

CULCON Binational Information Access Working Group Meeting
June 10-11, 1998
Tokyo, Japan

Record of Discussion

Members of the Information Access Working Group met on June 10-11, 1998 in Tokyo. They discussed progress since CULCON XVIII and began preparation for a report of their activities to the CULCON XIX plenary session, which will be held in February, 1999 in Okinawa, Japan.

The following recommendations deal with library information systems and research and are made to the panel and to the profession alike. They are not intended to be completed by the CULCON Plenary XIX; the working group members encourage the profession to begin work on these recommendations, and the working group suggests these recommendations be applied broadly throughout the world.

The members discussed the following seven topics:

1. Japanese Bibliographic Databases

Goal: To make essential Japanese bibliographic databases, especially JMARC¹, Zasshikijisakuin², and the NACSIS³ union catalog databases, easily accessible through the Internet and other channels with fee structures and payment mechanisms supportive of use outside of Japan.

Progress/status:

- The US reported that progress in the access to Japanese bibliographic databases by North American researchers and libraries has been greeted enthusiastically; more information is available and it is easier to access.
- Japan side reported on NACSIS Webcat, the system for searching the union catalog of databases of records held by participating university libraries.
- Japan MARC is already included in NACSIS-IR for overseas customers.
- The Japan side reported on the National Diet Library, which is developing the Web OPAC system.
- Zasshikijisakuin is commercially available on the Internet.
- Zasshikijisakuin CD-ROM will install an email order system.

¹ JMARC - Japanese Machine Readable Catalogue

² Zasshi Kiji Sakuin - Japanese Periodicals Index in Japan

³ NACSIS - National Center for Science Information Systems

- ❑ NDL is preparing linked services between bibliographic databases and document delivery services.

Recommendations/issues:

1. Payment issues: for US libraries, it continues to be extremely important to be able to purchase site licenses that permit access for affiliated users; to develop payment systems for consortial arrangements on state or regional levels. The Working group should explore ways of facilitating purchase of site licenses.
2. Times of availability: down times of databases adversely effect users on opposite sides of the Pacific – Japanese users of US databases and US users of Japanese information.
3. There is need to promote wider accessibility and further opening of databases. Specific action needs to be taken by organizations such as NACSIS and NDL to achieve this.
4. Organization of electronic information: what are the best ways of assisting users in locating the valuable information among the proliferation of web site offerings.
5. The “moving target” of the provision of services: both sides need to keep in mind that this area is constantly changing.
6. Information filtering: is an extremely important element in this field. Sophisticated filtering technology will soon be made available commercially at reasonable cost.

2. Government Documents

Goal: To make available on-line through the Internet and other channels government-related documents, such as statistics, ministry and committee reports, and policy papers that are publicly available.

To make efforts on both the US and the Japanese sides for developing user-friendly systems for referencing, and for archiving, governmental and other useful data that is publicly available on-line, through the Internet and other channels.

Progress/status:

- ❑ The Japanese Secretariats of both houses together with the NDL will soon establish web pages that will soon carry full text transcripts of Diet deliberations.
- ❑ Most ministries and agencies now provide current information, including over the counter documents, through their home pages.

- ❑ The Management and Coordination Agency is establishing a framework for other ministries and agencies to aggregate all government documents.
- ❑ The NDL is digitalizing English-language white papers and making them available on the Internet.
- ❑ The NDL is working to establish a workable framework for digital deposit and archiving of government information.
- ❑ The NDL home page plans to serve as a gateway to digitized Japanese library resources, including Japanese government information.
- ❑ The US government is providing more and more interactive capabilities through its home pages.
- ❑ The US government is not serving to aggregate government documents.
- ❑ The US libraries serve to aggregate government information on the Internet.
- ❑ The Government Printing Office has begun working with the OCLC to provide archiving of government electronic information.
- ❑ Japanese academic associations provide Japanese governments documents and analysis on their home pages at no cost.
- ❑ The overuse of hyperlinks in US government documents and on home pages in general can hinder abilities to read materials in a linear fashion.

Recommendations/issues:

1. Efforts need to be taken so that government documents provided only electronically should be aggregated and preserved in an organized manner.

3. Document Delivery Services

Goal: To improve the document delivery services for overseas requests by libraries and information service institutions in Japan and the United States.

Progress/status:

- ❑ The Association of National University Libraries deliberates on efforts to establish more effective document delivery services between Japan and the United States.
- ❑ The Association of National University Libraries is developing a set of concrete measures on document delivery services in conjunction with the various parent organizations making up the National Public and Private University Committee.

- ❑ The Special Committee on Information Access will be established at the Association of National University Libraries in late June, this year.
- ❑ The ARL has developed two projects relating to improving ILL performance: 1) the NAILDD Project (North American ILL & document Delivery Project) is working to improve US library ILL unit operations; and 2) the AAU/ARL Japan Project is working to establish binational ILL with Japan.

