

NCC 3-D Conference: Topical Discussion Summary The Future of NCC's Existing Projects (Proposition #3)

This summary reports on 3-D Conference discussions that reviewed existing NCC services and made recommendations about their future. A major venue for these discussions was the breakout sessions of proposition #3 led by Toshie Marra of UCLA. Prop #3 featured three separate discussions, one each that focused on the Multi-Volume Sets Project and cooperative collection development, on interlibrary loan and document delivery and the Global ILL Framework (GIF), and a third that enlisted recommendations about ways NCC can further expand its collaborations with organizations abroad and serve as a more vocal advocate for the needs of Japanese library and information resources. This summary also incorporates related recommendations from other sessions and from the wrap-up sessions.

Subtopic #1: Cooperative Collection Development

Facilitators outlined the history of the Multi-Volume Set Project (MVS), which is NCC's oldest program, established in 1992. MVS was created to leverage scarce funds for the purchase of Japanese language materials not otherwise held in North America. The cooperatively developed MVS Collection now circulates from over 30 institutions throughout the US.

Despite the fact that MVS has attempted to fund a broader number of institutions especially smaller and first-time grantees, it is apparent that few small libraries have been able to apply, and the current economic climate has made it difficult for a growing number to contemplate future applications. There is also the perception that the emphasis of MVS grants has shifted from building a national collection to supporting more local needs, which may partly be an artifact of MVS's effort to support emerging areas of scholarship.

After nearly 20 years, 3-D participants were asked: Is MVS working in the present format? Additionally, participants were asked to consider whether funds currently allocated to MVS would be better used differently, or to support other services.

Opinions were divided on whether to continue, discontinue or modify MVS. The greatest number of those expressing strong views wanted to see changes in MVS either to re-purposed MVS funds to support a national program of digital resource licensing, or to create a two-tiered system earmarking funds for both small and large institutions with the cost-sharing terms made more advantageous for small institutions. A small number simply expressed the view that MVS is no longer fulfilling its goals and should be discontinued outright, whereas, a similar number advocated for the continuation of MVS in its present form, arguing that it has effectively brought expensive multi-volume sets to Japanese studies scholars and students in the US.

Discussant expressed the view that fundamental shifts have occurred, as seen in the transition from the dominance of print to digital formats, requiring an overall rethinking of cooperative collection development strategies, including MVS. Participants strongly expressed the view that NCC is in the position to take the lead in helping to transform notions of cooperative collection development from print to digital (national licensing and/or mass digitization projects). Participants also expressed the view that there should be renewed national and regional coordination of cooperative collection development (in all formats).

Specific comments about possible alternative uses of MVS funding were:

- Different institutions and libraries have diverse needs to address and the gap between large and small libraries has widened. If MVS continues, a two-tiered program with separate categories for large and small libraries should be initiated.
- The MVS cost-share percentage of the 25-50% should be reconsidered for smaller institutions. The current levels of co-funding are beyond what some libraries can afford and with the present economic climate fewer will be able to afford to apply. NCC should considering a 100% funding option for small libraries (with the requirement that applicants could not apply every year).
- Some suggested that because there is no longer funding for such purposes, smaller institutions should be allowed to apply for more basic/reference sets.
- A number of participants recommended that if the JUSFC allows it, MVS funds should eventually be re-purposed to digital licensing. However, such a program required a long lead-time for planning and implementation during which time MVS should continue, perhaps with the two-tiered strategy and shift funds to digital licensing support when and if permitted by the funders.
- An entirely different project that was suggested was to consider re-purposing some portion of MVS funds to digitizing existing Japanese materials/resources housed in the North American libraries to make them freely available to researchers and students online.
- Digital resource licensing makes sense as a cooperative collection development priority because small libraries cannot afford to acquire/subscribe to digital licenses, nor can they afford to apply to MVS.
- Digital resources (compared to traditional format including print, microfilm and VHS) would better fit a national/cooperative collection development program because recent technology makes it possible for digital resources to be more widely available to multiple libraries and researchers. (However, despite the technical feasibility of such levels of sharing, most providers do not allow such broad distribution under their contract terms).
- NCC should explore further ways of coordinating Japanese library resource and collection development effort with the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) and the Library of Congress (LC). National collaboration in collection building remains important and broader coordination with CRL and LC, despite their different constituencies, may further underscore the importance of Japanese studies resources.

