

## **Library and Information Resources for International Education**

Discussion synthesis by James T. Simon

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The Center for Research Libraries (CRL) has long been a coordinator of cooperative collecting of international education material and continues to support, from afar, the needs of your faculty, scholars, and librarians. It has been my pleasure to work with specialists around the country to assess the challenges and opportunities of research libraries today.

Two of those specialists are Deborah Jakubs, Director of Collections Services at Duke University and former program officer for the Association of Research Libraries / Association of American Universities Global Resources Program, and Dan Hazen, Bibliographer for Latin American Studies at Harvard University and Current Visiting Program officer for ARL. These two presented a very provocative and compelling discussion of the current issues facing libraries today in an ever-changing environment, and some of the efforts to meet these needs. I commend to you this piece that captures the major issues and possibilities for the future. I will very briefly summarize the paper and present the major themes and recommendations coming from the discussion immediately following.

Libraries are unique among Title VI / Fulbright-Hays program areas because they support the entire system of international education. Access to information underpins all other activities of international education, from foreign language teaching to the humanities and social sciences to the professional fields; from books to bytes, we are the trusted gatekeepers of information you rely on.

Because of this, perhaps, issues that affect libraries affect you and your programs (whether you are aware of it or not). From the burgeoning production of information worldwide to the ever-adapting fields of interests that cut across traditional fields of inquiry, libraries have had to continue to adapt and even anticipate the needs of scholarship. If we

don't have it by the time your scholars need it, it's almost already too late to get it.

## **Challenges**

The challenges discussed six years ago at the last policy conference are perhaps more acute now, in part because of the Pandora's box opened by technological opportunities and in part because of fiscal realities.

Many of our problems are not unique to our own profession and are shared with other groups represented at the conference. Our profession is aging as well – we are faced with a thinning pool of viable trained specialists to replace those exiting the profession. We, too, face extreme budget pressures. Costs of monographs have risen 68% since 1986, while acquisitions have decreased 9%. Costs of journals have risen 215%, while acquisitions have decreased 5%.

As budgets decrease across the library, we are faced with a more profound squeeze in the availability of international materials. With more resources going to the acquisition of electronic databases and journals that serve the largest population, foreign language materials have suffered reduced acquisition. Yet, the demands of scholars have not let up and, in many ways, have increased. We must find ways of accessing new sources of material without giving up other long standing priorities.

A major challenge for research libraries continues to be better access to and bibliographic control of material. Shortage of language expertise in the general staff creates cataloging backlogs, inhibiting access to foreign language material. Copy cataloging is generally favored over original work. Integrated access to international databases is problematic because a lack of common standards. We are limited in our ability to influence these policies outside of our own region, but need to work towards this goal. Machine-based character representation for vernacular language material has only begun to be addressed in our catalogs, and standards

for Web display of non-Roman scripts have also only recently emerged as a viable option.

Intellectual property issues have grown as international opportunities arise. The traditional provisions of “fair use” do not apply as easily to international arrangements and document delivery. Domestically, copyright extension legislation restricts free access to information resources. Internationally, we still don’t have a full understanding of copyright restrictions in the regions in which we collect.

Another large challenge within intellectual property comes from the licensing of electronic resources. Commercial licenses deprive libraries of outright ownership and control of material. They supercede statutory provisions associated with fair use.

And there is the issue of the preservation of this electronic material – definitive standards have yet to emerge to govern this, and we cannot rely on commercial publishers to guarantee the lifelong preservation of these resources. The community is working to address this issue in many forms, including a recent planning investigation by CRL to select and preserve international political Web sites, but more needs to be done.

## **Opportunities**

However, many new opportunities have risen since the last meeting of this group. Cooperative efforts are becoming the norm in U.S. libraries. The “demise of the completeness syndrome” (as it was put by Ross Atkinson of Cornell University) has allowed us to accept that we can’t collect everything for ourselves at any one institution. Instead we rely on the national mosaic and a series of collaborative efforts (both formal and informal) to represent the sum of the parts.

Some successful collaborative efforts include the AAU/ARL Global Resources Program. GRP is creating access to sources of information

and content through a series of programs devised and implemented by information professionals. Several have executed multiple components, forged international linkages, and gone on to receive additional funding from other sources. The Jakubs/Hazen paper discusses these programs in detail.

