

UNIVERSITY LIBRARY COOPERATION— NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

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The subject of library cooperation has a variety of aspects, both national and international in scope. Only selected types of cooperation will be considered in the present review.

For the past two generations or more, university libraries in Europe and America have pioneered in cooperative movements. They have recognized certain realities. They know, for example, that no library has, or can ever obtain, all the world's literature. Only through joint action is it possible to provide the variety of resources demanded and needed by scholars and students. Consequently, many comprehensive and successful programs for library coordination and bibliographical control exist. Librarianship has been vastly strengthened by cooperative enterprises.

At the outset, a basic fact should be emphasized, namely, that the rate of publishing and the diversity of materials published have greatly increased during the twentieth century. Libraries are also paying more attention than ever before to non-book materials: maps, slides, motion picture films, music and speech recordings, prints, etc. The development of resources for instruction and research in a modern university library becomes more complex each year, and the future is unlikely to simplify the task.

Because of these problems, university and research librarians in recent years have explored and experimented with numerous cooperative proposals, most of them designed to bring under control the mounting flood of materials. A system of inter-library loans has long prevailed among libraries. International, national, regional, and local union catalogs

and union lists have been created to locate books and periodicals in libraries. There are cooperative purchasing agreements to divide the field of collecting, in the direction of subject specialization among libraries. There are ambitious projects for the micro-reproduction of large masses of material for preservation, to reduce bulk for storage purposes, and to make copies more widely available. Cooperative cataloging schemes have attempted to spread the labor and to reduce the expense of library cataloging. Regional storage centers have been established for housing little-used books.

From an international point of view, probably the most significant form of inter-institutional cooperation is the exchange of publications. The importance of such exchanges is recognized in the UNESCO constitution by the statement that one of the primary functions of the organization should be the maintenance, increase, and diffusion of knowledge »by encouraging cooperation among the nations in all branches of intellectual activity, including the international exchange of persons active in the fields of education, science and culture and the exchange of publications, objects of artistic and scientific interest and other materials of information; (and) by initiating methods of international cooperation calculated to give the people of all countries access to the printed and published materials produced by any of them«.

The interchange of literature, information and personnel on a worldwide scale is, of course, a problem with numerous ramifications. It involves, for example, exchange of publications between institutions; exchanges of official documents among governments; commercial exchanges; national bibliography; indexing and abstracting organs; reproduction of research materials; copyright, tariff, and postal regulations; interlibrary loans; traveling exhibitions; and reconstruction of war-devastated libraries.

International exchanges of publications between universities, learned societies, and other agencies are chiefly concerned with institutional publications, particularly current serials, on a title-for-title basis. The most active exchange programs are carried on by large universities having strong presses attached to them and willing to allot sufficient funds and material for the purpose. When properly supported, exchange relationships with organizations in other countries have proven extremely profitable. Several difficulties, however, are still unresolved, even though the exchange movement began several generations ago. There is no coordination, usually, among libraries, resulting in many gaps and much unevenness in library collections. In most instances, arrangements must be negotiated directly between institutions, frequently on a hit-or-miss

basis. Delivery of material is likely to be slower than for publications received by direct subscription, a delay that may be serious in the sciences, for example, if research on a particular problem is under way simultaneously in two or more countries. To deal with the entire problem of exchanges between institutions, a central coordinating agency is needed in each nation to expedite arrangements, to secure more complete coverage, and to stimulate the forming of exchange relationships.

The exchange of government publications presents special problems. Because of the expense involved, lack of bibliographical information, restrictions on distribution, limited demand, and space requirements, few libraries have been able to develop adequate collections of publications of foreign governments. Nevertheless, research workers are intensifying their interest in the official documents of other countries, doubtless stimulated by the current emphasis on international organizations of all sorts. National libraries are in the most favorable position to negotiate documentary exchanges, as branches of government, by way of treaties or executive agreements between governments. Through gift and exchange arrangements, however, university libraries have frequently been able to procure important serial and monographic publications of foreign governments to enrich their resources for research.

One of the major obstacles to international exchange is lack of information concerning the publishing output of various countries. Few nations maintain comprehensive records of book production. For example, in the United States, one of the leaders in bibliography, none of the three principal media for listing current imprints — the *Cumulative Book Index*, *Publishers' Weekly*, and the Copyright Office's *Catalogue of Copyright Entries* — is more than a partial record of American publishing. Omitted are nearly all government documents, periodicals, newspapers, many private press productions, a majority of pamphlets, and a considerable percentage of non-commercial and institutional material.

