoted to developing the potential of librarians. To promote the librarians' quality and ability on international resource sharing service, more success cross-border cases will be discussed.

### Success Cases:Thesis for Business, Path to Cross-Border

The paper shares two cases to study two kinds of international resource sharing, which took place in South China University of Technology library. It tries to figure out some success elements on achieving cross-border resource sharing.

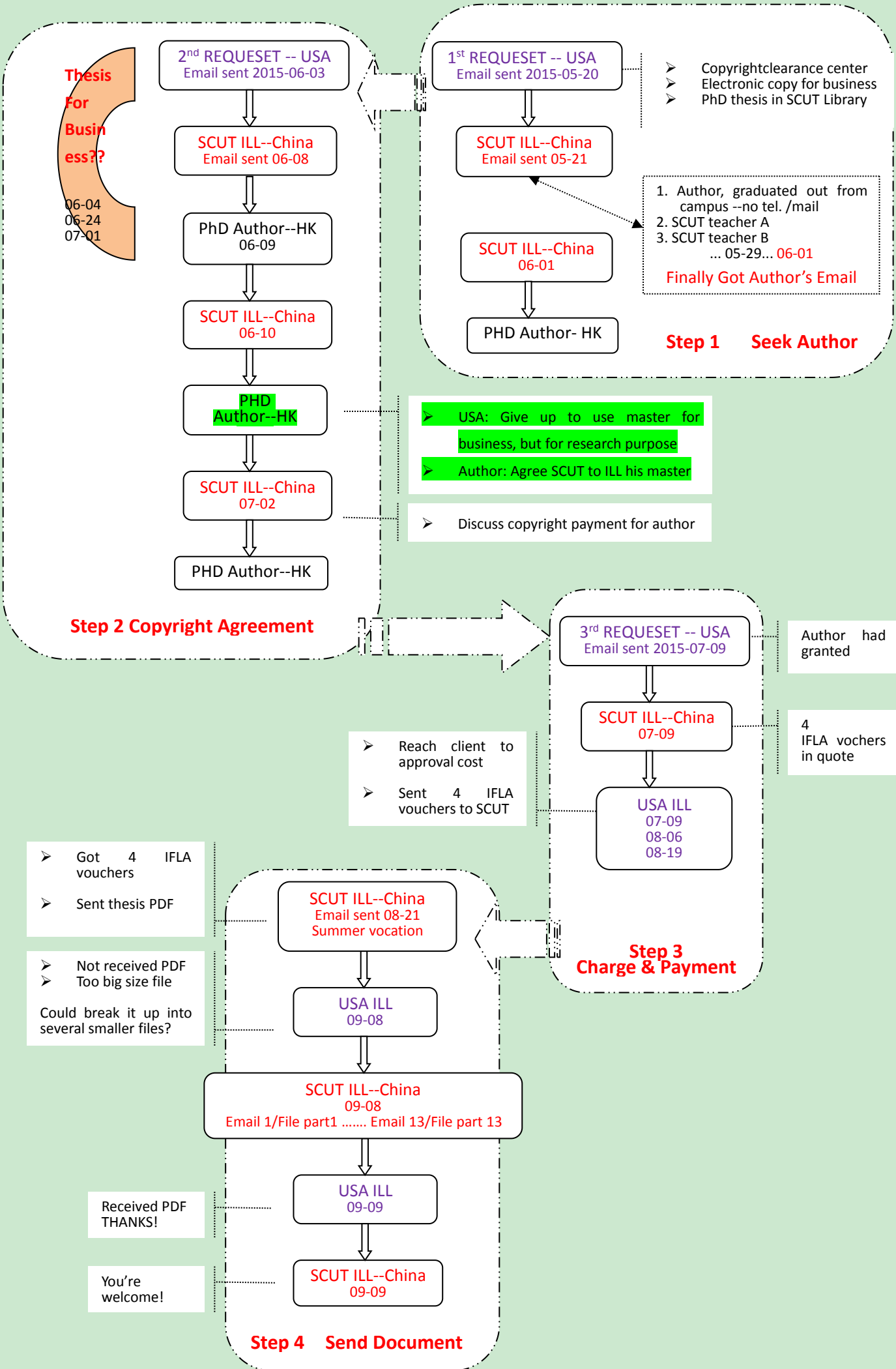
#### Case 1: SCUT ILL of China--Copyright Clearance Center in USA



Figure 1 the USA Request in Case 1

In The Digital Age, cross-border communication by email comes true. SCUT ILL received a request for PhD thesis of 2012 holding in SCUT library, for business use only from The Copyright Clearance Center of USA in 2015 by email. It is important to ensure the copyright agreement of the PhD thesis' author in this kind of ILL. Though the doctoral student has already graduated, the SCUT librarian finally connected with him and successfully offered the thesis to USA client. (As shown by Figure 2)

