Automation and Electronic Resources: The View from a Small Japanese Academic Collection

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THE VIEW FROM A SMALL JAPANESE ACADEMIC COLLECTION*

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Introduction

We have become so used to hearing words like online, CD-ROM, network, and database that it is sometimes hard to believe that automation in libraries was inaugurated only thirty years ago, with the adoption in 1968 of standards developed by the Library of Congress for machine-readable cataloging of library records, which made possible the exchange of bibliographic data between computers. Since then, each new development in automation in libraries has widened its application in library technical processes and in services to patrons. During the early years, the emphasis was on internal efficiency. In the 1980's online catalogs began to replace card catalogs, and integrated library systems that handled acquisitions, cataloging, and circulation were installed. Then computer networks made online catalogs and CD-ROM indexes accessible outside the library to local and regional users. Now, in the 1990's, the range of service of academic libraries extends from the local campus to multiple systems that access resources all over the world.

Electronic communication and information sharing have brought libraries closer to each other and widened traditional boundaries of library resources, users, and services. Scholarly networks and networks of scholars have been enlarged and strengthened through the capabilities that new electronic tools have given us for communicating and sharing information. The world is much shrunk now that we share cataloging, look at each other's library catalogs, use Asian WWW pages and create our own, participate in listservs, and transmit to each other e-mail messages and documents that arrive usually within minutes after being sent. In a variety of ways, electronic means of communication allow us to stretch our library collections and budgets. They help us be better stewards of our library resources and give better service to East Asian library users on campus and off, to patrons we meet face to face or through e-mail.

This paper addresses the situation of small Asian collections in American university libraries and the Japanese studies patrons they serve. To those of us who manage and use smaller Japanese collections with limited budgets, the money and material-stretching benefits of automation and electronic resources are particularly important, and I focus on this aspect of them in this paper.

It should be noted that the picture this paper gives of Japanese electronic resources is an oversimplification. There is much more overlap in types of sources available, means through which they are accessed, and the cost of access than is here apparent. I do not consider the indexing to

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Japanese studies books and articles available through the various automated indexes, many of them now available through web access, which are subscribed to by the general library. Furthermore, Japanese online sources and CD-ROM’s are given very short shrift. The resources that I mention and which are listed in the Appendix should not be considered exhaustive or comprehensive. Rather, they are indicative— they give an idea of what is available and are intended as a guide and help to finding others.

Bibliographic networks

Few small Japanese collections can afford a separate cataloger for Japanese materials. Indeed, many small Asian collections, like that at BYU, have one person who is responsible for all reference service and collection development work for all three major East Asian languages—Chinese, Japanese, and Korean—and another person who catalogs materials in all three languages. The importance of a shared bibliographic database to collections in this situation is immediately apparent.

Work to make possible online cataloging and bibliographic networks of East Asian materials was pioneered in the early 1980’s by the Research Libraries Group, which developed the ability to catalog books and serials in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean (CJK) using the vernacular, so that cataloged records of Asian books with characters, kana, and hangul displayed on the screen could be shared in its nationwide Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN) database. The Online Computer Library Center (OCLC) soon also developed a CJK module for its cataloging function, and most Asian collections in the United States now catalog their Chinese, Japanese, and Korean materials using one of these two major bibliographic utilities. This allows small collections to “borrow” the expertise of large collections to catalog materials. In this way projects to reclassify all Japanese Dewey materials to LC classification and recon other LC Japanese books not yet in the online catalog have been completed at BYU without our having a cataloger who knows or speaks Japanese (to say nothing of allowing us to catalog our regular Japanese purchases in a timely manner). Besides increasing cataloging capabilities, participation in the RLIN or OCLC bibliographic networks also allows precise bibliographic searching for ordering, collection development, and reference purposes.