The bibliographical treatment of periodicals calls for special comment. Particularly needed is a world list of current periodicals, noting such information as inclusion in abstracting and indexing services, availability on exchange, subjects covered, and all essential bibliographical details. Negotiations for exchanges and purchases can hardly begin when the very existence of a journal is not definitely known.

In every phase of national and international exchanges, in fact, bibliographical tools are basic. Necessary as a foundation for exchange arrangements are national bibliographies, lists of

periodicals and newspapers, checklists of government publications, and similar records. To achieve reasonably complete coverage of world book production is a huge task. It calls for the full cooperation of UNESCO, the International Federation of Library Associations, the International Federation for Documentation, national governments, national libraries, library associations, pertinent commercial organizations, and other agencies. In countries with limited resources and little bibliographical background the stimulus may have to come from the outside.

Closely related to the periodical situation is the question of abstracts and indexes. In this field there are problems of overlapping, with abstracting and indexing services in different countries, or even in the same country, covering the same titles, e.g., the *American Chemical Abstracts*, *British Abstracts*, and the German *Chemisches Zentralblatt*. On the other hand, contrasting with this unnecessary and expensive duplication of labor there are numerous valuable journals and broad areas (the social sciences, for instance) now omitted from any indexing medium. Some of the aspects involved in finding a proper solution are the shortage of qualified abstractors to deal with scientific and other literature, in a variety of languages, throughout the world; decisions as to whether abstracts and indexes should be complete or selective; difficulties in obtaining access to journals of all countries; and financing an extremely expensive type of publishing. As a first step, it would be of great value to have an up-to-date world bibliography of indexing and abstracting periodicals, including for each a list of publications indexed or abstracted. Such a compilation would serve as a guide for the establishment of new indexing and abstracting organs and for reduction of duplication of effort. The International Federation for Documentation prepared a *List of Current Specialized Abstracting and Indexing Services* in 1949, but did not attempt to list the titles covered by the various services.

International exchanges among institutions have been facilitated by the *UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries*. The last section of each issue deals with the distribution of publications and covers publications wanted, exchanges offered, and free distribution. The section on new publications is also helpful for exchange purposes. The *UNESCO Bulletin for Libraries* keeps up to date the *UNESCO Handbook on the International Exchange of Publications*, the second edition of which was issued in 1956. The *Handbook* contains a detailed directory, arranged alphabetically by countries and cities, of exchange centers, institutions willing to enter into exchange agreements,

and lists of journals and other publications available for exchange. This is a primary source of information for any institution interested in developing its exchange system.

The *UNESCO Handbook* points out that »University publications which can be obtained by exchange are of various kinds:

1. Dissertations, which are published as monographs or otherwise.
2. Year books, annual reports and syllabuses of universities and their separate laboratories, clinics, observatories, etc.
3. University library accession lists, catalogues of manuscripts and catalogues of exhibitions.
4. Scientific periodicals, edited by universities and their separate institutes.
5. Publications of learned societies which are in close relation with a university.«

Of these types of publications, dissertations are the oldest, and in many countries the most important. Extensive exchanges began as early as the first half of the nineteenth century. During the past decade or two, however, the exchange of dissertations has been considerably affected by two changes: The first is a trend away from the ancient requirement for publication of theses, and the second is the increasing use of photo-copies, usually microfilms, for reproducing theses. Consequently, the exchange of dissertations is decreasing in relative importance.

Of growing significance for all types of research materials is the wide utilization of micro-photographic reproductions. This subject divides itself into three parts: the need, the technical processes, and the potential uses. Because of destruction of research materials during the war years, and the increasing demands for materials on the part of libraries, scholars, and research workers, the existing number of copies of many publications fails to meet the requirements. Hence there is developing an extensive program of reproduction by photo-offset methods, microfilm, microprint, and microcard. International cooperation is playing an important role in this activity.

Also a part of the same field is international cooperation in the improvement of methods of reproducing library materials. Much experimentation and research are needed, as, for example, in microfilm and microprint techniques and mechanical and electronic indexing systems, before a reasonable degree of perfection is reached. For instance, what are the comparative costs of reproduction, by the several processes

now in common use, of materials by different lengths, types, and in varying numbers of copies? Closely related to the problem is a definite need for adoption of an international code of standards for technical reproduction. Interchanges of material are now handicapped by variations in practices and work quality.

