

DALNET Circulation Standards Committee's Review of DALNET Board Referred Issues

ISSUE 1: Enforcing financial blocks when monies are owed to more than one DALNET institution.

What should the policy be when your institution's financial block is exceeded because of money owed to another DALNET library?

Scenario: WSU student financial threshold is \$50.

WSU student is blocked because the total owed to ALL DALNET libraries is over \$50.

WSU student owes less than \$50 to WSU (i.e. anywhere from nothing to \$49.99).

Should WSU student be blocked from charging WSU materials?

POSITIVE ASPECTS:

1. Encourages payment of fines to DALNET libraries.
2. Stops library "shopping", i.e. patrons moving from library to library looking for a library with a higher financial threshold.
3. Prevents libraries from loaning to patrons who have historically been "bad risks".
4. Reduces need for staff to check patron record to determine to which library money is owed and do overrides.
5. Honoring blocks would promote DALNET cooperative policies and system-wide standardization.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS:

1. Is this legal? Would it expose institutions to law suits? Can we legally prevent patrons who are in "good standing" with one DALNET institution from borrowing materials from that institution because of monies owed to another DALNET institution?
2. Some patrons might view one library being aware of his/her library fines at another library as being a violation of his/her privacy.
3. Patrons may be unable to immediately discharge their debts because:
 - a. the lack of system-wide payment ability prevents patrons from paying anywhere except where the money is owed and
 - b. patrons may not have immediate access to the library at which money is owed due to differing hours of operation or transportation problems.
4. Library staff enforcing the block may be unaware and unable to verify that money owed at another institution is being disputed by the patron.
5. Implementing this would not take in account the possibility of mechanical or procedural errors at other libraries.
6. Patrons are likely to become hostile. Students and/or part-time staff may be unprepared and untrained to make such judgments.
7. Lack of uniformity of threshold fines and circulation policies could result in unequal treatment of patrons whereby patrons may be blocked at one institution and not at

ISSUE 2: If a library discovers that a patron has material from another DALNET library that is not charged out, should the library confiscate that material?

POSITIVE ASPECTS:

1. Would assist in the retrieval of stolen library materials.
2. Confiscating materials would promote DALNET cooperative policies.

NEGATIVE ASPECTS:

1. Is this legal? Would it expose institutions to law suits? Would this be considered "illegal search and seizure"?
2. Patrons are likely to become hostile if materials were confiscated. Students and/or part-time staff may be unprepared and untrained to make such judgments.
3. Confiscation of materials would not take in account the possibility of mechanical or procedural errors at other libraries.