Japanese Electronic Database Use in North America:
Widespread and on the Web

Report of the Consortial Licensing Task Force
North American Coordinating Council on Japanese Library Resources (NCC)
by
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Collection development officers in North American university libraries spend much of their time dealing with contracts for electronic products. While this is not yet true for those in charge of Japanese collections, the results of a recent survey suggest that things are beginning to change. Between June, 1998, when a survey was done by Kristina K. Troost of Duke University[1] and October, 2000 when a similar investigation was undertaken by the Consortial Licensing Task Force of the NCC,[2] use of commercial electronic databases more than doubled (see chart below). With the majority of East Asian libraries and collections across Canada and the U.S. reporting at least one contract, Japanese studies librarians are starting to grapple with the issues of licensing, pricing, technical access, and user education that are challenging counterparts in main campus libraries.

Trends in Japanese language database use, 1998-2000

	1998	2000
Japanese collections responding	41	46
Collections reporting at least one Japanese database contract	15	31

Japanese digital resources have become more widely available not only *within* East Asian libraries but also *throughout* each campus community. In 1998, only three libraries provided site access to any database, allowing faculty in their offices and students anywhere in the university environs searching capability. By fall, 2000, 23 libraries reported having site licenses for one or all of the databases to which they subscribed. Some of these contracts also allow for "proxy server" access, permitting anyone affiliated with the university to search from a remote site off-campus. The flexible access arrangements taken for granted for so many English language resources are now becoming standard for Japanese databases, as well.

The shift to site access has been made possible by another change over the two years between surveys. This is the availability of more digital resources on the web. In 1998, several online services, such as NACSIS-IR, Nikkei Telecom, and G-Search, were still available only via Telnet. The need to maintain password security meant that access was limited, in most cases, to East Asian libraries and collections. The three services mentioned above have all now migrated to the web (although Telnet access, often at lower cost, is still an option at present.)

The chart below introduces the commercial databases included in the recent survey. It also has a breakdown indicating whether the contract provides for site access or only one machine access (usually in the East Asian library or collection). An appendix lists the universities currently subscribing to each database.

Summary Survey Results of Database Use

	Site License	One Machine Limit	Total Users
MagazinePlus	18	2	20
Zasshi kiji sakuin	7	7	14
BookPlus	2	8	10
NACSIS			10
Janaru indekkusu	5	4	9
Sakka/shippitsusha fairu	3	2	5
Nikkei			4
WebWho			3
Sho no jiten fairu			2
Konpyuta gijutsu yogo jisho fairu	1		1
G-Search			1
Asahi DNA			0

The two most popular databases used for research in Japanese studies are *Zasshi kiji sakuin* and *Janaru indekkusu* from the vendor Nichigai Associates.[3] Both are periodical indexes to Japanese language periodicals and some western language periodicals published in Japan. *Zasshi kiji sakuin* has been compiled by the National Diet Library since 1948, although the electronic version only contains data from 1975.[4] It is the only comprehensive periodical index to Japanese scholarly journals and is essential for almost any literature review of Japanese sources. [The print edition was abandoned at the end of 1995 so electronic access is the only way to obtain citations for 1996 to the present.] *Janaru Indekkusu* covers more general interest and popular publications, although it only began in 1981. It is a useful complement to *Zasshi kiji sakuin*.

Both *Zasshi kiji sakuin* and *Janaru indekkusu* can be subscribed to separately. They are also bundled together with several other databases in a service called *MagazinePlus*.[5] A total of 32 libraries subscribe to *Zasshi kiji sakuin* either through a separate subscription or through *MagazinePlus*, while 27 libraries have access to *Janaru indekkusu*. Most large and medium-sized Japanese collections now have a contract, largely for the following reasons:

   a. The need to provide bibliographic access to articles in local collections of Japanese periodicals.

b. The need for users to identify articles in periodicals held elsewhere in North America and Japan so that they can be obtained through local interlibrary loan/document delivery departments in their libraries.