Recommendations/issues:

1. A group should be established to seek support for on-going discussions of DDS and to discuss the following issues:
 - a) It is necessary to consider DDS issues in a global context, rather than simply a binational context.
 - b) Conduct surveys regarding demand in Japan and the United States for academic information from the other country.
 - c) Promote the establishment of an agreement with national university libraries in regard to international ILL.
 - d) Initiate experiments of a “document imaging system” compatible with the Ariel system.
 - e) Seek solutions of issues of copyright and fee systems.
 - f) The US counterpart organization concerning ILL discussions should be the NCC.
 - g) All AAU/ARL libraries will participate in ILL with future expansion to all academic libraries.
 - h) Japan should have easy access to the bibliographic databases of major US university libraries.

4. Training Programs for Japanese Language Resources

Goal: To support training programs for US information professionals and users in the use of Japanese-language resources, so that the available resources are more widely accessible outside of Japan

This goal has been expanded to include the provision of training for Japanese librarians and researchers in the use of US library resources.

Progress/status:

- ❑ The CGP is supporting a training program on NACSIS resources for US librarians.

- ❑ Japan Foundation, in conjunction with NDL, NACSIS and International House, is supporting a training program for Japanese Studies librarians worldwide, including US librarians, on both printed and electronic resources.
- ❑ The CGP program participants have already conducted training workshops at seven US locations that have attracted over 175 participants.
- ❑ Japan Foundation training programs have provided US librarians with access to an international network of library resources and librarians.

Recommendations/issues:

1. To encourage the continuation of these training programs and workshops in the US and Japan.
2. Continued training on printed resources needs to be a priority.
3. Training should be provided for users of US resources. Specifically Japanese librarians and researchers should be trained in the US or at the American Center on using American resources.
4. Additional training in Japanese language software should be provided.
5. US librarians want consortial pricing and site licenses for NACSIS databases.
6. US librarians are now asking for access to full text documents as well as to bibliographic data.
7. The US side would like to know what Japanese librarians want to learn about US bibliographic resources.
8. US librarians would like the NACSIS databases to be available for longer periods of time and to have simpler payment mechanisms.
9. The US side should develop an English-language workbook with examples and distribute it to participants in the NACSIS training workshops.

5. Reading Japanese Text on Non-Japanese OS Hardware

Goal: To encourage the further development of widely available and inexpensive software that allows the reading and/or manipulation of Japanese text on non-Japanese OS hardware.

The further development of software for reading and manipulating Japanese text on non-Japanese OS has continued. The action to be taken is increased education on the available software as follows.

Progress/status:

- ❑ Existing English OS, specifically Windows 95, can create a Japanese environment with software downloaded from existing websites. This software can create difficulties in operations, but troubleshooting information is easily accessible through websites developed to deal with these issues.
- ❑ English-language OS with Japanese fonts and input software will soon be available commercially.

Recommendations/issues:

1. CULCON should prepare or have prepared an on-going plain language English guide to the hardware and software issues and alternatives in accessing Japanese databases. This guide should be made available via the Internet and publicized in appropriate venues.
2. US libraries, within which Japanese studies librarians have to work, require OS that offer a full range of fonts. Users using English OS should go to websites for instruction on installing and operating bolt-ons for reading and inputting Japanese.
3. Scholars should use a Japanese OS.

6. Newspaper, Journal Articles

Goal: To add to the information available through the Internet and other channels a menu of services of indexes and the full texts of newspaper and journal articles. This information should be made available under fee structures and payment mechanism supportive of use outside of the country of origin.

Progress/status:

- ❑ Due to issues peculiar to Japanese language the development of databases on Japanese newspapers and magazines as well as database services are behind information services in the US.
- ❑ As part of the AAU/ARL Japan project, a database is being created of Japanese newspaper holdings in the United States.

Recommendations/issues:

1. Aggregation and archiving are still problems in accessing US and Japanese newspapers. Development of efficient search functions is desirable.
2. Backfiles of Japanese newspaper holdings should be built up in the United States.
3. US libraries want consortial pricing and site licenses for Japanese newspaper sites.

4. Prices for access to Japanese newspaper databases are relatively high. This will turn around with greater diffusion of PCs and lower communications rates in Japan.

7. Translation of Japanese to English

Goal: To call for the development of software for the effective machine translation of Japanese into English, so that the available Japanese resources are more widely accessible outside of Japan.

Progress/status:

- Considerable progress has been made in developing machine translation programs for Japanese language materials into English.
- For general purposes, package software and translation servers are available.
- Some search engines now have translation programs built-in.
- The US Department of Commerce is cooperating with JST to develop machine translation programs for science and technology databases. For special domains, high quality machine translation systems involve high costs in compiling dictionaries for users in those domains.

In addition to the above discussion, the Japan working group members submitted the results of a survey of Japanese needs in accessing information via the Internet in the United States. The working group as a whole recommended that this survey be expanded to include US needs in accessing information via the Internet in Japan. The survey should also expand the sampling base in both countries.

The chairmen of the working group will draft a report to submit to CULCON XIX.