The Japan Documentation Center

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Introduction and background

It was in the early 1980s that the United States Senate voiced concern about the lack of up-to-date information relating to Japan, especially information about Japan's progress in science, technology, and business. Since then, the Congress has expressed clearly the need for the most current Japanese information to help shape legislation. Demand from others, in academia, private sector research and development, business and industry, and from the general public has been growing. Calls from the Executive Branch and other governmental agencies are increasing as well.

Recognizing the growing need, the United States has launched a number of research projects. One good example was a survey of the patterns of information flow in Japan, especially to investigate means to obtain current Japanese information more efficiently, in particular that which appears as so-called gray literature. For these purposes, gray literature is considered to be documents which are neither "black" (classified) nor "white" (published and widely disseminated for purchase). What is "gray," therefore, is anything in between. Some examples are technical reports, conference proceedings, policy papers, draft legislation, Ministry studies, and studies by Japanese "think tanks."

One of the findings of this study was that bibliographical control (capturing citations in indexes and abstracting sources) of this literature is handled quite differently in Japan than in the United States. In general, Japan holds this material more closely. Therefore, potentially interested U.S. researchers often cannot successfully identify, much less obtain Japanese literature using the same approaches that they use to acquire literature here in the U.S.

The Japanese, too, have begun to realize that the acquisition of this literature is a serious problem at home. Leaders in the information field in Japan have been concerned about the situation and seem to be making great efforts to improve information flows and avoid so-called international information friction. Japanese government agencies also are bringing some changes to the distribution of such literature in order to make information more easily available at home and abroad. One of the fruitful results of such efforts in both Japan and the United States has been the birth of the Japan Documentation Center (JDC).
At a time when there is a great deal of discussion about the level of American competitiveness in the world, the Japan Documentation Center's role becomes central to fostering American understanding of Japanese thinking on their economy, with particular emphasis on government, society, research and development (R&D), and international relations. "Information" can illuminate the relationships between Japanese technical and industrial organizations and Japan's social and economic policies.

More specifically, the Japan Documentation Center was established in response to a Congressional directive to enhance the Library of Congress's (LC) Asian collections to keep Congress informed about current happenings in Japan. In 1992 the Center officially came into being, thanks to a five-year grant from the Japan Foundation's Center for Global Partnership, with $700,000 as the budget for the first year. The Center's mission is to acquire and disseminate the most current and "difficult-to-obtain" Japanese literature from the immediate sources in Japan, by making documents electronically accessible, employing simple bibliographic control, and placing information in users' hands in a timely manner. Ultimately, supplying full text information will be central to its success.

**Physical setup of the Center**

The concept of locating the Japan Documentation Center at the Library of Congress flows from three issues. First, the Center is intended primarily to serve the needs of the U.S. Congress. Second, more than half of the Library of Congress's collections are in languages other than English, with Japanese, as well as Chinese, German, Russian, and Polish language collections being the largest outside those countries in which the language is spoken. These collections are the bases for programs that serve the research needs of Congress, enhance the nation's understanding of American and foreign cultures, and promote scholarship generally. Third, locating the Center in the Asian Division of the Library of Congress enhances the Center's activities thanks to the Division's own vast collection of Japanese-language materials.

A Library of Congress Task Force, which looked into various ways in which to establish the Japan Documentation Center, recommended the formation of two facilities for the Center to carry out its mission. Following this recommendation, two offices were established: one in Washington, now known as JDC; the other in Tokyo, now called the Tokyo Acquisitions Facility and usually referred to as TAF. The Center operates the Tokyo Acquisitions Facility (situated in the Akasaka Twin Tower building) which concentrates its activities in acquisition and initial processing of Japanese information.

At LC the Center consists of the director and a library assistant as of November 1994, later to be joined by a reference librarian with the possibility of a further expansion of staff, based on demonstrated need. The Tokyo Acquisitions Facility has been fully staffed, i.e., with a head, a reference librarian, and an assistant since its inception in November 1993.
Collections

The Japan Documentation Center collects documents issued by government and nongovernmental organizations in a wide range of public policy and research fields, including draft legislation, judicial decisions, etc., as well as materials in economics, commerce and industry, the environment, politics, social conditions, and national defense.

In addition to the gray literature described above, the Center subscribes to some thirty journals and various annual publications and reference works. The Center works hard to obtain the latest editions, with vendors being asked to use express mail. These items do not go through the routine check-in procedures of the Library before they are made available to the user. The Center manages and controls these materials, both bibliographically and physically, and makes all materials available for users' inspection and use on site.

