News from the Library of Congress

The Library of Congress is reviewing Chinese romanisation and looking at the possibility of changing to Pinyin.

Correspondence dated 28/2/90 from Henriette Avram, Library of Congress.

Discussions are taking place on the best way to handle non-Roman data in authority records. The choices are a single record with both vernacular and non-Roman data, or separate records.

LC Information Bulletin, August 7, 1989. p. 276.

OCLC CJK350 at University of Oregon Library

Before using the OCLC CJK350 system, the University of Oregon Library had maintained a card catalogue for East Asian materials, whilst also making brief romanised records for their COM catalogue. Even after CJK automation, catalogue cards were still necessary because most online catalogues were not capable of displaying non-Roman characters.

The Library tested the OCLC CJK350 system during 1986. The OCLC CJK system offered a choice of input methods and supplied an extensive input code dictionary to allow the user to check codes. Searching the OCLC database could also be performed on vernacular scripts on title, personal name, corporate name, and name/title.

Library staff found the system daunting to read about, but easy to learn and fast to use. During the testing stage they found that some characters were not present and experienced occasional equipment failure. These problems have since been rectified. The most serious problems lay with the printing of catalogue cards. Other problems were a double display of locations data, and complicated catalogue maintenance and correction to vernacular fields.

As a result of their experience, the authors recommended that libraries automating East Asian cataloguing should: try to incorporate as many CJK routines as possible into the regular workflow; train CJK staff in all aspects of cataloguing and OCLC, starting with English-language materials; ensure that cataloguers understand the local system thoroughly; involve non-CJK staff in planning; give East Asian cataloguers background training in DOS and general computer use.

EALGRA Newsletter No. 17, May 1990

From:
Darling, Karen and Allen, Alice. "Using the OCLC CJK350 at the University of Oregon Library." *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly* 9(1) 1988: 59-68.

CJK automation in Hong Kong libraries

The Hong Kong Polytechnic has investigated software to handle Chinese and English scripts for library purposes. The main problem is one of standards. There are four Chinese character code standards:

GB 2312-80	People's Republic of China
CISCII	Taiwan's Executive Yuan National Science Commission & others
CCCII	Taiwan's National Library Association
REAC	Library of Congress (LC), Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN), Online Computer Library Center (OCLC).

Those of the PRC and Taiwan are based on UNIMARC, while REAC is based on USMARC. There are resulting problems as regards sharing cataloguing data across systems. Considerations affecting choice include whether a library's Chinese language records form the bulk of the records or a small part.

The Fu Ping Shan Library of the University of Hong Kong and the Hong Kong Baptist's College have opted for ChinaStar software while the Chinese University of Hong Kong has chosen Kuo Chiao software, both of which are fairly compatible with dBase III and Lotus 1-2-3. A certain amount of customising is needed. Keyword searching on Chinese characters is more complicated to program than for alphanumeric symbols.

From:
Cheng, Grace. "The design of a Chinese/English system: a Hong Kong librarian's perspective." *Journal of Librarianship* 21(4) October 1989: 225-245.

CJK automation in China

Following a trip to China in 1987, John Cayley describes the computers and Chinese systems that he found in various organisations. Minisis was used in a number of locations, and its microcomputer counterpart, CDS-ISIS in a few. Both are capable of supporting multiple character sets. RLG Sinoterm and Sinoterm III systems were also in use based on the REACC character codes. There were a number of IBM compatible microcomputers, among them the Great Wall microcomputer,

running such programs as dBase II, dBase III and Chinese WordStar on CCDOS. Incompatible standards were seen as a problem to some extent. Work was being done by the Central Institute of Nationalities on the automation of the various languages spoken in China, such as Tibetan, Korean, Mongolian, Uighur and Yi.

For full details, read the original article!

From:
"Language automation in the People's Republic of China: report of a visit, May to June 1987" *Sesame Bulletin*. 3(1): 13-23.

Multiscript library system

As the national library of a bilingual and multicultural country, the National Library of Canada (NLC) is particularly aware of the problems of, and need for, multiscript library automation. NLC is committed to multiscript automation with full diacritics, supplying catalogue records in the vernacular script of various languages of the ethnic population of Canada. The Library has automated 28 languages and 6 scripts and intends to expand to 70 languages.

When looking for suitable software, NLC originally decided against DOBIS because of its limited diacritics and lack of non-Roman scripts. [In fact the National Library of Canada has since adopted DOBIS for its bilingual French and English online catalogue - editor]. They tested MINISIS, which runs on Hewlett-Packard 3000 series of minicomputers and the supermicrocomputer HP Micro 3000, in 1985 and 1986.

MINISIS on the Micro 3000 was selected for several reasons, including its flexible database structure which allowed users to redesign the database without a knowledge of programming, and the capability for entries in up to 16 different scripts coded by the user. The first phase was installed in 1987, and work then began on the second phase for the addition of non-Roman scripts, including Arabic, Cyrillic, Devanagari and Chinese.

UNESCO has developing a compatible microcomputer version of the software, called MICRO-ISIS, for the IBM PC, which should make multiscript online systems feasible for small libraries.

From:
Kirkwood, Francis T. "A Supermicro-based Multilingual Online System." In *SCIL 1988: the Third Annual Software/Computer Database/CD-ROM Conference and Exposition for Librarians and Information Managers. Conference Proceedings*, edited by Nancy Melin Nelson. Westport, CT : Meckler, 1988.