Japanese and Japanese Studies Free Resources on the WWW

Japanese collections, no matter what their size, are always faced with the problem of the high cost of Japanese books. In small Japanese collections this problem is compounded by the fact that the budget for buying those expensive books is small in the first place. In the Asian Collection at BYU, for example, in the five academic years from 1992 through 1997, we bought 706 volumes in Japanese at an average per volume cost of $56.67. Compare this to Chinese purchases 1992-1997: during this five-year period we bought 1,562 volumes in Chinese at an average cost of $16.32—a per volume cost less than 1/3 that of the average cost of Japanese books purchased; or looked at in another way, we bought over twice as many books in Chinese for less than two-thirds the amount of money spent on Japanese books. Figures like this clearly demonstrate why East Asian librarians are always looking for ways to stretch Japanese book budgets and provide more materials for users of the collection. In this regard, the World Wide Web offers real help to small Japanese collections.
In general, the World Wide Web can serve as an encyclopedia/yearbook combination ready reference tool for Japan and a quick source of information on current events. I have listed in the Appendix a number of these sites; there are of course many others. The section on Japan on the Council on East Asian Libraries website includes an excellent list of categorized sites, all linked. The Japan World Wide Web Virtual Library has the same. Other Japanese studies sites listed give statistics and information about Japanese customs, culture, education, trade, politics, current events, and government agencies and ministries.

While major Japanese newspapers (such as Asahi shinbun, Yomiuri shinbun, or Mainichi shinbun) are not found in full-text on the World Wide Web, all of these, and other Japanese newspapers as well, do have websites which provide in Japanese and English selected articles from the newspapers, updated daily. These websites provide a widely accessible source of a variety of Japanese newspaper articles that would be a good alternative choice when online, full text access to complete issues of Japanese newspapers is not essential. They provide more Japanese newspapers for the small collection that can subscribe to only one, though of course they are not ideal for research. Keyword or topic searching of these WWW newspapers is not available. This is a development we may hope for.

Some World Wide Web sites, including those developed by East Asian librarians, introduce Japanese reference and research materials. These web pages provide very useful lists of Japanese studies resources, including bibliographies, Japanese dictionaries and other reference books. A welcome development is the increasing number of content sites on the WWW, such as Japanese language learning sites and one titled "Primer: Documents, Publications, and the Media," an introduction for the foreign researcher to Japanese documents and gaining access to them.

Libraries, East Asian collections, and research and special study institutes related to Japan maintain home pages that describe the institution, give information on services and activities, and tell a researcher how to obtain access to their resources. Usually links are provided to online catalogs or other finding guides for their collections. Some institutions (such as the Center for Global Communications and the Foreign Press Center/Japan) provide their publications in full-text. The Center for Research Libraries is well-known as a source of specialized research materials available to researchers through its generous ILL program. Information can be found on CRL's website about its documents on Japan, which include official daily records of the Tokugawa, records of the foreign trade of Japan 1866-1935, prefectural statistics for the Taisho and Showa eras, Diet proceedings, statutes, Army-Navy archives, and long runs of Asahi shinbun and Japan Times—to mention just a few.

Another rich source of materials for the researcher is the Library of Congress. Information on the Asian Reading Room and collections can be found on the Home Page of the Asian Reading Room. Among the links given there is one to The Japan Documentation Center of the Library of Congress, which collects and disseminates information on Japanese public policy issues. Its collection, 90% of which is in Japanese, focuses on non-published materials from Japan. The JDC home page provides a link to the bibliographic file. Researchers may search the database and request documents by telephone, fax, e-mail, or in person.

Another help to researchers provided on the World Wide Web are the home pages of Asian
Studies institutes around the world. These home pages often include information on Asian Studies programs at that institute, researchers and their area of study and current projects, and special articles on resources in archives, as well as links to WWW resources. The home page of the International Institute for Asian Studies in Leiden, The Netherlands, includes an electronic version of the IIAS Newsletter, which is rich source of information on Asian Studies activities, conferences, and research all over Europe. The WWW addresses of other Japan studies institutes are listed on the Handout. The home page of the Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Harvard University provides an excellent list of Japanese Studies Academic Links on the World Wide Web. It also links to the website of the Documentation Center on Contemporary Japan, a unit of the Reischauer Institute which makes available up-to-date materials on contemporary Japan.

