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Summary of the Survey on Pinyin Conversion

Amy Tsiang

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SUMMARY OF THE SURVEY ON PINYIN CONVERSION

The Library of Congress (LC) will convert to pinyin for the romanization of Chinese in the year 2000. In view of this event, the CEAL Pinyin Liaison Group conducted a survey to solicit comments and opinions on how the East Asian libraries and collections will cope with this change, as well as their plans and concerns over the preparation and implementation.

To conduct the survey, a questionnaire was distributed through eastlib, the listserv of the East Asian Libraries. Of the 48 responses received by March 5, 1999, 20 represented the views of institutions and 27 were individual opinions, while one response did not state which it represented. The following is a summary and statistical report of the survey.

Preparation and Concerns

The survey shows that a majority of East Asian libraries and collections will start to use pinyin for the romanization of Chinese after LC’s lead in 2000. 27 of the 48 responses gave a positive “yes” to the question, while 15 responses stated “most likely.” Only 1 response thought “most unlikely,” and 5 were “not sure at this time.” However, regarding the question of converting existing files on the local system to pinyin, only 13 responded “yes,” and 14 said “most likely.” Nineteen responses were “not sure at this time,” while two said “most unlikely.” Among the thirteen “yes,” one was under the condition when an acceptable conversion program and software have been developed. One response indicated the reasons for responding “not sure at this time:” were that it would depend on their financial resources and also on which integrated library system the library chooses.

The above statistics show that most East Asian libraries and collections are preparing for the changes that conversion to pinyin will bring, while they also understand the huge workloads they are facing. As the survey shows, most responses noted there are a series of projects necessary to carry out the conversion.

“If you will start to use pinyin, what projects do you think will be necessary before Day One when pinyin will be used to create new records,” the survey’s findings are:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>7-9</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>Unranked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retrospective conversion of card catalog</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>22.2%</td>
<td>33.3%</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Name authority file conversion</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>54.5%</td>
<td>24.2%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conversion of Subject Headings and Place Names</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>27.6%</td>
<td>51.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>33.3%</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Considering both the number and percentage of the responses, name authority file conversion as well as conversion of subject headings and place names are the two major projects that were indicated as necessary before Day One of the conversion. Other comments include:

* There is no specific plan to start any above projects until LC beginning to practice pinyin in the year of 2000.
* Retrospective conversion of online catalog
* Conversion of Shelf titles for serials
* LC should revise and publish its DS and PL schedule in the area where personal names and place names are used as subject cutter.
* Freeze the existing records and start the new system (Notify the patrons and provide necessary trainings and consulting).
* Means of converting title and note fields which cannot be done on an authority controlled basis
* Acceptable conversion program and software
* Conversion of author and title
* It all depends how LC and OCLC, RLG do.
* At this point we plan to do the following: 1. Convert paper records for serials; 2. Employ a download of pinyin converted records from OCLC to get records in the local system for books. We are thinking of running the records against the LC authority file to correct headings. This is very much a preliminary plan and subject to change as we learn more. All “books” classified in the LC system are online, however books classified in the H-Y system are represented only in the card catalog. We have no plans at this time for a recon project for the card catalog.

As to the question regarding “major concerns” related to the conversion, the survey findings covered a wide range of the library profession:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>7-9</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>Unranked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Split files of both Wade-Giles and pinyin in the same system</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of staff and financial resources to do the conversion</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for library instruction</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need to re-arrange and re-label your collection materials such as journals</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Re-loading bibliographic records</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statistics shows that the greatest concerns are dealing with split files and lack of staff and financial resources, although other concerns are also important to many libraries. There are many other comments on this question as follows:

* Extra workload for acquisition, cataloging, and public service staff
* Still unclear about the impact on sheflisting and cutting and when these changes to classification tables will take place. Obviously we can’t re-classify the entire collection.
* We are in the middle of recon. We need guidelines from OCLC and RLIN in their handling of newly inputted records. We don’t know how it will affect our workflow.
* Related clean-up projects for the next 100 years!
* Accurate machine conversion
* How to coordinate with other library units to clear non-Chinese records
* Numerous subject headings with W-G elements

Task and Implementation

The survey also covered the workloads of the conversion and how the libraries are preparing for its implementation.

To the question how many online Chinese records at your library will be affected by this conversion, responses were wide-ranged, which shows the uncertainty among library professionals.