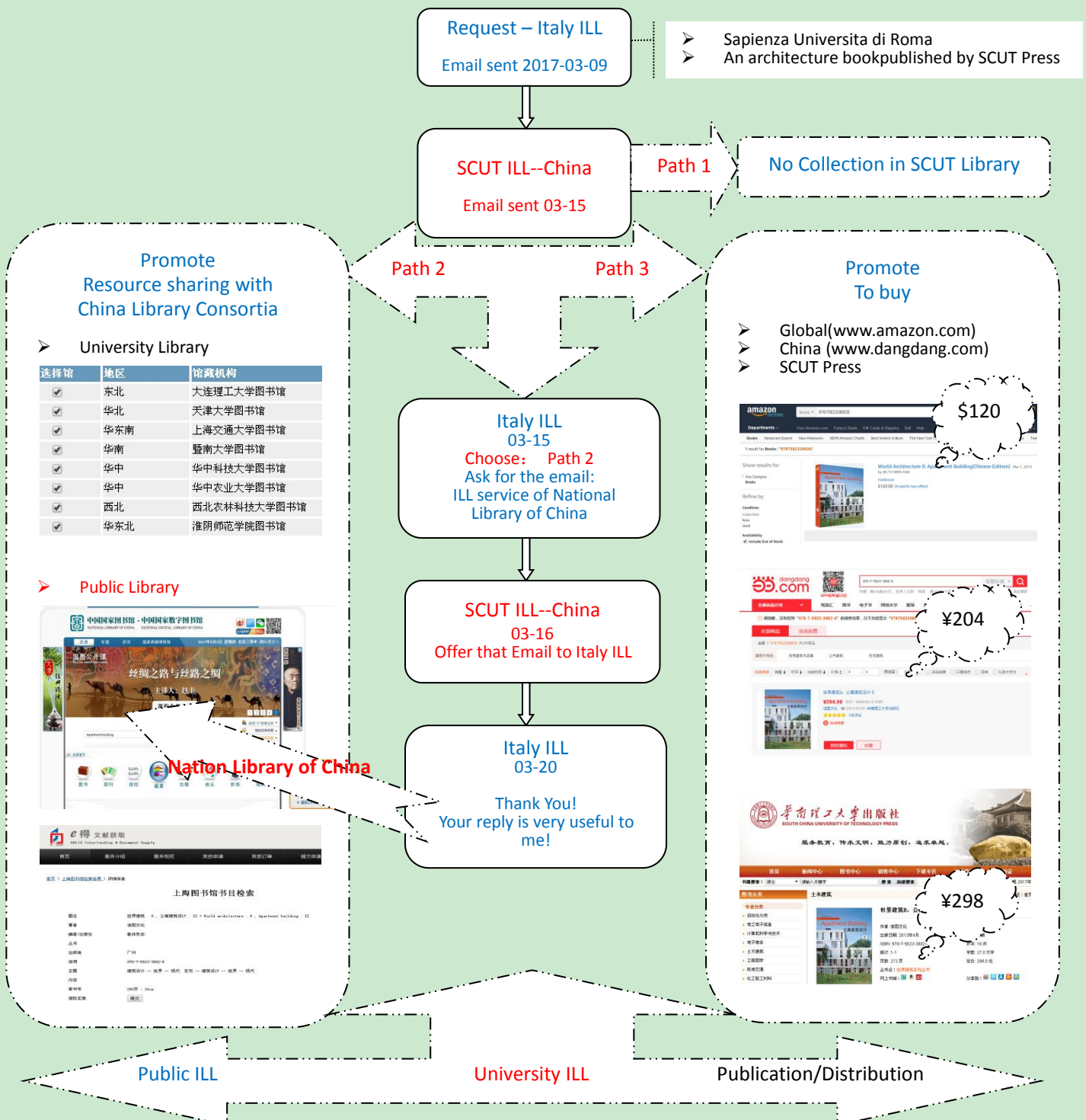
Figure 2 Four Steps of International Resource Sharing in Case 1



## Case 2: SCUT ILL with Italy ILL, the path connecting 3 libraries

The request was from Italy ILL, Sapienza Università di Roma in 2017. This case is unique in that there was no collection in SCUT library. What requested is an architecture book published by SCUT Press. Italy librarian maybe knew that but wanted to ask for some information from SCUT ILL service. At last, Italy librarian got the path to connect with the Nation Library of China which collected the architecture book through help by SCUT ILL. In addition, Italy ILL was offered 2 shopping websites in China and overseas selling the book at the same time. Case 2 shows 3 paths on cross-border resource sharing. The path of resource sharing crosses the border between Asia and Europe, and the border between university library and public library. Also the path crosses border between libraries where the book was collected and where it was published&distributed. (As shown by Figure 3)

Figure 3 Paths to Cross-Border Resource Sharing in case 2



### **Success Elements: Cross-Border Resource Sharing**

Based on Case1 and Case2, it shows two kinds of international resource sharing. One is about collection and copyright agreement, and the other is about no collection and correlating promotion. There are some common success elements within cross-border resource sharing.