Users

The Center's primary users at this time are the U.S. Congress and the Japan specialists in the Congressional Research Service (CRS) of the Library of Congress. Each researcher who specializes in Japan in the Congressional Research Service has his or her defined area, such as economics, law, or science and technology policy. In consultation with each of these researchers, Center staff maintain an individual profile of interests, as well as general guidelines for the scope of literature to be collected. These basic frameworks are frequently reviewed and revised according to the needs of users, as well as to take account of developments in politics and economics in Japan. The Center is going to expand this activity in the near future to researchers who have specific areas of specialization and will welcome requests for Selected Dissemination of Information (SDI) services.

In keeping with the Library's policy of serving the nation, JDC's collections are available to other users from federal government agencies; academic and research institutions (both in the public and private sector, including think tanks and R&D institutions); American business and industry; and the general public. They may search JDC's index file on the Internet. Individuals may also visit the Center during weekday office hours.

Functions

The Center's functions are: (1) to respond to all Congressional requests and inquiries and those of other users for policy information and to provide translations on a selective basis; (2) to offer access through the Center to materials relating to Japan that may be found in its database; (3) to oversee the activities of the Tokyo Acquisitions Facility, in particular to help establish policies, guidelines, and procedures for acquiring, processing, storing, and retrieving documents; and (4) to instruct American researchers, as well as people interested in the use of Japanese policy information generally, through seminars, conferences, and publications.
Flow of information

Staff members in Tokyo scan several newspapers to learn what events are taking place, identify which government newsrooms will issue related reports, announcements, etc., and identify which documents might then fall within the scope of our established guidelines. They visit those agencies to collect information and documents, revisiting if documents are delayed. They also maintain various personal contacts with staff members of many other Japanese organizations to remind them of our interest.

The Center's activities would be extremely difficult to carry out without the cooperation of major government agencies as well as some professional associations and corporations in Japan. Especially to be mentioned here is a special arrangement with the National Diet Library. The Library of Congress and the National Diet Library have had a long history of a successful exchange program, with each library saving those national, as well as local, government reports and some other documents, to send to the other library. Many of these materials are very appropriate for the Center's users and so can be obtained on a timely basis. The National Diet Library allows the TAF staff to go through those materials, pick out relevant titles, and send them to the Center without waiting for the normal exchange period or going through regular channels. Thus, current information, especially that which is not for sale, can be obtained by the Center very efficiently. Numerous organizations including the Keidanren (Federation of Economic Organizations) and the Database Promotion Center also give special consideration to the Center's need and make exceptions to their routines by simplifying procedures to speed up the process in order to supply the information to the Center.

After obtaining these documents, the reference librarian at TAF prepares a bibliographic sheet for each one. This includes a transcription of the title and agency name in romanized form, together with the English translation and basic descriptive bibliographic information. Also attached to each is a summary of the contents in English. Both bibliographic sheets and documents are sent to the Center weekly via express mail service.

In Washington the bibliographic sheets are reviewed against the documents and staff add index terms. Documents of less than 120 pages are scanned and the information is stored in optical disks maintained by the Congressional Research Service. The information from the bibliographic sheets is input into the Library's online system, SCORPIO. The lengthier documents which are not scanned are physically controlled in the Center.

File access

Researchers in the Congressional Research Service search the online index file and call up documents for viewing. They may request printouts via their own microcomputers. When JDC receives requests from researchers outside the Congressional Research Service, Center staff search the online index file, send for printouts of documents to printer equipment at
the Congressional Research Service, and supply printed documents to the users by whatever means best suit the users' needs. In cases of documents more than 120 pages long, the document is retrieved from the shelves and sent out to the user's institution by the loan services of the Library of Congress.

As of November 1994, the JDC bibliographic records are accessible to other institutions and researchers electronically on Internet through Machine-Assisted Realization of the Virtual Electronic Library (MARVEL), LC's gopher. Researchers can search the index file and identify the documents they wish to have. Then they can request the documents from the Center by indicating the document number. The Center will send them out in the manner indicated by the requesters or by the most appropriate means. LC's automation staff are also exploring the listing electronically of the Center's journal holdings.

**Other reference services**

When the researchers cannot find all that they need in the index files and optical disks, they may ask the Japan Documentation Center for further information. The Center utilizes its reference collection and, if the information is still not sufficient, those inquiries are faxed to TAF where the reference librarian will search various databases, newspapers, and reports. The librarian may of course contact agencies for information, too. In all cases, the librarian send documents to the Center mostly via fax.

Because 99 percent of the JDC documents collected or requested are in Japanese, the majority of users request a detailed English summary before they decide to ask for a complete translation. Some users of course request translation at the beginning. Translation is very costly and time-consuming and, therefore, the Center must carefully analyze the pattern of requests and determine how to provide both cost-effective and time-efficient provision of translations.