In recognition of the importance of these databases, the Task Force on Consortial Licensing has initiated discussion with Nichigai Associates about the possibility of consortial contracts. Survey respondents overwhelmingly favored such an approach, with 43 out of 46 indicating interest in a consortium contract that brought improved terms and conditions. With contract issues increasingly handled outside East Asian libraries and collections (6 respondents handle within the collection; 30 must go through a university library unit; 6 must submit contracts to a unit outside the library), one benefit of a consortial approach can also be a decrease in staff time spent on communicating with administrators outside the East Asian library or collection. [Anyone interested in the current possibilities for consortial contracts with Nichigai Associates should contact Ellen Hammond, Chair of the Task Force, at ellen-hammond@uiowa.edu.] It is, however, important to note that the National Diet Library has pledged to make *Zasshi kiji sakuin* available for searching at no cost through its home page in the fall of 2002. This development may take some pressure off Japanese collection librarians to provide site access for this particular file although it is not yet clear whether the NDL search interface will duplicate functionalities in the Nichigai service.

Nichigai Associates has several other databases that are receiving some use in North American libraries. These are *BookPlus* (10 users), *Sakka, shippitsusha fairu* (5 users), *Who* (3 users), *Konpyūtā, gijutsu yōgo jisho fairu* (1 user), and *Shō no jiten fairu* (1 user). *BookPlus* contains bibliographic information on monographs and is noteworthy in that it contains data on prewar books (1927 on) as well as abstracts for many of the titles published in the last twenty years. It can be used for subject searches and compiling bibliographies and is particularly helpful for collection development.   Use is not widespread partly because of the proliferation of bibliographic databases and Japanese university library OPACs available for free searching on the web.[6] *Sakka, shippitsusha fairu* and *Who* contain biographical information. (Several respondents indicated that they had sufficient print resources in their reference collection; electronic subscriptions to the biographical files therefore would not provide much additional information.) The last two files are quite specialized, containing a dictionary to computer terminology and information about prizes awarded in all fields in Japan, respectively.

Unlike the commercial Nichigai databases described above, the "NACSIS" databases used by 10 North American libraries (9 subscribe to NACSIS-IR and 1 to NACSIS-ELS) are provided to the public by a government agency called the National Institute of Informatics (NII). Until April, 2000, the Institute was known as the National Center for Science Information Systems (NACSIS) and several of its online services still contain this acronym in their names. Several NII databases are provided at no charge, such as Webcat, which functions as a national union catalog for Japan. The two databases covered in the survey require payment per use (rather than a set annual fee such as required by Nichigai).

NACSIS-IR hosts 59 databases at present; 44 are available to overseas users, including *Zasshi kiji sakuin* (see above). They provide primarily citations to monographs, dissertations, serials and journal articles in a broad range of fields. A list of the databases included in the service is available at http://webfront.nii.ac.jp/. Users and non-users (10 respondents) indicated that they were discouraged by the cumbersome payment system, which requires an advance deposit. NII has displayed some willingness to consider consortial arrangements and will be approached by the Task Force in order to make contracting and payment easier for North American users. Another frustration expressed with the service is the difficulty finding out in any detail about the content and extent of coverage for each database. While fairly sketchy, some description is now available at the NII website if you click on the title of interest in the list mentioned above. There is also a recent bilingual publication that provides somewhat more detail.[7]

The NII service NACSIS-ELS was only used by one respondent at the time of the survey. ELS (Electronic Library Service) is a full-text database featuring the journals of academic societies (*gakkai*). It now provides images of the articles in 360 journals published by 124 societies (a title list is available at http://www.nii.ac.jp/els/contents-j.html). The content of ELS has been heavily weighted toward the pure and applied sciences but this is beginning to change as more societies in humanities and social science fields have shown willingness to submit their publications. NII is also planning improvements in the service in order to enhance image quality, increase timeliness, and expand content.

Finally, a handful of respondents indicated they were using the Nikkei Telecom service, either via Telnet (1 user) or the web (3 users). Nikkei Telecom provides access to the full text of the four daily newspapers published by the Nihon Keizai Shinbun group and a number of other newspapers as well as economic, corporate, and market information. The recent announcement that the full text of the Asahi newspaper will be available through the web version of the Nikkei service may increase its popularity. [The survey found that no library had subscribed to Asahi's own fulltext database, largely due to cost and problematic contract terms.]