One successful element about No Library Left is high-quality librarian who is willing to help others and with global vision, with professional ability in international resource sharing service. If not, it is difficult to achieve cross-border, because the service maybe longtime communication between two or more librarians in different languages. Never giving up is important to librarian. Try to search more paths to achieve cross-border resource sharing although some borders are difficult to cross, such as multi-communication or authorization.

The other success element is worldwide resource catalog system online, what is the foundation of cross-border sharing. Catalog reveals every piece collection of each library. So many perfect online union catalog systems are helping libraries to be connected together all over the world in the digital era. In China, the union catalog systems online contain university system, public system and special libraries. For example, the catalog system online of CALIS (China Academic Library & Information System) includes about 1,000 libraries, involving not only university systems, but also public systems. It is the reason why SCUT ILL could search out effective information and promote the Nation Library of China on collecting the requested book to Italy ILL immediately.

Many resource sharing consortia in different countries all over the world are success pipelines to achieve cross-border resource sharing. Most of the resource sharing consortia in different country already constructed network platform for international resource sharing. The CALIS of China, OCLC of USA, Subito of German, etc. are some of the famous consortia at home and abroad. The library members are easier to contact with target library or colleague oversea through their consortia. Each library could be the path for cross-border resource sharing all over the world.

IFLA VOCHER breaks through paid service problems to link world libraries ILL. Although to send & receive by post is a long time wait, IFLA VOCHER is in common use. It reduces trouble of International Currency Exchange in cross-border resource sharing payment. It allows librarian to focus on professional ILL jobs, like resource search, contact with overseas colleagues, and photocopying.

Copyright agreement is a notable element for success cross-border resource sharing. To learn about copyright agreement rules is a magic shield to develop international resource sharing with the libraries beyond the borders. Some disputes do take place in resource sharing in recent years. It is one of the major reasons why librarians sometimes would rather give up the overseas request than achieve international resource sharing once without copyright agreement. To access authorization is particularly important while meeting cross-border resource sharing for business use.

Above all, internet & new technology is no doubt the basis to transfer the information stream to all over the world libraries in good time in the digital age. Benefiting from technology development, cross-border resource sharing is more convenience than before. Besides original literature resource interlibrary loan, document-delivery by network develops so fast so that more and more librarians and clients would like to request international document delivery. The advantage of this approach by network is rapid and maybe cheaper. More perfect resource sharing system depends on more perfect technology growth, which proves cross-border resource sharing efficient.

### **Suggestions: for International resource sharing Development**

No library left: cross-border resource sharing depends on the same concept about international interlending & document delivery in each library held by each librarian. Try to popularize the concept of international resource sharing is necessary worldwide. It seems more effective to promote the development of international resource sharing from library leader to librarians than from librarians to their leader.

To motivate librarian's enthusiasm to share international resources, it is important for IFLA or library to set up some motivation system, such as evaluation projects, verbal praise, honor or awards program following successful cross-border sharing. Too difficult tasks is not easy to accomplish so as to knock down the flame of enthusiasm. It is important to set up popular training system for librarians to improve their professional skills of international resource sharing, including communicating skill with overseas clients, ILL systems, payment service, copyright rules through face-to-face or online lessons. Good professional skill must bring out nice cross-border development. To set up Exchange Program is effective for librarians to broaden their horizon at international resource sharing. Also it is necessary to connect libraries and librarians in different countries with common goals of international resource sharing.

To put forward the guide of promotional policy for different countries could balance the success on cross-border resource sharing all over the world. Knowledge is priceless, but the ability of payment sometimes is limited in different countries. Promotional policy could increase the chances of cross-border resource sharing for poorer countries. Actually those countries with limited payment ability maybe need more help on international resource sharing because of their own limited resources.

On the other hand, to advertise the benefit from international resource sharing is also necessary for the cross-border development, whatever library or client to do in the public. Only effective service of international resource sharing could attract more clients to use. To carry out more public advertisement activity and let more people know more about international resource sharing. The clients in every corner of the world will be the pushers in cross-border resource sharing development.

## **Conclusion**

Border maybe invisible, but the mission of international resource sharing is to cross borders to share valuable information for clients in the world. Every library and librarian will be one of the creators of cross-border resource sharing development.

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