**Communications**

Requests and inquiries come to the Japan Documentation Center twenty-four hours a day through E-mail, fax, telephone, and regular U.S. mail. Communication between Washington and Tokyo staff is done mainly by fax. Because of the time difference between these two locations, fax sent out during the day from Washington is picked up in Tokyo several hours later when the Tokyo staff comes to work. They respond to the fax that day (which is during the night in Washington) and documents are waiting the next morning when the Center staff comes to work. As of this writing, the Tokyo office does not have access to Internet and therefore the two offices are not communicating electronically. (Because of the time difference, people are not able to read E-mail immediately after its receipt anyway.) Therefore, fax seems adequate now and has the advantage of allowing one to correspond in Japanese using Japanese script.
Additional JDC activities

The Japan Documentation Center issues announcements, newsletters, and papers to keep users informed about the Center, new developments in the field, events, etc. These announcements are issued in printed form as well as via electronic means. Center staff also take every opportunity to present papers and disseminate information at professional and scholarly conferences and other similar occasions.

In March 1994, the Center held its first workshop on "Technical Requirements for Accessing Japanese Information: Problems and Solutions," which was attended by a capacity audience of 150. Speakers included technical specialists in Japanese communication, such as Ken R. Lunde, the author of Nihongo joho shori: Understanding Japanese information processing. The workshop was very favorably received and its proceedings have been requested by various specialists. Planning for the 1995 workshop to take place in April is underway.

The future

Direct access to the Center's index file by users at locations outside of LC now being available, the next reasonable step is to make the documents themselves available over Internet. However, this is expected to present difficulties because the Center's involvement in optical scanning is recent and proportionately very small, in context of the whole scanning operation at the Library's Congressional Research Service. If we are to make the Center's documents available, they must be separated from the rest of the documents. All documents are stored in the same optical disks according to the order of acquisition, regardless of whether they are CRS or JDC documents. If these could be separated, then we would have to put all JDC documents through an optical character recognition process. However, there appears to be no ready way to separate the Center's documents for the time being.

A future priority is to make it possible for the Tokyo-based reference librarian to directly input bibliographical and summary information into the Center's online system from Tokyo, so that we can eliminate the redundancy of handling bibliographic information twice. Another priority is to provide a large enough space for users to come and use the Center's journals and other documents. The Center is now in tight, temporary space. When the Center moves to the Jefferson Building, which is currently undergoing renovations, we hope to be able to provide more space in such a way that the users who simply want to examine some documents on the optical disks on site can do so before requesting printouts. This will also provide far better opportunity to coordinate between the Center and LC's Japanese Section to enhance their functions mutually.

Since most documents are written in Japanese, a possibility to utilize some ways to transmit those as digitized images must be considered as the need increases. In that case, users also must be equipped to receive images electronically. At present, the documents on the optical disks are printed out solely on a printer located at the Congressional Research Service. This
is a special printer designed and developed by the Library of Congress. As more documents are requested by the Center's users, it will be more efficient to print them out on-site at the Center. Therefore, the Center is in process of acquiring such a specially designed printer.

The Library of Congress is planning to update this optical disk system so that the disk capacity can be increased to accommodate those documents which are over 120 pages long. This will serve two purposes for the Center: (1) reduce the amount of physical control of documents the Center has to do, and (2) store more information permanently.

Long-range plans

There have been frequent questions as to the long-term fate of those documents that the Center acquires. As stated earlier, the mission of the Center is to acquire and serve current information needs. The decision yet must be made: "how current is current?" — "how long should the Center keep documents on hand in order to fully accomplish its mission?" No decision has yet been made. The length of time that the Center will maintain the information depends ultimately on the demand. Too short an interval has passed since the Center has begun its activities to be certain. A rough idea of approximately two years is being considered.

At the point of removing the materials from the Center, there are several ways to store them, depending on their nature. Those items which the Center acquired by the exchange program with the National Diet Library are all to be transferred to the Japanese Section of the Library of Congress, but they are placed in the Center for their currency.

For documents that are over 120 pages long and therefore not on the optical disks, there are two possibilities: one is to scan them when the disk capacity is increased; the other is to transfer the paper documents to the Japanese Section where decisions about adding them to the permanent collection can be made, with a commitment to traditional cataloging. The journals on subscription also are transferred to the Japanese Section and added to the Library's permanent collection.

A decision on the course of those documents that are scanned with the information stored in the optical disks must be made in the near future. It is the Center's current view that since the information is stored on optical disk, the physical documents may be discarded. However, as the life of an optical disk is not yet known, the information would be transferred to newer disks before it deteriorates.

