

# CENTER FOR RESEARCH LIBRARIES

## Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. What is CRL?

Answer: CRL is a consortium of more than 240 college, university, and independent research libraries that makes available through interlibrary loan and digital delivery more than 4.5 million publications, archives, and collections and one million digital resources to its member libraries to supplement their humanities, science, and social science holdings. Located in Chicago, CRL was founded in 1949 and is governed by a 15-member Board drawn entirely from the higher education community.

### 2. What are the eligibility criteria for membership?

Answer: Membership in CRL is open to higher education institutions and research libraries in two main types: Voting (North American institutions) and Global (institutions outside of North America). Non-members can access CRL materials through pre-paid user accounts.

### 3. What does it cost to become a member?

Answer: As a consortium, Voting members support CRL activities and services by paying an annual, apportioned, “means-based” cost share, rather than a fee. Cost shares are calculated as a small percentage of an institution’s annual library materials expenditures, averaged over five years. Global members pay an annual fee. Non-members pay on a per-request basis.

### 4. What are the benefits of a CRL membership?

Answer: Benefits for Voting and Global memberships are summarized below.

Voting member benefits include the following:

- Unlimited access to CRL materials, which are delivered to member institutions at no additional cost.
- A 90-day loan period, with 90-day renewals as needed.
- Participation in the Purchase Proposal Program—an annual, ballot-based, cooperative acquisition program.
- Participation in the Shared Purchase Program—a cooperative acquisition program based on CRL-organized buyer groups.
- Participation in the Demand Purchase Program, in which patrons (i.e., individual faculty, grad students, etc.) at member institutions can request purchases up to \$2,000 annually in three areas: foreign dissertations, newspapers, and archival material.
- Electronic delivery of materials, when possible
- Eligible to load CRL catalog records or subsets at no charge (includes periodic updates)
- Program and service orientations available for member staff.
- Individualized resource searches available through CRL’s User Services.
- Participation in planned scanning projects through Users Services.
- Web consultations to optimize user access to the CRL catalog.
- Free subscription to *The Charleston Advisor*.

- Cost avoidance - Many members take advantage of CRL's large legacy newspaper collections on microfilm—and third-day delivery—to discontinue costly subscriptions, thus saving or redirecting funds to other purposes
- Eligible to participate in JSTOR, ICON, Print Archiving, and other CRL activities and partnerships.

Global member benefits include the following:

- Unlimited access to the majority of CRL materials. Paper-based and other hard-copy materials are not available for interlibrary loan. Global members pay all shipping costs.
- A 90-day loan period, with 90-day renewals as needed.
- Participation in the Shared Purchase Program—a cooperative acquisition program based on CRL-organized buyer groups.
- Participation in the Demand Purchase Program, in which patrons (i.e., individual faculty, grad students, etc.) at member institutions can request purchases up to \$2,000 annually in three areas: foreign dissertations, newspapers, and archival material.
- Electronic delivery of materials, when possible
- Eligible to load CRL catalog records or subsets at no charge (includes periodic updates)
- Program and service orientations available for member staff.
- Individualized resource searches available through CRL's User Services.
- Participation in planned scanning projects through Users Services.
- Web consultations to optimize user access to the CRL catalog.
- Free subscription to *The Charleston Advisor*

## 5. **How are requested materials delivered?**

Answer: Two-day express courier, digital links, and electronic delivery.

- Two-day express - All returnable materials are delivered by two-day express courier. Last year, 92% of all interlibrary loan requests were processed in a single business day, then shipped by two-day express.
- Digital delivery - CRL now delivers as much requested material as possible digitally. The average turn-around time is four days, but whether individual requests can be delivered digitally depends on the extent and condition of the requested material. We expect to provide desktop delivery to the vast majority of requests within the decade.
  - Accessing digital files – Digital files are accessed through a link on the bibliographic record. Users whose requests have been filled digitally are forwarded a link, once the material accessible.
  - Copyright note - To enable a “fair use” consultation of titles with copyright restrictions, we make digital copies available for restricted, non-simultaneous use by members within a limited period.
- Electronically – More than 95% of all-page image copies of articles are processed and delivered (by email, ARIEL, fax transmissions) in a single day.

## 6. **How do users request and receive CRL materials?**

Answer: Materials are requested through standard interlibrary loan systems, including OCLC, ILL Manager, Iliad, InnReach, Fax, and U.S. mail. The materials are then delivered through ARIEL, Odyssey, fax, or links from our online catalog to a Digital Delivery Server. All returnable items are shipped by two day express.

**7. Can non-members access CRL resources?**

Answer: CRL materials are available to non-members through interlibrary loan on a cost recovery basis. To access CRL materials, non-members must set up a pre-paid user account, and then request the materials through a library or directly through Access Services.

**8. What are CRL's collection strengths?**

Answer: CRL resources include:

- 6,500 international newspapers, many dating to the 1700s—the largest collection of circulating newspapers in North America.
- 4,500 U.S. newspapers, many dating to the colonial era, including 2,000 ethnic titles.
- More than 38,000 foreign journals that are rarely held in U.S. libraries.
- More than 800,000 foreign dissertations, mostly from European universities.
- Area Studies - Major microform and paper collections from Africa, Latin America, Middle East, Europe, Asia, Southeast Asia, and more.

**9. What programs are included in a CRL membership?**

Answer: Voting members are eligible to participate in CRL governance and all of the following programs. Global members do not vote or participate in governance.

- Governance—election to the board, committee and task force appointments, budget responsibilities, etc.
- Purchase Proposal Program—an annual, ballot-based, cooperative acquisition program.
- Shared Purchase Program—a cooperative acquisition program based on buyer groups.
- Demand Purchase Program—in which patrons (i.e., individual faculty, grad students, etc.) at member institutions can request purchases up to \$2,000 annually in three areas: foreign dissertations, newspapers, and archival material.

**10. What services are included in a CRL membership?**

Answer: All members are eligible to:

- Load CRL catalog records at no charge (includes periodic updates)
- Program and service orientations available for member staff.
- Individualized resource searches available through CRL's User Services Liaison.
- Web consultations to optimize user access to the CRL catalog.
- Participation in JSTOR, ICON, Print Archiving, and other CRL activities and partnerships.

**11. How do institutions apply for CRL membership?**

Answer: Prospective institutions are obliged to submit a membership application letter—for review and approval by CRL's Board of Directors—indicating they have read and agree to the terms of CRL bylaws. The membership year runs from July 1 – June 30<sup>th</sup> annually; however, new members can enroll on the first day of any month on a prorated basis. To learn more, please contact Don Dyer, CRL's Membership and Communications Coordinator, at 773-955-4545, ext. 317 or [dyer@crl.edu](mailto:dyer@crl.edu).