**Japanese fee-based electronic sources**

Japanese electronic resources available for purchase or subscription abound. There are educational, cultural, artistic, and entertainment videos and CD-ROM’s, electronic hand-held books of various sorts, Japanese language teaching materials on CD-ROM, and reference works, newspapers, and journals available in CD-ROM and through online databases. The problem for a small Japanese collection is balancing our desire to provide these useful, needed materials in convenient, timely electronic format against the reality of a small monograph and serials budget. A newspaper that costs $1200 a year for a CD-ROM subscription or $1 per minute online charge (such as the *Asashi shinbun*) is hard to manage when its cost would consume one-fourth of the year’s budget. Even when CD-ROM and online subscription charges are funded through a separate library-wide electronic resources budget, there is still the problem of convincing library administrators that the volume of use would justify the expense and that the request should be given a place among all the others clamoring for attention and purchase. Still, if faculty demand is insistent and faculty and student use high enough, subscription to online databases or CD-ROM’s may be justified.

Newspaper databases are available in CD-ROM or online through a subscription with the publisher or through a database service. A database service provides access through its own computer facilities to a number of different data files such as corporate, financial and market information, economics statistics, technology information, prizes, medicine, hotel information, and biography, as well as newspapers and other news sources, magazines, and directories. Examples of Japanese database services are Nikkei Telecom, G-Search, C & C Van, Nichigai Assist, and Nifty-Serve. The RUKIT (Ruko Intelligent Terminal) (Joho Toshokan) offers access to a number of Japanese database services and many CD-ROM products, plus a database search service. For all of these online services, there are initial fees, monthly fees, and access charges.

Some of the databases of NACSIS, the National Center for Science Information Systems, are now accessible to users overseas through the Internet for a fee. *Zasshi kiji sakuin*, the main general index to Japanese periodicals, which was discontinued in print form by the National Diet Library in 1995 and issued subsequently in CD-ROM, has been available online through NACSIS-IR (NACSIS Information Retrieval) over the Internet since December of 1996, and a World Wide Web version is now available to users. Charges are assessed based on time and number of citations.
New efforts using electronic means to enhance access to Japanese materials

A number of initiatives have been undertaken recently in an effort to use electronic means to improve access for researchers to Japanese materials, efforts that will benefit not only scholars at institutions with limited collections, but those at major collections as well. One such project is the Japanese Journals Access Project of the ARL Global Resources Program, which was begin spring 1997. The Project's goal is to improve access to Japanese journals available in North American and to Japanese journals in Japan. Working groups have been set up to plan four concrete measures toward reaching this goal. They are (1) updating the National Union List of Current Japanese Serials compiled in 1991 and making it available for searching on the World Wide Web; (2) cooperative collection development of serials; (3) identifying information on access to Japanese journals on the World Wide Web; and (4) retrospective conversion of Japanese language records in East Asian libraries.

Some university libraries and institutes have begun to digitize or scan resources and place them on the World Wide Web. The Kokubun Gaku kenkyu shiry6kan (National Institute of Japanese Literature) has begun scanning text documents and prints into an image database that will be available on the Internet for scholars in Japan and around the world.\(^1\) Columbia University is in the process of placing the letters from Abe Kobo to Donald Keene on the WWW and plans in the future to expand this project to include letters from other Japanese writers and ukiyoe prints.\(^2\) The University of Minnesota is scanning the Tables of Contents of thirteen Japanese history journals and placing them on the Web, and the University of Virginia Library Electronic Text Center and the University of Pittsburgh East Asian Library have joined in a collaborative effort to make the texts of classical Japanese literature available on the World Wide Web.