For acquisition or pre-cataloging records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Up to 500</th>
<th>501-1,000</th>
<th>1,000-1,500</th>
<th>1,500-2,000</th>
<th>Over 2,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>15</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>26.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are greatly based on estimation, ranging from just a few records to as high as 250,000-300,000 records. Most responses were unable to provide even an estimated figure.

For less than full level cataloging records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Up to 50</th>
<th>51-100</th>
<th>500</th>
<th>3,500</th>
<th>80,000-90,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>28.6%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>14.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are also wide-ranging. Once again, most responses were unable to provide even estimated figures.

For monographic records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Up to 50,000</th>
<th>50,001-100,000</th>
<th>100,001-150,000</th>
<th>150,001-200,000</th>
<th>Over 200,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>56.7%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These figures are very much based on the size of the collections. However, almost all the responses indicated these were estimation, and not accurate at all.

For serial records

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>Up to 1,000</th>
<th>1,001-2,000</th>
<th>2,001-3,000</th>
<th>3,001-4,000</th>
<th>Over 4,000</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These were also based on estimation, with as few as 3 records and as high as over 10,000 records being affected.
In general, my impression is that, at this time, East Asian libraries are uncertain about how many records are affected by the conversion. Therefore, the size of the task of conversion is also not clear to most library professionals.

To prepare implement the task at regional and institution level, the survey found most East Asian libraries at very early stage, and a lot of uncertainty exists.

At the regional or local level, to the question of support group in a same library local system, 22 of the total 47 responses said “yes,” and 7 “most likely.” Meanwhile, three chose “no” and two “most unlikely,” with thirteen “not sure at this time.” 28 of the 47 responses said “yes” to participate in regional consortium, and the rest 19 answered “no” to the question.

Regarding the responders’ own library systems and institutions, a great majority of East Asian libraries and collections, 40 of total 48 or 83.3 percent, have informed their institutions’ “main library” about the LC pinyin policy change. One response chose “most likely” to inform, one chose “no,” four were “not sure at this time,” and one indicated “not applicable.” However, only ten of the 48 responses, 20.8 percent, have discussed an implementation plan with their institutions’ Systems professionals, and 33, or 68.8 percent, “will do later.” Three thought there was “no need” to do so, one said “most unlikely” to do so, and one did not answer this question, but provided a comment: “We need an acceptable conversion program and software before we can plan for the conversion.” These statistics show that most institutions are aware of the changes, but the implementation plans are still far from beginning.

Following are the solutions or comments specified in the 10 “yes” responses:

* Staff from System office will come to CEAL meeting to listen to plans of LC, OCLC, and RLIN.
* Build user interface to search in pinyin and/or correct title specific fields into pinyin.
* We propse a UC wide initiative.
* Preliminarily, concerning post-conversion RLIN tape load.
* The Head of our Systems Dept. will write up an implementation plan to submit to the Administration.
* Have begun discussions and informed key people about the upcoming need to purchase converted records from RLIN and then to re-load into local database.
* Only preliminary discussions have taken place. Information on the conversion process to be employed by RLIN/OCLC is not sufficient to enable any meaningful discussion at this time.
* Hollis will have CJK capacity in 2002.
* We are watching closely what Lc, OCLC, and RLIN will do on this matter.
* We need an acceptable conversion program and software before we can plan for the conversion.

**National Coordination**

In the survey, most responses paid full attention to national coordination, and hope the Library of Congress, CEAL, RLG, and OCLC will play a greater role in the conversion.

*What CEAL can do to help member libraries:*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Set up guidelines for members in consultation with LC</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>7-9</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>Unranked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>42</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

28
Other comments on what CEAL can do:

* We would like to suggest that CEAL set up a committee to initiate and coordinate a grant proposal to do the conversion. In the proposal each East Asian collection is responsible for drafting its own need.
* Assist in cooperative projects to resolve non-unique names in the authority file.
* We applaud the Library of Congress for beginning to study the subject headings with Wade-Giles elements. The Library should be urged to complete this efforts before using Hanyu pinyin for transliteration.
* Press OCLC to comply with the conversion timely.
* Perhaps act as a clearing house to gather and make available reliable information on the status of conversion at LC, OCLC, RLIN, contractors, and local system vendors. This would tandem with the role of coordinating conversion of records on the national level.
* Set up guidelines for members in consultation with OCLC.
* Work closely with LC, OCLC and RLIN.
* Provide input to conversion on the national level.

