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ESTABLISHING A BI CLEARINGHOUSE FOR EAST ASIAN STUDIES

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The seed of a bibliographic instruction (BI) clearinghouse for East Asian studies was planted a few years ago. In 1992 I conducted an East Asian studies BI survey and in the following year organized a BI roundtable in conjunction with the Committee on East Asian Libraries (CEAL) annual meeting. Six librarians and faculty from different areas of East Asian studies presented papers on bibliographic instruction for East Asian studies. Maureen Donovan was the Chair of the roundtable. The presenters and their topics were as follows:

Tim Connor (Harvard), "BI methods, focus, and students' needs"
Yasuko Makino (Columbia), "Basic reference sources in Japanese studies"
Al Dien (Stanford), "BI in the Department of East Asian studies: some considerations"
Ken Tanaka (Maryland), "Some issues concerning BI in Japanese studies"
Peter Zhou (Iowa), "BI in a formal classroom setting: curriculum design, syllabus and pedagogical considerations" "Chinese electronic databases"

Cathy Chiu (UC Santa Barbara), "Current BI programs in East Asian collections and future plans"

I reported the findings from the BI survey and, based on the overwhelming support for a clearinghouse, I recommended the establishment of a BI Clearinghouse for East Asian Studies. Maureen Donovan did a poll at the roundtable, which was attended by over 150 colleagues, whether a BI clearinghouse should be established. The response was positive.

In 1994 CEAL approved the establishment of the Public Services Subcommittee. Even though the Subcommittee has not received formal charges, BI was suggested to me as an area in which I should continue my work. This suggestion was formally confirmed by the result of the survey conducted by Yasuko Makino for the Subcommittee on Public Services prior to the 1995 CEAL meeting.

I would like to present a blueprint of the clearinghouse here. I would like to hear from you about this tentative blueprint. I hope we can work together to make the clearinghouse a valuable resource.

Format — Printed vs. Electronic

According to the latest survey, many colleagues would like to see included in the clearinghouse BI materials in both printed and electronic formats. I did some investigation on keeping the printed format; here is what I found from the California Clearinghouse for Library Instruction, South (CCLI). The CCLI is a membership-based organization; its collection of BI materials, mostly contributed by its members, is housed in the office of the CCLI Curator. They are not available through interlibrary loan or through a copy service.
Whoever wants to consult these materials needs to go to the site to retrieve what may be available. CCLI was founded in 1975 and is in the process of creating an on-line catalog for their collection with the help of library interns. CCLI collects $10.00 per year from individual members to pay for the storage of materials, e.g., boxes, folders, etc. and for other group activities. Having no other government funding for staff and facility, this arrangement is helpful, although it is not ideal.

Because sufficient funding is not available for acquiring and maintaining a printed BI collection, if we want a printed format for such a collection we need to take another route towards establishing a BI clearinghouse—the electronic format. Now that advanced electronic technology allows us to transmit high volumes of information, comprising text, graphics, and sound in a very short time to remote places around the world, it becomes obvious that we should take advantage of what is available to organize an on-line BI clearinghouse, one that is easy to search and to retrieve.

Contents of the Clearinghouse

Theoretically, the BI clearinghouse collects everything that is designed to teach library and research skills in East Asian studies, regardless of format or language. I suggest that we set a limit to collecting nonaudiovisual materials, i.e., text only or graphics only, for these formats can be easily converted or scanned into a computer.

I received many well-designed BI materials from colleagues who responded to the BI survey four years ago. They provide the groundwork for structuring the content of the BI clearinghouse. Some of the materials are very inspiring. When you consider them, I am sure you will agree with me that the BI clearinghouse can contain a wealth of information helping to increase efficiency and effectiveness in our profession. Based on the materials received, I will divide the contents of the BI clearinghouse into eight categories.

1. Profiles of East Asian Collections

This will be a simple profile of East Asian Collections in North America organized to help scholars and researchers find appropriate tools to locate materials. The profile will include the following information:

   Collection size
   Percentage of on-line materials or the date of materials on-line
   Location of the on-line records (e.g., the local system, OCLC, RLIN . . . )
   Availability through ILL

2. Guides and Bibliographies

There are ample examples of guides. The most common ones are guides to Chinese studies, Japanese studies, Korean studies, and East Asian studies, etc. As for bibliographies, I would focus on the ones developed by East Asian studies librarians for the purpose of in-house
instruction and exclude bibliographies published by commercial publishers. This involves not only manageability but also copyright issues.