There is a considerable sentiment in the field that since those documents have been collected with so much effort, they should be permanently stored. Since the Center does not have resources to maintain an ever increasing number of documents, the majority of which are only a few pages long, the Center will consider the possibility of soliciting one or two volunteer institutions to retain the paper version. There is a similar challenge in Japan, where several libraries in major think-tanks also collect and use gray literature. Their
documents are transferred to the Sangyo Joho Senta of Hosei University to be stored and scanned to optical disk.

Significance of information management practices in the Center

A unique characteristic of the Center is its nature as a cooperative venture of the Center for Global Partnership of the Japan Foundation and the Library of Congress. This is the first arrangement of its kind. It would have been impossible for the Center to materialize without significant funding which this makes possible, and it would not have been effective without the great support of many Japanese organizations—at the top of which is the National Diet Library.

The Center is also significant in that it was established with a special role in mind—to fulfill the need for access to the most up-to-date Japanese information in defined areas. Though the Center is located in the largest research library of the world, it functions as a "special library."

The Center is too new to assess its effectiveness. However, the way the information is managed appears to be efficient and effective for the purposes it serves, and how appropriate the structure is can be proven only when the further improvements and refinements cited here are made. Therefore, the Center must still be considered a prototype with potential applications in other areas and in other institutions yet to be considered.

There have been many such projects in cooperative acquisition and sharing of resources in order to avoid redundancy among many libraries. However, in most cases, these ventures have been confined to libraries in one nation. This concept extends the idea on a truly international basis, which—because electronic transmission of information removes limitations of time and distance—is a new world. If users from overseas, including people in Japan, can request information on Japan from Washington as if they were using the National Diet Library, we know we will have succeeded! The potential to bring it to us all is very great.

On the following pages are pictures of computer screens illustrating access to the Japan Documentation Center's database files through the Library of Congress's MARVEL gopher.
What is LC MARVEL?

LC MARVEL is a Campus-Wide Information System that combines the vast collection of information available about the Library with easy access to diverse electronic resources over the Internet. Its goal is to serve the staff of LC, as well as the U.S. Congress and constituents throughout the world. It is available on the Internet and uses the Gopher software from the University of Minnesota. Since information offered by the system will be viewed by both staff members and users outside of the Library from workstations with varying ranges of characteristics and capabilities, the format of documents on LC MARVEL will, for the most part, adhere to the "lowest common denominator"—plain ASCII text. In some cases files will be listed that are not in ASCII format (i.e., graphic images and computer software programs) which can be saved, but not viewed through LC MARVEL. In the near future, it may be possible to view images and more richly formatted text.

Availability and How to Connect

LC MARVEL became publicly available over the Internet on July 9, 1993. To access it, telnet to marvel.loc.gov and login as marvel. This will connect you to a "courtesy" Gopher client. Initially, only 15 ports will be available to internal users for direct telnet connection. However, connection is also possible through a local Gopher client, or another Gopher server by pointing to marvel.loc.gov, port 70 (the 15 port user limit does not apply to this access method).

Main Menu

The Main Menu of LC MARVEL consists of the following selections:

1. About LC MARVEL
2. Events, Facilities, Programs, and Services
3. Research and Reference (Public Services)
4. Libraries and Publishers (Technical Services)
5. Copyright
7. Employee Information
8. U.S. Congress
9. Government Information
10. Global Electronic Library (By Subject)
11. Internet Resources
12. What's New on LC MARVEL
13. Search LC MARVEL Menus

Reporting Comments and Problems

Since LC MARVEL will be under construction for several months, the LC MARVEL Coordinators Team is interested in hearing comments, suggestions, and reports of any technical problems that may occur. Please send Internet mail to:

lcmarvel@seq1.loc.gov

[EXTERNAL USERS]
How to SEARCH the JDC Bibliographic Citation Database

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Wages, working hours and employment at small firms; the slow growth of wages since 1986. Tokyo, Ministry of Labor, 1993. 15 p.

Shows results of a survey conducted on 77,000 small Japanese firms which employ 1-4 persons in July, 1993 in various sectors. Wages grew 1% since 1986. Bonuses paid during the past year were 0.83 up from the previous year. Working hours continue to decrease. The ratio of women workers increased, accounting for 6.7% of the total in service sectors, and 6.9% in wholesale, retail and restaurants. The role of women workers increased, accounting for 6.4% of the total in service sectors, and 6.8% in wholesale, retail and restaurants.

Text in Japanese; citation title and abstract translated by Japan Documentation Center.

Subjects: Wages—Japan—Statistics; Hours of labor—Japan—Statistics; Small business—Japan; Women's employment—Japan.