

China National Bibliography at the Crossroad 중국국가도서관의 국가서지정보정책

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Basic Facts about the National Library of China

The predecessor of the National Library of China is 京师图书馆 (Metropolitan Library) founded in 1909. In 1912, the library opened to the public. In 1916, the library began to receive legal deposit copies of Chinese publications, thus functioning as a national library. In 1928, the library was renamed 国立北平图书馆 (National Library of Peiping). In 1931, new premises were built for the library on Wenjin Street.

Upon the founding of the People's Republic of China in 1949, the Library was renamed the 国立北京图书馆 (National Library of Peking) and 北京图书馆 (Beijing Library), while the English name is always the National Library of China. In 1975, Premier Zhou Enlai approved the plan of the new building. In September 1983, Deng Xiaoping wrote the calligraphy for the name of the library. The new building was completed on July 1, 1987, and was inaugurated on October 6 of the same year. On the authorization of the State Council, the library was renamed 中国国家图书馆 (National Library of China) on December 12, 1998.

Legal Deposit Policies in China

In China, there isn't any legal deposit law, but there are some regulations promulgated by the State Council and the General Administration of Press and Publications (GAPP, 新闻出版总署) under the State Council. According to these regulations, legal deposit copies of books, journals, newspapers and A/V materials should be sent to the GAPP (1 copy), the National Depository Library (NDL, 中国版本图书馆) under GAPP (1 copy) and the National Library of China (NLC, 中国国家图书馆) (3 copies). Sometimes, however, these regulations are not very effective.

Because NLC is not responsible for the ISBN registration and there is no legal deposit law,

NLC is very hard to acquire all the new publications of China. Publishers give their top priority to the legal deposit copies to GAPP and then to NLC. Acquisitions librarians have to contact publishers every year to remind them to send legal deposit copies and prepare reports to GAPP, so that GAPP can pay more attention to the NLC legal deposit issues in their management of publications. The legal deposit rate is about 70%, not including children's books, juvenile books, school textbooks and teacher's manuals. To make the collection and the bibliographical databases as complete as possible, NLC has to pay extra money to purchase books without legal deposit copies.

In recent years, NLC discusses the legal deposit issues regularly with GAPP to ask them to implement related regulations more strictly. We expect to see a higher legal deposit rates in the future. We are also appealing to draft a national library law, which should include legal deposit issues.

National Bibliographies

Because GAPP is the ISBN registration authority in China, the National Depository Library (NDL) under GAPP publishes National Register of Books (全国总书目) annually. It is a kind of national bibliography partly based on CIP information, but it is mainly used by acquisitions librarians. Since there isn't any "books in print" in China, acquisitions librarians sometimes use it to find new book information. The National Register of Books has also CD-ROM version, but without any output functions. It is almost impossible for library catalogers to use such kind of information.

The National Library of China edited and published China National Bibliography (中国国家书目) during 1985-1993. Because of the financial problem, the printed version of the China National Bibliography ceased to be published in 1994, and the National Library of China still distributes MARC records of the National Bibliography, which include the books collected in the National Library of China and some other libraries, via CD-ROM or online (Z39.50).

Now, the Online Library Cataloging Center (OLCC, 全国图书馆联合编目中心), which is a part of the Acquisitions & Cataloging Department (图书采选编目部) of NLC, is responsible for the distribution of CNMARC records of the National Bibliography based on the bibliographical records of NLC and records from other participating libraries.

There are about 1.2 million bibliographical records for monographs and about 100,000 records for new monographs every year.

CIP, BIP and National Depository Library

The NDL under GAPP is responsible for the compilation and release of CIP data. However, there are some problems in CIP:

1. CIP is based on the prepublication reports of publishers to GAPP. Some titles are changed immediately before their publication, and therefore CIP data cannot reflect the actual situation of the books. CIP is just a prerequisite for publishers to apply for ISBNs.
2. CIP is not done by professional librarians.
3. CIP doesn't release MARC records.
4. There is no authority control for CIP records.

In China, some companies are considering to incorporate CIP with BIP (books in print) or national bibliographies. Now, the private bookseller Rentian Bookstore (人天书店) is trying to establish a "Chinese Books in Print" system. It is said that the Information Center of GAPP is also considering a kind of BIP. However, we haven't seen any results yet.