3. Instructions Techniques

There may be some instruction techniques that are East Asian studies specific. However, most of them, I believe, are universally applicable.

4. Romanization Tables

This is not intended to replace or copy the romanization tables published by the American Library Association but to include romanization tables created to facilitate instruction or use of East Asian collections.

5. The Use of East Asian Collections: How to Find Books and Articles

"How to's" are one of the most popular instruction tools. We can all use one of these at one time or another and many of us have created one at some point. I expect to collect the largest amount of materials in this category.

6. Research Strategies

Like instruction techniques, many of the research strategies are universal although some are applicable only to East Asian studies.

7. Developing BI Courses/Projects/Syllabi

There are many types of BI methods including the one-shot session, course-integrated classes, independent courses, etc. Whichever you decide to conduct, it is always helpful to have a written plan, listing the objectives of instruction, the targeted audience, methods, activities, means of evaluation, etc.

8. Internet Resources

This area is developing rapidly. More and more Internet resources on East Asian studies are available through various channels, e.g., gopher and World-Wide Web (WWW). It would be very helpful to have an annotated or even evaluative guide to help us locate useful information without getting lost in cyberspace.

The BI clearinghouse can be an invaluable resource if set up appropriately. My proposal is to set up the on-line BI clearinghouse at a WWW site because WWW software can easily accommodate both graphics and text. Many of the East Asian studies BI materials contain vernacular characters and graphics; we can use scanners to scan the characters and graphics into the database. The information is ready for printing or downloading once it is input. For those who do not have access to the Internet or to WWW, there should be a resource person in each area to answer questions and distribute information as needed.
BI Clearinghouse Working Group

I have investigated the financial implications of setting up the BI clearinghouse at a WWW site and have received very encouraging news. All we need to be concerned about is the contents of the database. We need to contribute our time and effort to set it up, organize it, and keep it current. Most sites will not consider any financial charges. Obviously this project can only be accomplished successfully through group effort. It is important that those who are interested in bibliographic instruction participate in the project. Many tasks need to be carried out to make the clearinghouse a reality. They include collecting materials, creating documents, inputting them into the database, serving as a resource person, etc. I am very excited about making the East Asian BI resource available and hope that many will join me in organizing the On-line BI Clearinghouse for East Asian Studies.

Afterword

Six months after this proposal was presented at the CEAL Committee on Public Services meeting, I worked out a preliminary structure for the On-line Clearinghouse at the University of California at Santa Barbara Library WWW homepage. The structure is very much the same as the blueprint drawn up in the proposal but the method with which data are input has been modified. I had originally proposed to scan the BI materials but later discovered that to be impractical because scanning turns text into images and that takes up large amounts of computer memory and is very time-consuming to retrieve. This means that images cannot be indexed and thus the contents of the images cannot be retrieved by any kind of search mechanism. All the BI materials I have at hand are in printed format. I have input a few of them in order to provide a general picture of the clearinghouse. To make the clearinghouse truly useful, we would need to put in much more work.

I started this project partly because of my own interest in BI and wished to locate and make available useful BI resources to those who share the same interest in teaching library and research skills in East Asian studies. Maureen Donovan, when she was Chair of CEAL, encouraged me to initiate something. When Yasuko Makino invited me to join the CEAL Committee on Public Services, I took this project as a way to fulfill my duty as a member of the Committee. After initiating this project and carrying it into its present stage, I have further confirmed my aforementioned theory that this project can only succeed with group participation. My next step is to investigate the creation of an official structure for the clearinghouse.

As I mentioned in the proposal, there are many tasks to be carried out to establish a clearinghouse. If you feel you can contribute in any way, please get in touch with me. We should work out together a structure for the clearinghouse. If you wish to contribute BI materials to the clearinghouse, please send them to me in electronic format—e-mail, disk (PC format), ftp, etc. I would be happy to include them. Meanwhile, if you know any site that has related materials, let me know. I would be happy to make a link to them.

A few colleagues have checked the Clearinghouse web page and expressed interest in contributing. I want to especially thank Hideyuki Morimoto for sending me seven BI
documents via e-mail to be included in the On-line Clearinghouse. I am confident that the Clearinghouse will help us become more efficient librarians as well as better teachers if enough of us take an interest in this project. Please spare a moment to examine the Clearinghouse and send me your comments. The URL for the On-line Clearinghouse for East Asian Studies is: "http://www.library.ucsb.edu/chiu/house".