Strategies for National Database Licensing: (also discussed in Proposition # 1)

- The Korean Collections Consortium (which was originally patterned after NCC) developed a system of subscriptions for Korean databases in the US and Canada. The KCC system negotiates subscription prices for participating libraries by size, funding up to 40% of subscription costs. NCC should consider this model for Japanese database subscriptions, as it would also benefit smaller libraries.
- If NCC negotiated a national licensing strategy for Japanese databases it would be useful to subscribers everywhere.
- It was suggested that NCC serve as the umbrella to assist libraries in forming a consortium for database subscription.
- It was pointed out that Canadian libraries are not allowed to apply for MVS because all the funds come from US government sources. However, Canadian libraries have adapted the KCC plan, and there are already Japanese database consortia in Europe, all of which may benefit from an umbrella licensing strategy.

Subtopic #2: The Global Interlibrary Loan Framework and NCC's participation in international strategies for resource sharing

The Global ILL Framework (GIF) was formed to support Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery (ILL/DD) services between North American and Japanese academic libraries and now has over 230 institutional members. Open access digital resources such as NII's CiNii and others may eventually make interlibrary loan and document delivery services obsolete, however for the near future, the need for GIF and programs like it will remain vital to many users.

The 3-D Conference provided the ideal venue for reviewing GIF services and recommending improvements to the management teams on both sides. Discussions focused particularly on: education for current and potential users of GIF; expanded support services for ILL staff (especially those without Japanese language fluency); and strategies for more broadly promoting GIF services and expanding its membership. Possible ways that the GIF network might work to strengthen general communications and collaborations with Japanese libraries and to facilitate reciprocal borrowing were touched upon and are discussed more fully in the section on promoting international collaborations, directly below.

Education for Current and Potential GIF Users (especially in North America):

- There is a need for materials that help users and ILL Librarians to know more about Japanese ILL/DD services
- Existing guidelines and manuals (print/online/video) are too lengthy and detailed
- There is a need for simplified manuals for users with procedural check lists for ILL staff
- GIF and the NCC should create a guide to Japanese Romanization (with LC)
- A seamless interface between the GIF and DRC Webpages should provide needed links to free resources
- Users need to become aware of the expansion in freely available online Japanese resources. An NII representative explained that approximately half of their materials are provided free of charge and half are fee-based. Users may purchase fee-based materials through NII or via NDL's ILL/DD services
- All of these details need to be incorporated into the GIF user materials, along with new procedures for checking freely available sites before submitting a GIF request
- New online materials should be the focus of regional workshops on GIF

Needs for ILL Librarian Support Services (on both sides):

- GIF should have a revolving coordinator (perhaps assigned monthly) to work with ILL librarians and faculty at institutions without JS librarians, to confirm holdings information, submit requests to Japan, and follow up on problems (a clearinghouse). That person should be responsible for documenting problems, identifying common mistakes, and recommending remedies

- Bilingual GIF request templates and a bilingual glossary of terms would be useful at both ends of the transaction (parallel to the IUP materials). A GIF Japan group representative noted that manuals already exist in Japanese, and because of those manuals, the number of questions received has decreased in Japan. The GIF team should work from those models to create new bilingual materials
- A Guide to Romanizing Japanese could prevent problems (English versus Japanglish)
- A more formalized GIF team-building process should be created to include JS/ILL librarians, student workers, faculty and student users
- There is also a need for strengthening networks among library staff on both sides. Even though citations may be filled out correctly, there are cases in which no response is received by requestors in North America. More data on the names of staff on either side might build virtual networks to facilitate personalized contact improving the response rate

Promotion of the GIF Program:

- Recent substantial improvements in GIF transaction statistics need to be broadly publicized through library associations (2009 transactions were balanced at about 2,000 each way)
- NCC Website materials on GIF need to be greatly simplified and highlighted
- Regular email notices to listservs such as H-Japan should be used to promote GIF
- NCC should further advertise GIF via established professional groups (ALA, heads of ILL, library schools)
- Promotion should be aimed at expanding GIF membership on both sides
- Strengthen GIF roles and visibility in Japan

Subtopic #3: Strengthening North American and Japanese collaborations to improve international cooperation and resource sharing

The session began by outlining questions for discussion: In what new areas should NCC work with counterpart organizations? What roles should NCC play more actively? How can the US and Japan more effectively streamline communication? How can both sides collaborate to seek institutional support and outright funding to improve international cooperation and resource sharing?

Promote Reciprocal Onsite Access to Academic Libraries for Foreign Scholars:

- Gaining access to Japanese academic libraries is a problem of many foreign researchers
- Japanese scholars have similar problems abroad, it is an international issue
- Reciprocal library access (including to stacks) should be part of Memoranda of Understandings among institutions (MOU's)
- More communication is needed up the chain of command to university administrations
- NCC should form a task force or working group with the Japan Association of National Universities, the Association of Private Universities of Japan, and other relevant organizations to advise the project (serve as a clearinghouse)

Create a Foreign Libraries Access Webpage on the NCC Site:

- The webpage should feature an annotated directory to libraries and research facilities in Japan, including prefectural libraries
- It should contain library policies, procedures, and annotated contact information
- Templates for standardized bilingual letters of introduction should be provided (like IUP)
- Guides should also be bilingual (links should be sent to Japanese partners)
- This effort should collaborate with Koide-san and others from IHJ on updating older print materials
- The task force/working group members in Japan can solve problem, and intervene if needed
- Such a website would provide excellent additional visibility for NCC
- A parallel directory of academic libraries in North America would be most valuable to Japanese researchers

Global Networking:

- All NCC networking efforts should be international, not limited to those between North America and Japan
- NCC should expand the definition of its mission beyond the frame of the US-Japan cooperation
- NCC should help create/improve networks among individuals as well as institutions
- NCC should invite more librarians from Japanese and Europe to attend NCC meetings as observers
- NCC should create an annotated map listing each librarian in the US and Canada

Developing E-Learning and E-Collaboration Opportunities:

- New technologies make it possible for specialists in different places to work together. NCC should design a project to share the knowledge of such specialists by creating online e-learning courses with video and bibliographic information
- Use e-learning tools for creating such collaborations internationally
- Use multi-media (to create course videos collaboratively)

Exchange of Librarians:

- Some university libraries already have exchange programs with partner libraries in Japan however networking opportunities beyond the scope of those bilateral ties are limited
- An NCC exchange could create more opportunities for site visits, better chances for varied onsite training, and network and mentorship building
- The virtual exchange of librarians could also be arranged through future expansions to the NCC Website using Web 2.0 technology

Directory of Digital Collections and Projects: (Also discussed in Best Practices #1)

- There has been an enormous proliferation in the number of digital collections created by NDL, Japanese university libraries, and other institutions; but many of those resources are not broadly known
- A directory of digital resources and on-going digital projects in Japan is needed
- The NCC Website would be a good location for such a directory (even if NCC is not the actual creator of the directory)
- A parallel set of directories for resources in North America, Europe, and elsewhere should be created, and linked via the NCC Website

Subtopic Facilitator(s): MVS--Sanae Ito and Michael Bourdaghs, MVS Co-chairs, Note-taker(s): Eiichi Ito, former MVS co-chair, Naomi Kotake, former MVS co-chair, Subtopic Facilitator(s): GIF--Michiko Ito, NCC ILL/DD Co-chair; Note-taker(s): Yoko Okunishi, ILL/DD Registrar and Kazuyo Good, ILL Staff, Subtopic Facilitator(s): International Cooperation--Akio Yasue, NCC Japan Liaison, National Diet Library, retired; Note-taker(s): Sachie Noguchi, former NCC chair, Hiroyuki Good, GIF Committee member and coordinator of the Shashi Interest Group.