NCIP Overview

Find an overview of the NCIP enabled ILL workflow as well as a list of library systems that Relais supports for NCIP integration.

NCIP (NISO Circulation Interchange Protocol, also known as Z39.83) is a North American standard which allows disparate library systems to talk to each other (for example the library's management system and ILL system). Configuring Relais to communicate with your institution’s library system via your NCIP server increases efficiency and accuracy in Supplying and Requesting loans. If you would like additional background about NISO, see About NCIP on the NCIP Standing Committee (NCIP-SC) website.

NCIP enabled ILL workflow

Supplying

Loans to other libraries

When your library receives a request for a loan from another library, there are two separate and independent steps involved in the supplying workflow.

1. A staff member updates the request in Relais as Loan Document (or Ship Loan if appropriate).
2. The staff member updates your circulation system to indicate that the item is checked out.

With NCIP enabled, Relais automatically does the checkout in your local library system for you, eliminating step two of the workflow. NCIP uses the Check out Item message to communicate between Relais and your library system.

Returns from other libraries

When an external library returns a loan to you, there are two separate and independent steps involved in the processing workflow:

1. A staff member updates the request in Relais as returned.
2. The staff member updates your circulation system to indicate that the item is checked in.

With NCIP enabled, however, Relais automatically does the checkout in your local library system for you, eliminating step two of the workflow. NCIP uses the Check In Item message to communicate between Relais and your library system.

Requesting
Loans to your patrons

When your library receives material from an external library to fill a request for one of your patrons, there are two separate and independent steps in the requesting workflow.

1. One, a staff member updates the request in Relais to Loan Document.
2. The staff member creates a brief bibliographic record, an item record and places a "hold" (to notify the patron).

With NCIP enabled, Relais automatically creates the bibliographic and item records, and places the hold in your local library system, eliminating step two of the workflow. NCIP uses the Accept Item message to communicate between Relais and your library system.

Returns from your patrons

When your patron returns an item supplied by an external library, there are two separate and independent steps in the requesting workflow.

1. The item is checked in to the circulation system.
2. The request is updated in Relais as Returned.

With NCIP enabled, Relais can automatically do the check in, however, typically the item has already been checked in at the circulation desk and so both steps are still required. NCIP uses the Check In Item message message to communicate between Relais and your ILS.

NCIP support

Relais supports NCIP integration for the following library systems:

- Innovative Millennium
- ExLibris Aleph
- ExLibris ALMA (vendor testing completed)
- ExLibris Voyager
- Polaris
- Sirsi Dynix Horizon
- Sirsi Dynix Symphony
- TLC library.solution
- VTLS Virtua – coming soon