What the Library of Congress should do to help other libraries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>7-9</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>Unranked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Inform other libraries of LC’s timeline for conversion</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide computer program for pinyin conversion for duplicating LC’s practice</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide training materials for conversion</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Set up guidelines and policies on the conversion of name authority file, subject heading, place name, etc.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other comments on what the Library of Congress should do:

* Initiate cooperative projects to resolve non-unique names in the authority file.
* We will appreciate it if LC can provide detailed report on conversion experiences including information on planning, budgeting, staffing, and training.
* Play a major role in coordinating the conversion of national authority file.
* Work in concert with CEAL, OCLC, and RLIN.
* Study subject headings with W-G elements.
* If Library of Congress provides a computer program for pinyin conversion, will this be a free share program?
* Inform other libraries of LC’s time line for conversion – As soon as possible.
* I don’t think LC is able to provide any assistance in computer programing.
* It might not be possible due to the differences in each library [for LC to provide computer program for pinyin conversion.

**What RLG and OCLC can do to help member libraries:**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>7-9</th>
<th>4-6</th>
<th>1-3</th>
<th>Unranked</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Convert records in RLIN and OCLC to pinyin</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>80% 17.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide tape load of converted records for member libraries to be loaded into local systems</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>62.2% 33.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide computer program for pinyin conversion</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>30.6% 47.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provide training and consultation</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>12.5% 65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Coordinate conversion activities with each other, LC and CEAL</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>43.9% 33.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>20% 20%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Other comments on what RLG and OCLC can do:

* Provide assistance with conversion and distribution of authority records for chinese names and subjects.
* Help reduce cost of conversion and provide lists of, or an accessible database of, authority records in LCNA which are affected by the conversion to pinyin.
* Reasonable price for converting member libraries’ records.
* Convert pinyin fields in non-chi bibliographic records.
  I don’t think RLIN and OCLC will provide computer program for pinyin conversion. The software is available from Karl Lo for free already.
* Work together as a team!!!

**Additional Comments**

* Libraries should convert all Wade-Giles records before date 1. If not, retrospective conversion after a mixed file (or split file) will be difficult, therefore more expensive.
* We should refrain from adding parallel pinyin fields on top of Wade-Giles files in the bibliographic record as an expedient solution. The confusion in retrieval will be close to chaos.
* Carefully consider if year 2000 is a realistic target time frame.
* It looks very likely that at least for some time, there will be co-existence of pinyin and Wade-Giles records in most databases. I wonder if the computer will know which records to pick up for conversion. Will it make things easier if OCLC and RLIN automatically supplied an default indicator to mark that after date one, the records entered in the systems are in pinyin.
*I would like to see vernacular added to authority files simultaneously with conversion to pinyin. That way we won’t have to work on the same authority files twice.
* Conversion of the national authority file should be coordinated among libraries with East Asian collections.
* The Library of Congress will be well-advised to begin using Hanyu pinyin when the library has converted its Chinese records (into pinyin)
* We congratulate RLG on their success in obtaining the Mellon grant to develop the conversion program. We urge RLG to include the provision of tapes of converted records for research libraries.
* It is very important for OCLC converting their database to pinyin. Their conversion will benefit all their members and library users.
* Users are very eager to see this conversion, but librarians need to proceed cautiously, since so many files are affected. At this time I cannot make specific comments on conversion practices or cooperative projects.
* If a national-level cooperation is not practical, at least members of consortia or regional networks should work together to do the conversion. Those libraries who share the same library system, such as Melvyl for UC system, can consider converting the joint system and download records to their local systems.
* If individual libraries have the resources to do local conversion (preferably with conversion software provided by either LC or one of the bibliographic utilities), it is better to do it at the local level. This way local data will be preserved.
* The EAL community in North America should form a strong voice in pushing RLG, OCLC, and the various local system vendors to facilitate this change and make it as smooth as possible for the libraries.
* Currently, I am doing a small-scale cooperative web-based project about Chinese place names. I would like to expand it to include historical periods and events if this proves to be useful for CJK catalogers, librarians, and library users.