A third phase concerns use. Studies are needed of the use of micro-reproductions for inter-library loans, for exchanges between institutions, and to determine how satisfactorily reproductions serve the purposes of the scholar and student. In view of the hazards of transportation, extensive lending of original materials between countries is not practicable, and we must look toward increasing utilization of microfilm or other photographic reproductions to replace originals. There is considerable risk of damage or loss in sending valuable materials across oceans and other great distances, and alternative means must be found. Uniformity in international interlibrary loan practices might be achieved by the establishment of a national clearing-house in each country. In connection with such a center, there should be a well-equipped photographic laboratory. Such laboratories are expensive to establish and to maintain. Consequently, cooperation in their use is desirable, since one good laboratory, centrally located, can easily serve all the libraries in a city or an even larger region.

In addition to their usefulness for the inter-library loan function, micro-photographic techniques can facilitate other phases of exchanges among libraries. Microfilms, microprints, and microcards can be exchanged for materials not readily available in their original form. For international transactions, this plan may have the advantage of avoiding currency restrictions, if no transfer of funds is involved.

Subject specialization among university and other research libraries has long been regarded as one of the most fruitful and promising devices for successful cooperation. Accomplishments in that area have been substantial, though far below the potentialities. A noteworthy example in the United States is the »Farmington Plan,« sponsored by the Association of Research Libraries, an organization primarily composed of university libraries. The Farmington Plan is designed to acquire for American libraries all books of research value published abroad. Beginning in 1948, the undertaking has gradually expanded until it is practically world-wide in scope. There are now about sixty cooperating libraries, each of which has accepted responsibility for one or more specific subject fields or geographical areas and for listing all acquisitions in the National Union Catalog at the Library of Congress. A Farmington Plan agent in each

country, in some cases with the help of a librarian-adviser, is responsible for selecting books coming within the scope of the Plan, classifying them, and sending them direct to participating libraries at frequent intervals.

Like every large and ambitious program, the Farmington Plan has critics. Some suggest that it is too inclusive and is bringing into libraries much material of little or no value. These critics suggest a highly selective policy. On the other side, there are equally vocal spokesmen for the point of view that practically everything published abroad should be made available in libraries. The Farmington Plan is attempting to steer a middle course between these two extremes.

In one respect, the Plan has a major hiatus. For simplicity of operation at the outset, only monographic works were included, omitting the extremely important areas of serial publications, newspapers, and government publications. While the complexities of the serial field are considerably greater than those associated with monographic works, the Farmington Plan must eventually extend its coverage to all categories of publications if it is to be of maximum value to research and scholarship.

It would undoubtedly be of great advantage to scholars, students, and research workers in all countries if programs similar to the Farmington Plan could be organized to bring into each country the most important books issued abroad. A cooperative arrangement is undoubtedly the most feasible method of carrying on such a program, with libraries agreeing among themselves on divisions of fields and with the understanding that they will lend freely among each other books acquired cooperatively. If there are currency restrictions or other financial problems, libraries can resort to exchanges, as is being done, for example, in Australia for the Farmington Plan. In that way, only publications, and no money, leave the country.

Specialization of fields among libraries, as represented by the Farmington Plan, is a type of cooperation that should be more widely accepted and utilized, especially within national boundaries. Competitive institutional ambitions and rivalries, however, often stand in the way. University administrators and governing boards are frequently determined to develop graduate study, research, and teaching in every field offered by any other university. The libraries are expected, of course, to support these programs by providing materials and services; in short, librarians are not free agents in the matter of specialization, but servants of their institutions. Limitation of fields is a direction in which universities have been reluctant to move. The trend is almost invariably toward

expansion, rather than retraction, except in periods of financial depression. Unless educational leaders develop a different attitude, the outlook for comprehensive programs of library specialization is not encouraging.

Another major form of library cooperation is union catalogs and union lists, many of which are international in scope. Any effective scheme of bibliographical control must depend upon such records. The principal value of union lists and union catalogs from the point of view of inter-library cooperation is to make materials known and available after they have actually been received in libraries. There would be little purpose served by carrying on exchanges and other forms of acquisition unless there is a satisfactory method for locating the materials for use after their receipt. Published lists which can be widely distributed are one of the most efficient means of publicizing the resources of libraries. Of particular value are union lists of serial publications, since about 600 000 serial titles are in existence. No single library has more than a fraction of the total. Also popular and useful are union lists of incunabula and other early printing, government publications, newspapers, and maps. As for separately printed modern books, the number of titles issued is extremely large for published lists, except in limited fields, though the *National Union Catalog*, prepared in the Library of Congress, has attempted such listing for American libraries since January 1956. The annual world book production was recently estimated at about 250 000 titles. Card-form union catalogs, which can be indefinitely expanded, are best maintained in each country, preferably in the national library.