The National Diet Library has begun a number of projects to help it meet the challenges of an information society and move into the new century ready to be of even greater service to the Japanese people and all others who use its resources. These projects include a pilot electronic library to prepare the technological basis for a digital library system to be opened in 2002, a database of bibliographic records and location information for materials held by 27 libraries in Japan, a Digital Library of Children's Literature, and digitizing NDL Asian language materials.\(^3\)

Conclusion

Developments in automation and electronic communication have changed the world of East Asian libraries in the last fifteen years. Bibliographic networks are only a first step in resource sharing, but for small Asian collections, it is a very real and important first step. Through electronic sources of information, small Japanese collections are able to enlarge the number of resources available to Japanese collection patrons and provide easier access to them. Computerized searching of indexes and content databases is much faster and more powerful than manual methods, and clicking on links on the World Wide Web is the students' favorite.

Those of us responsible for small Japanese collections welcome the increasing number of useful, valuable sites on the World Wide Web, which (at no direct cost to our Japanese book budgets) supplement our reference, newspaper, and journal collections. CD-ROM products and online databases provide, for a cost, a similar extension of our resources, the difference being we specify

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and choose according to our collection needs and policies and then pay. But whether by membership in a bibliographic network, by the World Wide Web, online database service, or other electronic means, our Japanese collections are stretched beyond the boundaries of our own libraries, beyond the boundaries of our own universities, across other states and countries and oceans to reach resources that just a few years ago were available to only a circumscribed group or did not even exist.

At the same time that our collection walls are stretched, we librarians also are stretched to use electronic resources to help us provide better service to our patrons. We are called to learn about electronic publishing and communication and the electronic information sources that are available, to help patrons use the World Wide Web well, and, especially, to devise ways to use electronic formats so that they help us to carry out our mission of supporting scholarship and fostering understanding of the peoples and cultures of Asia. If we can succeed in doing these things, we shall doubtless also have sprouted angels' wings, and our collections will be the havens of glory that they should be.

NOTES


APPENDIX

GUIDE TO JAPANESE RESOURCES ON THE WORLD WIDE WEB
A selected list for small Japanese collections

GENERAL

Japan Home page of the Council on East Asian Libraries:
http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~felsing/jstuff/jshelf.html

Japan Virtual Library

East Asian Libraries Cooperative World Wide Web
http://pears.lib.ohio-state.edu
Links to information on the Japanese Journal Access Project

JOURNALS and NEWSPAPERS

Japan News
http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~felsing/eastlib/jnews/html
An excellent, comprehensive listing of Japanese and English WWW sources of news on Japan

World Wide Web Virtual Library Asian Journals
http://coombs.anu.edu.au/WWWVLPages/AsianPages/AsianE-Journals.html

Japanese Electronic Journals
http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~felsing/jstuff/jmags.html

Japanese Language News and Magazines
List of Japanese newspapers on WWW, linked.

Japanese Newspapers and Magazines
http://soli.inav.net/~ceicher/japan.html
A very good, comprehensive list, all linked.

U.S.-Japan Links Resources
http://www.us-japan.org/resources-quicknews.html
Links to sources of latest news from Japan on the Web: Nikkei Net, Tokyo Kaleidoscope, Jam-Jam, and Asahi.com. All except Tokyo Kaleidoscope (English only) are available in both English and Japanese.
Asia Pacific Magazine
   http://coombs.anu.edu.au/asia-pacific-magazine

Far Eastern Economic Review
   http://www.feer.com/

Japanese Publications
   Linked lists of books and magazines, online magazines, special listing of computer-related magazines, names of publishers and bookstores.

JAPAN STUDIES RESOURCES

Japan Subject Guide
   http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~felsing/jstuff/jshelf.html

Japanese Documents Primer
   http://www.nmj.c.org/JIAP/primer/pubs.html
   An introduction to Japanese documents and gaining access to them for the foreign researcher. Gives lists of reference books, agencies, newspapers, bookstores, and journals.

Japan-related Web Links
   http://www.panix.com/~tn/japan.html
   Current events, Japanese culture, Computers, Internet and Science and technology in Japan.