Of the 46 survey respondents, 15 indicated they do not subscribe to any electronic service (although 2 out of the 15 were seriously considering a contract). The reasons most often given for this were lack of demand and cost. As Kris Troost indicated in her earlier article, it is difficult to determine whether there would be more demand if library users were aware of what was available in digital format. Cost, however, is certainly an issue when the user base for Japanese languages sources at an institution is small. Therefore, recent news that the web version of G-Search is now available outside of Japan should be of great interest to smaller Japanese collections. At the time of the survey only one institution had a subscription to G-Search (and it was almost never used). While the Telnet access may have discouraged some users, the new web version may be a solution for some librarians who cannot afford a yearly contract to a commercial database such as those offered by Nichigai. The web version of G-Search, for which all files are charged on a per use basis, contains most of the important databases featured in this article: *MagazinePlus* (which contains both *Zasshi kiji sakuin* and *Janaru Indekkusu*), *BookPlus*, Nichigai's *Who*, the Nikkei newspapers, the Asahi newspaper, and a broad range of other

databases, as well. For smaller collections, independent scholars, or faculty at institutions with no Japanese collection, G-Search may provide a cost-effective solution to the database access problem.

Responses to the Task Force survey last year demonstrate the rapid growth in subscriptions to Japanese electronic databases within North America. With more of these databases now available on the web, use should become even more widespread in the future. Several other developments, past and projected, also suggest that the *next* survey of database use will likewise show large increases. Some of these developments include:

1. Greater availability of full-text: Since the survey, Nichigai Associates has made a full-text database, *Netto de hyakka*, available in North America. It contains the full text of a major encyclopedia, *Sekai daihyakka jiten* (Heibonsha, 1988) along with research reports, book reviews, and other more current information from a variety of fields.
2. Improved access to document delivery: The availability of convenient document delivery services for Japanese articles has increased the usefulness of citations retrieved from online databases. Some of these services include the two Japan document delivery projects of the AAU-ARL Global Resources Program and the NCC[8]. Also, the National Diet Library, as part of its plans to make *Zasshi kiji sakuin* available through its web site, hopes to provide a link from each citation to an online order form for article copies.
3. More user education is underway to alert librarians and end users to database resources now available. This is one mission of the Task Force on Consortial Licensing. In addition, the web site "Ask an East Asian Studies Librarian," at http://askvrd.org/askeasl, the NCC's new project for East Asian Studies reference questions. This site will provide detailed guides to database content and searching.

While much change has occurred and more is obviously in store, what remains the same? Japanese vendors continue to emphasize the CD-ROM medium for delivery of digital data. Many valuable indexes and full-text newspaper databases, for example, are only made available in CD-ROM format. This presents several difficult management issues for Japanese collection librarians: the obsolescence of the hardware and software needed to access the technology, the difficulty (or impossibility) of providing site access, and high cost. While electronic databases have become mainstream in Japanese collections, it may require a shift in vendor orientation away from CD-ROMs to allow users of Japanese digital information the broad range of web access to scholarly and popular resources that is now the "state of the art" for users in the wider library setting.

The Task Force survey indicates that Japanese Studies librarians and East Asian collection managers have moved rapidly to take advantage of Japanese language online commercial databases. These sources are available to end users within the library and, increasingly, from their offices and homes. The next step for the librarian community is to make sure that potential users are aware of the resources available and that current users are knowledgeable about database content and searching techniques. It is hoped

that future surveys will address librarians' effectiveness in educating the end user to make full use of the resources now so widely available.

APPENDIX

Japanese Language Database Use by University/Collection

The asterisk (*) is used to indicate affiliated libraries that contract together. The libraries in bold lettering had contracts at the time of the survey by Kris Troost in June, 1998. [Note that the MagazinePlus and Web Who services are new since the last survey.]