(Amy Tsiang, UCLA, Compiler)
** The questionnaire was distributed through eastlib on February 26, 1999
** 48 responses received by March 5, 1999

This survey is completed to represent the views of (Please select one)

(20) an institution
(27) an individual   * ( 1) No indication

** Preparation and implementation plans for Pinyin conversion

1. Will your library start to use Pinyin for the romanization of Chinese after LC's lead in 2000?

(27) Yes
(15) Most likely
( 1) Most unlikely
( 0) No
( 5) Not sure at this time

2. Does your library plan to convert existing files on your local system to Pinyin after LC's conversion in 2000?

(13) Yes
(14) Most likely
( 2) Most unlikely
( 0) No
(19) Not sure at this time

3. If your library will start to use Pinyin, what projects do you think will be necessary before Day One when Pinyin will be used to create new records? (Rank your priority on a scale of 10-1, with 10 being the most important)

(27) Retrospective conversion of card catalog
(33) Name authority file conversion
(29) Conversion of Subject Heading and Place Names
(10) Other (please specify):__________________________

4. What would be your major concerns if your library converts to Pinyin immediately after LC's action? (Rank your concern on a scale of 10-1, with 10 being the greatest)

(43) Split files of both Wade-Giles and Pinyin records in the same system
(39) Lack of staff and financial resources to do the conversion
(35) Need for library instruction
(37) Need to re-arrange and re-label your collection materials such as journals
(32) Re-loading bibliographic records
( 8) Other (please specify):

5. How many on-line Chinese records at your library will be affected by this conversion?

Acquisition or pre-cataloging records: wide-ranged (a few to 250,000-3000,000)
Less than Full level cataloging records: wide-ranged (less than 50 to 80,000-90,000)
Monographic records: very much based on the size of the collection
Serial records: wide-ranged (3 to over 10,000)

6. Which library local system are you using at your library?

NOTIS, DRA, Innovative Interfaces, Innopac, CARL, SIRSI, HOLLIS, Gladies, Horizon, EUCLID, Melvyl, DYNIX, RLIN, Voyager

Do you wish to form a support group of libraries which are using the same library local system for coordinating the conversion plan?

(22) Yes
( 7) Most likely
( 2) Most unlikely
( 3) No
(13) Not sure at this time

7. Does your library participate in any regional consortium?

(28 ) Yes (Please specify): SENYLRC; East Coast Consortium of Yale, Princeton, Cornell, NYPL; CIC, Melvyl, Circuit; New England Law Library Consortium, etc.; Colorado Alliance for Research libraries and its union catalog; Prospector; EAALC (East Asian Academic Libraries in California); CIHLA (Chesapeake Research Library Association); FL SUS; NEFLIN; FLRC, SOLINET; TRLN; CAMLS; CSU Link; G4; SCELC; IPALS (main library); Arizona University Library Consortium; MOBIUS Union Catalog; RLIN
(19 ) No

8. Has your institution's "Main Library" been informed about the LC Pinyin policy change?

(40) Yes
( 1) Most likely
( 0) Most unlikely
( 2) No
( 4) Not sure at this time * ( 1) N/A

9. Have you discussed with your institution's Systems people for any implementation plan?

(10) Yes (Please specify solutions):
(33) Will do later
( 1) Most unlikely
( 3) No need * ( 1) No indication
II. National Coordination

1. What do you think CEAL can do to help member libraries convert to Pinyin? (Rank your priority on a scale of 10-1, with 10 being the most important)

(42) Set up guidelines for members in consultation with LC
(41) Coordinate the conversion on the national level
(41) Provide training materials
(41) Initiate and coordinate cooperative projects aimed at reducing the adverse impact on conversion
( 8) Other (Please specify): ______________________________________

2. What do you think the Library of Congress should do to help other libraries convert to Pinyin? (Rank your priority on a scale of 10-1, with 10 being the most important)

(45) Inform other libraries of LC's timeline for conversion
(40) Provide computer program for Pinyin conversion so that other libraries can duplicate LC's practice in converting existing records to Pinyin
(41) Provide training materials for conversion
(44) Set up guidelines and policies on the conversion of name authority file, subject heading, place names, etc.
( 6) Other (please specify): ______________________________________

3. What do you think RLG and OCLC can do to help member libraries convert to Pinyin (Rank your priority on a scale of 10-1, with 10 being the most important)

(45) Convert records in RLIN and OCLC to Pinyin
(45) Provide tape load of converted records for member libraries to be loaded into member library's local systems
(36) Provide computer program for Pinyin conversion so that member libraries can convert their records to Pinyin by themselves
(40) Provide training and consultation for member libraries on the conversion
(39) Coordinate conversion activities with each other, LC and CEAL
( 5) Other (Please specify): ______________________________________