

AUTOMATION OF THE LIBRARY SERVICES IN THE NATIONAL DIET LIBRARY

Kuniko Nosaka, National Library of Australia

HISTORICAL REVIEW

It was in 1961 that the National Diet Library (NDL) began to work on the possibility of mechanizing some internal operations of library work. During the period from 1965 through 1969, many studies and discussions were held on the feasibility of computer application to relevant aspects of library work.

In the meantime, pilot experiments were undertaken mainly on the mechanical compilation of bibliographies and indexes of this library. To compile and publish catalogues, bibliographies and indexes is one of the most important functions of the NDL, and an earnest desire for computerization was raised in this field of library services. Computerization meant not only increasing efficiency in library work but also providing a wide range of services for users who rely on prompt and accurate bibliographical information.

In 1971 the Library installed a computer and its related machinery and two years later the Computer Applications Section was created as the core unit pushing forward the technical aspect of mechanization. At the same time another unit, the Systems Development Office was organized to function as an advisory organ for the overall automation program.

The basic requirements of developing systems were to develop kanji or Chinese character - processing techniques and to equip such hardware as kanji input machines, high-speed kanji printers and kanji display terminals. The greatest obstacles to the processing of Japanese-language bibliographic records were overcome in 1971, which meant a success in a pioneer project so far attempted nowhere else.

Thus the first issue of the General index to the debates, an index to the proceedings of the Diet sessions and committee meetings in both Houses, was compiled and published by computer in 1972. It has been a useful tool for the legislative reference service to the Diet, which is the primary function of the NDL.

Since then several systems have been developed. Each system consists of mainly building-up and management of data bases and compiling various bibliographies. The following is a list of catalogues and bibliographic publications produced to date by the NDL on a computer basis.

General index to the debates (annual)
 National Diet Library catalog of foreign periodicals with supplements
 National Diet Library catalog of Japanese periodicals with supplements
 Japanese periodicals index (quarterly) with annual cumulative author index (This is divided into 3 separate parts)
 i) Humanities and social sciences
 ii) Science and technology
 iii) Medical sciences and pharmacology
 Japanese national bibliography--weekly list and quarterly index
 Monthly list of foreign scientific and technical publications (mostly reproduced from the Government reports announcements of the U.S.A.)
 Japan MARC tape

Among these systems the Japanese National Bibliographic Information System (Monographs) is the most remarkable. This system was designed to build up and maintain the data base and compile many types of bibliographies of Japanese language monographs acquired comprehensively by the legal deposit system. It consists of several subsystems as follows:

Input & Correction Subsystem, Data Base Renewal Subsystem, National Bibliography Editing Subsystem, Library Catalog Editing Subsystem, Card Distribution Subsystem, Authority Control Subsystem, Library Work & Statistical List Editing Subsystem, Japan MARC Distribution Subsystem,

and is linked to the On-line Information Retrieval System. Its data base started to be built up in 1977 and the first issue of a weekly list and a quarterly index of the Japanese National Bibliography through automated compilation was produced in 1978. In May of 1981 its data base contained approximately 167,000 accumulated records and a yearly average input of 50,000 records is expected. Since the beginning of 1980, the data base has included records of pamphlets, monographic series, European-language publications issued in Japan and microform publications, too. The data base will eventually cover about 80% of the total of Japanese domestic publications excluding serials. We have started also to input some 220,000 retrospective records (1969 to 1976).

JAPAN MARC

The Japanese National Bibliography--weekly list, with its quarterly index, has been making a great impact on libraries with Japanese collections at home and abroad. And now the goal of having data accumulated on magnetic tape to form a Japan MARC has been achieved.

As you saw in the former paragraph, Japan MARC is one of the subsystems of the Japanese National Bibliographic Information System. MARC is defined as a national bibliography in machine readable form.

Each national bibliographic agency like the NDL is responsible for the development of a national MARC since MARC is a basic tool for achieving IFLA's goal of UBC (Universal Bibliographic Control). The development of Japan MARC had been a pressing task to be performed by the NDL as the producer of the Japanese National Bibliography. The NDL set up in 1978 the Deliberative Council on Japan MARC with its membership comprising representatives from public, university and special libraries, government agencies, information services, publishing and communications industries as well as people of experience and expertise in and outside the Library. After several meetings of the Council, the format specifications were finalised and at the end of 1980 matters concerning distribution of the Japan MARC magnetic tapes.

Details of the tape are as follows:

1. Contents: Data of all entries in the Japanese National Bibliography weekly list issued by the NDL (Approximately 50,000 titles per annum).
2. Frequency: Weekly (600 foot tape)
3. Outline of method:
 - (1) Structure of bibliographic records; based on ISO-2709 (Documentation Format for bibliographic information interchange on magnetic tape)
 - (2) Physical character of magnetic tape; 9 track tape with record density of 1600 BPI
 - (3) Data arrangement of the bibliographic record; based on UNIMARC (Universal MARC format)
 - (4) Kanji code; JIS C6226
 - (5) Cataloguing rules; the Nippon Cataloguing Rules in use by the NDL which conforms to ISBD, but does not follow it strictly in every detail, reflecting Japanese special circumstances.
4. Subscription rates per annum (through Maruzen Company, P.O. Box 5050, Tokyo International 100-31 JAPAN, delivery direct from Japan Library Association by air parcel): ¥760,000 for Australia and New Zealand.
5. For availability overseas, the NDL is willing to hold discussion with its counterpart institutions, based on the "Recommended text for a bilateral agreement for the international exchange of MARC records via tape between national bibliographic agencies" adopted by IFLA's Conference of the Directors of National Libraries held in Manila in 1980.

Japan MARC is useful as an efficient aid for such library work as selection, reference and inter-library loan as well as for prompt availability of cataloguing information. Now the NDL is making efforts toward the formation of systems which will make possible on-line retrieval of the data accumulated in the different files. And this will mark the first step forward toward the goal of the NDL of assuming the role of Japan's bibliographic information centre, forming a national network of libraries with their terminals linked to NDL's date base.