MagazinePlus	Zasshi kiji sakuin	BookPlus	Janaru indekkusu	Sakka/shippitsu-sha fairu
Ohio State	**Duke**	**Duke**	**Duke**	**UC-Berkeley**
Princeton	**Stanford**	**UC-Berkeley**	**Stanford**	Ohio State
Columbia	**U.Mass.-Amherst**	**Stanford**	Yale	Maryland
U. Washington	**Washington Univ.**	**Pittsburgh**	Hawai'i	Chicago
U. Washington Law School	**Yale**	Ohio State	Iowa	Hawai'i
Maryland	Hawai'i	Maryland	Toronto*	
Pittsburgh	Iowa	Hawai'i	Royal Ontario Museum*	
Kansas	Toronto*	Iowa	Chicago	
Harvard-Yenching*	Royal Ontario Museum*	Chicago	Cornell	
Harvard-DCCJ*	Chicago	Washington University		
Michigan	Indiana			
Chicago	Wisconsin			
Wisconsin	U. of Arizona			
Hawai'i	Cornell			
UCLA*				
UC-Berkeley*				
UC-San Diego*				
UC-Irvine*				
UC-Santa				

Barbara*				
UC-Davis*				

NACSIS	Nikkei	WebWho	G-Search
Pittsburgh	**Harvard-DCCJ**	U. Washington	U. Washington
UC-Berkeley	**UC-Berkeley**	Harvard-DCCJ	
UCLA	**Pittsburgh**	UC-Berkeley	
UC-San Diego	**UC-San Diego**		
Columbia			
UC-Santa Barbara			
Iowa			
Stanford			
U. of Arizona			
Colorado			

[1] Troost, Kristina Kade, "The Use of Japanese Electronic Databases in North American Libraries," [Online]. Available: http://www.aasianst.org/troost.htm [2001, May 3]. A revised version of this electronic publication is available in print: *Journal of East Asian Libraries*, no. 116 (Oct. 1998), pp. 79-82.

[2] The survey was carried out using the eastlib e-mail list serve. The questionnaire posted on eastlib in October resulted in a total of 31 returned surveys by mid-November. Task Force members then contacted East Asian libraries and collections identified in the *Journal of East Asian Libraries* annual feature "Current Status of East Asian Collections in American Libraries, 1998-1999." This direct solicitation brought in 15 more responses.

[3] *Zasshi kiji sakuin*, also known as *Zassaku*, is also available through NACSIS-IR and G-Search. Survey respondents indicated that the ease of use of the Nichigai interface led them to prefer this service for searching this database.

[4] The National Diet Library has digitized the data for 1948 through 1974 and it will be made available to the public at some point in the future.

[5] The other files are: *Gakkai nenpō, kenkyū hōkoku ronbun sōran*; *Keizai, sangyō kiji midashi JOINT*; and *Kaigai sangyō kigyō jōhō KSK-SCANNER*. A subscription to the separate files of *Zasshi kiji sakuin* and *Janaru indekkusu* is somewhat less expensive that a subscription to MagazinePlus. However, with MagazinePlus, both *Zasshi kiji sakuin*, *Janaru indekkusu*, and the additional files listed here can be searched at one time.

[6] Examples include national union catalogs such as Webcat at http://webcat.nacsis.ac.jp/; the National Diet Library's OPAC at http://webopac2.ndl.go.jp/; Waseda University's WINE (Waseda libraries' OPAC) at http://wine.wul.waseda.ac.jp/; the University of Tokyo's OPAC at http://opac.dl.itc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/; the vendor TRC's "books in print" database at http://www.trc.co.jp/trc-japa/search/trc_www.asp; etc.

[7] Akiyama Kazuo and Eisuke Naito, "Kokuritsu Jōhōgaku Kenkyūjo no gaiyō to dētabēsu jigyō = Scholarly Databases at the National Institute of Informatics (NII) (formerly NACSIS): Status Report 2000, presented at the 2nd Cooperative Program for the Exchange of Experiences, Expertise, Information in S&T in South East Asian Countries Workshop, Hanoi, Oct. 10-11, 2000. (The authors are affiliated with NII.) The appendix contains a chart with information about most of the databases in NACSIS-IR and ELS produced by NII (although NACSIS-IR also contains databases produced by other entities).

[8] The AAU (Association of American Universities)-ARL (Association of Research Libraries) projects are part of its Global Resources Program (http://www.arl.org/collect/grp/grp.html). The Japan projects, initiated in cooperation with the NCC, have made it possible to easily obtain article copies from a wide range of university libraries in Japan.