One of the principal devices for bibliographical control in the United States, as indicated, is union catalogs. At the head of the system is the National Union Catalog in the Library of Congress. The National Catalog has been in operation since 1900, and now contains cards for about 13 000 000 titles. According to its latest report, the Catalog is able to locate in some library at least one copy of eighty per cent of the titles for which it is asked to search. In addition to the National Catalog, there are numerous regional and local union catalogs distributed around the country. Like the National Catalog, the primary concern of regional centres is the location of books. But frequently they perform a variety of added functions, such as coordinating acquisitions, aiding libraries in cataloging and classification, assisting with inter-library loans, and preparing subject bibliographies.

A form of cooperation that has been considerably in the limelight in the United States for the past several years is the regional library center. There are now three such centers

in operation: the New England Deposit Library, the Midwest Inter-Library Center and the Hampshire Inter-Library Center. Their chief purpose is to provide inexpensive centralized storage for little-used books. The first, the New England Deposit Library, began in 1941, and its participating institutions are all in Boston and Cambridge, Massachusetts, with Harvard University occupying more than fifty per cent of the space. The libraries retain ownership of materials sent to the storage building. The second, the Midwest Inter-Library Center opened in Chicago in 1951. The present membership includes seventeen universities, in nine different states. Individual ownership is relinquished by the member libraries; either materials deposited are given outright to the Center, or it is agreed that they shall remain there as long as the organization continues in existence. The principal categories of material that have been sent to the Midwest Center by the cooperating institutions are textbooks, college catalogs, state and foreign government publications, foreign dissertations, foreign newspapers, directories, and book dealers' catalogs. The third organization, the Hampshire Inter-Library Center, was established at South Hadley, Massachusetts, also in 1951, by Amherst, Mount Holyoke, and Smith Colleges and the University of Massachusetts for the purchase and storage of jointly owned research materials.

A few other useful types of cooperation should be mentioned briefly. It must be conceded that language differences are one of the most formidable barriers in cultural relations between peoples of various nations. There is a widespread need for translations of both popular and technical literature. Even scholars, as a rule, are not proficient in more than two or three languages, and many of them only in their native language. The *Index Translationum*, sponsored by UNESCO, provides an international record of printed translations, but it does not include all countries and frequently translations are unpublished. The opportunities in this field are almost limitless. It has been suggested further that machinery should be established through which publishers might organize, possibly under UNESCO, to exchange translation rights. Such an agency would aid in determining what works should be translated and would facilitate settlement of copyright and other problems.

A further direct and effective method of informing world scholarship of the results of research everywhere is traveling exhibitions of publications. Each year the most significant publications of a country could be selected and routed for exhibition to the principal research centers abroad. Possibly the larger libraries, public and academic, could devote a

certain portion of their display facilities to such exhibits continuously. Apart from the value of traveling exhibits for bringing foreign books to the attention of scholars and informing other readers, the collections would be useful in guiding library buying and helping to fill in gaps of important books that might otherwise be overlooked.

Still another important activity is the interchange of personnel. The principle of international exchange of students is well established. International travel by college and university professors on sabbatical leaves is also traditional. Further interchanges of this character should be encouraged, because of their favorable effect on relations between scholars of different nations. In addition, ways should be found to facilitate interchange of specialists in various fields, from one country to another, to aid in the study and solution of particular problems.

In conclusion, a few general observations might be offered on cooperation among university and research libraries. These views are based upon approximately twenty-five years of investigation and study, as well as actual participation by the present writer in cooperative enterprises:

1. Cooperation has distinct limitations. Every great research library must maintain a large degree of independence. A university library, for example, that depends too much upon its neighbors is probably not providing satisfactory service to its students and faculty.
2. The most favorable opportunities for cooperation are in highly specialized subjects and in little-used kinds of material.
3. There are fewer obstacles to cooperation in regions where libraries are concentrated than in those where distances are great and libraries are scattered.
4. Somewhat paradoxically, even where distances are wide, library cooperation has great opportunities in areas with inadequate library resources.
5. Cooperation should be viewed positively rather than negatively, with libraries expanding their responsibilities in such matters as the preservation of local newspapers, archives and manuscripts, and other areas that may be inadequately covered, rather than curtailing or reducing their obligations.

The free interchange of cultural, scientific, and educational information is unquestionably one of the most critical needs of the world today, and international cooperation among university library can contribute immensely to meeting these needs. Society's progress depends upon the extent to which

scholars and scientists have unrestricted access to all sources of information. Likewise, international understanding requires that the cultural records of every nation be fully available to all other nations. Finally, intelligent and informed world opinion must be based upon the wide dissemination of educational materials. These are the reasons why librarians should perfect the machinery for international cooperation.