National Bibliography: Printed to Electronic

Since the ending of the publishing of printed China National Bibliography, there have been some problems of the National Library of China as a national bibliography agency in the last few years.

First, the low legal deposit rate doesn't allow NLC's catalog to cover all publications in China.

Second, since NLC doesn't collect children's books and school textbooks, the coverage is even narrower.

Third, because of the lack of cataloging cooperation between NLC and other Chinese libraries, NLC cannot include some titles not collected in the library and other OLCC participating libraries.

We are considering a new way to provide electronic national bibliographical services. Shall we solve the problem by negotiating with GAPP to use their CIP records? Or, shall we promote the cooperation with other libraries to form a real national union catalog? The Online Library Cataloging Center of NLC is discussing with Ex Libris to make an online cataloging module in its Aleph500 system. If we receive bibliographical and holding records from other libraries, we will form a real national bibliography.

At present, we regularly collect records from other libraries to make the National Bibliography database as complete as possible.

Roles of the National Library of China

The National Library of China plays important roles in library cataloging in China in the following aspects:

1. A major rule maker:
 - a. In cooperation with other major libraries in China, NLC staff revised the Descriptive Cataloguing Rules for Western Language Materials (西文文献著录条例), which is a Chinese counterpart to AACR2 and was originally published in 1985. The revised and expanded edition was completed and published in 2003.
 - b. During 2001-2003, the National Library of China organized an editorial committee to revise the UNIMARC-based CNMARC Manual (Bibliographical Format) to replace the original edition as a standard of the Ministry of Culture published in 1996. The revised edition was published in 2004 as新版中国机读目录格式使用手册, and will become a national standard in a couple of years.
 - c. In 2002, NLC began to organize a revision committee of Chinese Cataloging Rules (中国文献编目规则) composed of NLC staff and experts from other institutions. The revised edition was published in 2005.
 - d. In 2002, CNMARC Authority Format (中国机读规范格式) was revised by the staff of NLC and became a ministerial standard of the Ministry of Culture.
 - e. NLC also compiled a user's manual of MARC21 (MARC21格式使用手册), which was published in September 2005. It consists of both bibliographical format and authority format.
 - f. In cooperation with other libraries, NLC compiles Chinese Library Classification (中国图书馆分类法) and maintains Classified Chinese Thesaurus (中国分类主题词表).
2. Bibliographical services:
 - a. China National Bibliography (Chinese Monographs, 1949-Present): 1.2 million records and about 100,000 new records every year;

- b. Bibliographical Records for Monographs Published during 1911-1949: 140,000 records;
 - c. Bibliographical Database of Rare Books in NLC: 47,000 records;
 - d. Foreign languages, A/V materials, E-publications, etc.;
 - e. The bibliographical records of NLC are of the best quality in China and at the fullest cataloging level, although they are sometimes not earlier than those of other libraries.
3. Seminars and trainings:
- a. The Online Library Cataloging Center provides training courses for Chinese librarians two or three times a year.
 - b. NLC hosts seminars and conferences on library cataloging irregularly.

Bibliographical Formats and Classification Systems

In China, libraries use two MARC formats, i.e. MARC21 and CNMARC. Most small-sized libraries use UNIMARC-based CNMARC for all materials. For large-sized libraries that have sizable collections in foreign languages, they prefer USMARC/MARC21 to CNMARC with the consideration of international compatibility and easy record downloading.

In the National Library of China, we use CNMARC, Chinese Library Classification and Classified Chinese Thesaurus for Chinese publications, and we use MACR21 for foreign publications, including Western languages, Japanese and Russian. For publications in Western languages, we use AACR2, LC Subject Headings and LC Name Authority File.

The Aleph500 system allows us to maintain two separate databases respectively in CNMARC and MARC21 formats. There isn't any relationship between the two databases now. We are considering the possibility to establish the relationship of the two authority databases respectively in CNMARC and MARC21.

Union Catalogs: OLCC and CALIS

In China, there are some online cataloging consortia, including the Online Library Cataloging Center (OLCC) hosted by the National Library of China and the CALIS (China Academic Library and Information System, 中国高等教育文献保障系统) hosted by Peking University Library. OLCC has about 900 users mainly from public libraries, and CALIS has more than 500 users mainly from university libraries. CALIS has holding records and forms a kind of union catalogs, while OLCC just provides a kind of shared cataloging with downloading and uploading functions and without holding records. As a part of the National Digital Library Project, the National Library of China is considering to develop its online cataloging service to include holding records. Then, we will develop a real electronic national union catalog.