The Title VI TICFIA project has, in its first few years, created a body of institutions exploring new means of access to foreign materials. This effort should be applauded and continued, with the encouragement that different kinds of institutions should apply.

NRC support for research institutions expand our capacity to provided needed materials. The idea of a council of National Resource Center librarians would seem to have much merit. This would facilitate discussions of interregional issues, new initiatives and best practices.

Other sources of cooperative funding (including governmental sources such as the NSF, NEH, and IMLS and private foundations such as Mellon and Ford) and the continuation of more traditional aspects of collaboration (such as the Library of Congress' Cooperative Acquisition Programs and CRL's Area Studies Microform Projects) have all assisted in exploring the new dynamic of international resource collection.

## **Issues**

In the discussions following the paper, participants identified a number of additional issues that will need to be faced in the coming future.

The role of librarians continues to evolve. Whereas librarians used to be the identifiers and procurers of information, increasingly, electronic and other resources need expertise for the mediation and navigation of information. The lure of unmediated and questionable Web resources also requires experts to help scholars identify and evaluate reliable material.

Meanwhile, the described “grey revolution” of the profession requires innovative solutions for professional preparation (one model discussed was the Mellon-funded programs at Duke and Indiana that supported training of post-doctoral specialists). Here, again, it is crucial we have foreign language expertise.

We’ve discussed important themes at this conference, including the rise of internationalization in professional schools; the need to better prepare our constituents for service in commercial and government sectors; and issue-specific scholarship that crosses boundaries. We do not currently have selectors specifically for these issues (e.g. human rights). To enact a comprehensive collecting program would require a change of the vertical structure of the organizations.

We need to be constantly aware of changing needs of our scholars, such as the increasing interest in cultural studies. We also need to seize opportunities offered by external funding sources – and perhaps help mediate the differences between these two constituencies.

As will likely be discussed in a broader theme of institutional linkages, international partnerships among libraries is critical to extend our understanding and access to new resources. These linkages would provide great economy in our ability to collect (both in term of human capital and intellectual expertise).

We also need to work in complementarity with other collectors of information, for example our colleagues in Europe. While U.S. collecting is often more robust for current materials, their unparalleled collections in early history are vital to further our programs.

Digitization and other preservation and access efforts are assisting in these efforts, but there needs to be further work in making national and regional boundaries transparent in collection access. Efforts like the Open Archives Initiative will serve us well in this regard.

Finally, we need to revisit the concept of collections in the new electronic and distributed environment. Does your library “own” a cooperatively funded digital effort? Electronic journals? Microform sets cooperatively purchased through CRL? This same shift to a perception of a shared national collection raises fundamental questions of how we count (and rank) our relative library strengths.

## **Recommendations**

There are a number of useful suggestions and possibilities mentioned in Deborah’s and Dan’s report. We won’t touch on most of them here, but suggest a few key areas that we feel there is a deep need.

- Federal support for projects to develop intellectual, technical, and conceptual infrastructure to enable access to foreign information.

There is a distinct need for support for efforts that are beyond the means of any single institution, and for efforts that are not tied to immediate concrete outcomes. Examples of such activities funding might support are to define and extend international standards for copyright, or to examine the application of emerging technologies for information access

- Federal support for foreign infrastructure and capacity-building to support linkages.

It is critical to build local capacity in cooperative projects. Institutions need infrastructure support and training in standards and procedures. It is important, however, to understand the reality of the local situation when designing and implementing projects. For projects to be successful, it is important to match their needs with ours (example: vernacular cataloging vs. romanization).

- Federal funding providing broad general support for North American library collection development, access, and preservation to strengthen foreign information collections.

Most sources of external funding are tied to concrete outcomes which often add loads to our already existing burden. There often seems to be a lack of long-term focus among projects as well as funders of international efforts. Funding sources continually emphasize sustainability, but do not seem to want to fund continuation of efforts, even legitimate next phases of efforts.

Broad funding for general operations such as increased acquisition of materials, foreign language cataloging, or preservation and conservation efforts would provide much needed assistance in the continues operations of our libraries. However, we recognize that there need to be further discussion to define parameters of what would be included in such funding.