Interesting Japanese Statistics
   http://www.shinnova.com/japa-e.htm
   Mostly travel information, statistics on population, life expectancy, debt, and doing business.

Statistics for Japan
   http://www.jinjapan.org/stat/index.html
   Can be searched by keyword or category (e.g. politics, elections, party members). Provides links to other statistical resources: census figures, Monthly Economic Report, income surveys, investments, schools, students.

Index to Japan-related British government sites on Internet
   Links to pages of the Bank of Japan, JETRO, various agencies and ministries, MITI (including statistics), and WWW servers of the Japanese government

Bridge to Japan
   http://www.daiwa-foundation.org.uk/index.html
   Index to various Japanese Internet resources.

Japanese Resources A-Z
http://daiwa-foundation.org.uk/resource.html
Alphabetical list by topic of linked sites.

Japan Information Network
http://www.jinjapan.org
Links to sites introducing aspects of contemporary Japan.

Japan Research
http://students.gsm.uci.edu/~joelwest/Japan/index.html
References to information on Japan on the Internet, including language resources, directories, newspapers and magazines, and research programs.

Japan File
http://www.kto.co.jp/
“Information bridge between Japan and the rest of the world”

Daruma Network
http://www.isnet.or.jp/~daruma/Home.html
Links to sites with information on such topics as Japanese business, government, industry and trade, entertainment, and language study.

Japanese Government WWW server
http://www.kantei.go.jp/

Japan Window Home Page
http://www.jwindow.net/

MITI Agency of Industrial Science & Technology
http://www.aist.go.jp/

Library Guides/ Teaching Aids

Japanese Journals Table of Contents
http://ealib.lib.umn.edu/jhisj.html

Current Japanese periodicals at Pitt
http://earth.library.pitt.edu/~ealib/jlcp.htm

Reading Japanese for Daily Life
Materials for developing interactive lesson material for reading the types of things important for daily life in Japan.
Basic Japanese
http://www.japanese-online.com/
Lessons in beginning Japanese, including dialogues, vocabulary, and grammar.

Libraries

Japan Academic Libraries
http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~felsing/jstuff/lib.html

Libraries on the Web: Asia

National Diet Library
http://www.ndl.go.jp/

Center for Research Libraries
http://wwwcrl.uchicago.edu

Library of Congress Asian Reading Room
http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/asian

Japan Documentation Center - Library of Congress
http://lcweb.loc.gov/rr/jdc

East Asian Collections in the United States
http://darkwing.uoregon.edu/~felsing/ceal/ eastcoll.html

Electronic Text Center at the University of Virginia
http://www.lib.virginia.edu/texts.html
Japanese Text Initiative is at http:// etext.lib.virginia.edu/japanese/index.html

Institutes and Organizations

Asiatic Society of Japan
http://tiu.ac.jp/~bduell/ASJ/

Institute of Oriental Culture, University of Tokyo
http://culture.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/index-e.html

Institute of Social Science - University of Tokyo
http://www.iss.u-tokyo.ac.jp

Nichibunken: The International Research Center for Japanese Studies
http://www.nichibun.ac.jp/
Japan Foundation Japanese Studies Network Forum
   http://www.acejapan.or.jp/jsg/jsnet/index.html

National Center for Science Information Systems (NACSIS)
   http://www.nacsis.ac.jp

Center for Global Communications
   http://www.glocom.ac.jp/

Foreign Press Center - Japan
   http://www.nttls.co.jp/fpc

International Institute for Asian Studies
   http://iias.leidenuniv.nl

European Association of Japanese Studies
   http://www.hhs.se/eijs

Nordic Institute for Asian Studies
   http://nias.ku.dk/

Monash Asia Institute

Association for Asian Studies
   http://www.aasianst.org

Edwin O. Reischauer Institute of Japanese Studies
   http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~rijs

Documentation Center on Contemporary Japan (DCJ)
   http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~rijs/dcj.html