Because both NLC and CALIS have strong teams in cataloging and researches, and are developing their services independently, some of their rules and regulations are not compatible, although both have participated in the drafting of important national standards and rules.

Authority Control

The National Library of China created a name authority file in 1995 and is now maintaining a name authority database with about 600,000 records. NLC drafted a rule for the description of name authority records according to GARR (Guidelines for Authority Records and References). However, the rule is not so complete and has not been revised for many years. Besides, there are controversies over the name authority control and the selection of name headings in bibliographical databases among various libraries in China, especially between the National Library of China and CALIS based in Peking University Library. The controversies are mainly focused on the internationalization and Chinese characteristics.

NLC plans to modify records in its name authority database and the corresponding headings in bibliographical records in the near future. However, financial and human resources are required for such a job.

In the future, we will consider the drafting of a national name authority standard.

The National Library of China uses Classified Chinese Thesaurus to build a subject authority database.

Foreign Languages

The above mentioned practices are limited to Chinese cataloging. For publications in Western languages, we use MARC21, LC Name Authority File, LCSH and Chinese Library Classifications. For publications in other languages, especially Japanese, Russian and Korean, we would like to use the name authority files created by related countries if they exist, although they are in the same database in MARC21 format.

I hope I can learn some experiences from the Japanese and Korean colleagues here on name authority control.

If we realize the authority control, how can we manage different authority files (LC, Japanese, Korean, etc.) in the same database? There is no answer now.

Problems

We are still faced with some problems.

1. Authority control: There are no complete national authority files, especially for names of corporate bodies. For example, we haven't decided whether the established heading should be in Chinese characters only. Some people think that in a Chinese authority database, the established headings should be in Chinese characters, while others think that we should use the original languages for foreign names. For example, we are discussing how to create established headings for Japanese names without Chinese characters (Kanji) like 稲浜みのる (Inahama Minoru). If we adhere to the principle of "Chinese characters only", we will have to find some Chinese characters for the kanas "みのる" (Minoru), but it is almost impossible. Otherwise, the authority database will contain many scripts, which is not familiar to Chinese readers. Especially, how can we deal with a Hindi heading which very few Chinese librarians know? Another example is William Shakespeare. Shall we use the Chinese form "莎士比亚" or the original form "Shakespeare, William, 1564-1616" as the established heading?
2. Coexistence of various authority files: If we use LC Name Authority for Western languages, Japanese authority file for Japanese publications and Russian authority file for Russian publications, how can we process names with different forms (Chinese, Romanized, Cyrillic) simultaneously existing in all these databases? Shall we use see also references?
3. Two "national bibliographies": One (by NDL) is more complete but not for libraries, the other (by NLC) is not complete but is for libraries.
4. No foreign languages in the China National Bibliography: Since Chinese publications and foreign language publications are separately stored in two bibliographical databases respectively in CNMARC and MARC21 formats, the China National Bibliography doesn't contain publications in foreign languages.
5. Narrow coverage: NLC's database doesn't include school textbooks, and children's and juvenile literature, which are included in some national bibliographies of other countries.
6. Services to foreign libraries: We would like to provide bibliographical records to foreign countries. However, we are faced with the following problems:

- a. Conversion from CNMARC to MARC21 formats: manual intervention required;
- b. Conversion from Chinese Library Classification to DDC: Full conversion impossible, part mapping possible, manual work required;
- c. Conversion from Chinese characters to Pinyin Romanization and creation of 880 fields for Chinese characters: Possible for most parts, but human intervention required for proper names;
- d. Manual and automatic conversion: If we decide to provide MARC21 services to foreign countries, we will need financial and human resources, because additional manual work is required for full bibliographical records.

Conclusions

The China National Bibliography is at the crossroad of its development. Will it develop in its own way, or in the direction of internationalization? Will Chinese bibliographical records be used by more libraries? How to realize a complete authority control in China?

I hope you can help me to solve these problems, or give me some advices.

Thank you.

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