



# LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE DIGEST

*Journal of the Nigerian Library Association  
Anambra State Chapter*

Volume 5, 2011.

## Article

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### COOPERATIVE CATALOGUING AMONG LAW LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA

Rita John-Okeke

#### **Abstract**

*A shared cataloguing service such as the Library of Congress Online has facilitated access to cataloguing data. This has benefited libraries around the world. The University of Adelaide Online Catalogue also offers a great opportunity for law - libraries using Moys Classification Scheme to copy cataloguing data for law books which original cataloguing data exist in their catalogue. This paper delineates the need for cooperative cataloguing in a networked environment. It reviews cooperative activities from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Some of the benefits of shared catalogues are discussed extensively in the paper while the challenges of law libraries in Nigeria and the way forward are also discussed. It finally proposes a network of bibliographic database for law libraries in Nigeria.*

**Key Words** - Cooperative Cataloguing, Online Catalogues, Metadata Searching, Law Libraries, ICT, Nigeria.

#### **Introduction**

The www has provided a platform whereby libraries and information systems can cooperate to increase access to all kinds of information resources locally and globally. Free online searching of both bibliographic and full text resources are available on the Internet. Libraries exist to provide access to information. The intellectual basis of providing such access is the organization and cataloguing of materials. Cataloguing is one of the most expensive tasks in the library. This is because it takes a lot of time to produce a quality catalogue record. The challenges exist in providing authority control to the records created and having to meet acceptable descriptive standards.

The history of library cooperation, resource sharing, twinning and networking dates back to 15<sup>th</sup> century, with the invention of the movable type in 1450. This epochal development in the history of information access brought about great churning of

printed information resources that no library can boast of collecting. To ease off the burden of having to create original cataloguing for the titles by individual library that purchased them, LC started selling physical catalogue cards to many other libraries in United States and also through Cataloguing in Publication (CIP) libraries still enjoys their cooperative cataloguing.

Collaboration has proven difficult with print collections and audiovisual materials because of the constraints imposed by the physical media but, librarians have successfully developed scalable cooperative models for shared resource description - such as cataloguing standards that enable the creation of basic catalogue records that can be used widely and be customized for local use (Smith, 2003).

The importance of bibliographic control in information access and delivery informed most of the cooperative activities in libraries. Thus, Programme for Cooperative Cataloguing (PCC) activities centre on providing authority control to variant names and subjects. The creation of National Union Catalogues (NUC) by national libraries paved way for the subsequent creation of many online catalogues today. OCLC's World Cat in the United States, Research Libraries Group's RUN system, BLCMP in the UK, Dansk Biblioteks Center in Denmark, and PICA in the Netherlands, SABINET in South Africa, CATNIP in Pietermaritzburg, and DELNET in India are some good examples.

The invention of computers and the advancement of information communication technology moved cooperative activities to the next level. Thus, development of machine - readable cataloguing (MARC) by the LC in the 1960s was a landmark event in the automation of library operations. Today, the Internet does not only allow easy and fast means of publishing but provides the quickest ways of disseminating all kinds of information -bibliographic, full-text and multimedia - to a large group defiling distance.

The aim of this paper is therefore, to establish the importance of a cooperative programme for bibliographic access of legal information resources in Nigeria and to advocate for the creation of a bibliographic database of legal information available in all the legal information centres in Nigeria.

### **Cooperative Cataloguing**

Cataloguing has to do with metadata creation and the organization of knowledge. Metadata is data about data or information about information. In the Internet

environment, the terms cataloguing and indexing have been replaced with the term metadata (Hodge, 2002). Librarians used metadata long before the word was invented (Hopkinson, 2004). A library catalogue is the most common set of metadata records - author, title, date of creation, subject coverage, class mark, etc. Metadata records may exist differently from the resource it describes, for example, the library catalogue, union list, subject indexes, etc. It can also exist in the resource itself, example is the cataloguing in publication (QP) printed at the verso of a book's title page or header in a web page. If you have a document in electronic form with its metadata within it, that metadata may be extracted and entered into catalogues, thus reducing the labor-intensive activity of cataloguing.

Cooperative cataloguing is a way by which libraries work together to create bibliographic and authority records that can be used by others. Cooperative cataloguing system catalogues bibliographic items through the joint action of a group of independent libraries and makes bibliographic records accessible to both group and non participating libraries (Baker, 1994).

Librarians agree to follow established cataloguing practices and work in systems or utilities that facilitate the use of records by others. Bibliographic records for materials collected at different institutions can then be shared. The Standing Committee of the IFLA Section on Cataloguing developed a standard called Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR). This was based on the growing need for shared cataloguing system caused by economic pressures. The Dublin Core is the basis for the Cooperative Online Resource Catalogue system at OCLC by which libraries can share catalogue records for web-based resources (Hodge, 2002). Tillett (1993) opined that "in order for cooperation to work, there needs to be standardization and agreement and a strong organizational structure to coordinate and monitor effort".

Emphasizing on the need for standard in cooperative programmes, Smith (2003) notes that materials cannot become shared or "sharable" resources unless they are described in commonly accepted ways and made interoperable. Today's metadata environment comprehends AACR2, RDA, MARC2, MARC XML, MODS, Dublin Core, ONIX and retrieval protocols environment encompasses Z39.50, Meta Search (XML) and Gateway (MXG).

Library associations played important roles in library cooperation. These associations provided fora for discussions and adopting standards such as international cataloguing codes and standards, and communication standards that allow library computer systems to be linked to each other and encourage the sharing of resources. Some of these associations are: International Federation for Information and Documentation founded in 1895, The International Federation of Library Associations and Institutes founded in 1927, and other national library associations.

### **Reasons for Networking**

- Eliminates redundancies. The Working Group on future of bibliographic control found out that time and money are spent redoing work that has already been done, rather than creating new records for materials not yet catalogued. Leads to delay in providing access to materials that though owned are not yet accessible (On the record, 2008).
- Saves cost. LC cataloguing saves other U.S. libraries more than \$268 million each year. Committee on an Information Technology Strategy for the Library of Congress (2000) observes that the estimates range from \$50 to \$110 for the creation of a single full cataloguing record. The cost is adduced to the challenges and time consuming. “Copy cataloguing” exploits the fact that the overwhelming majority of resources in an average library are not unique. Rather than produce original cataloguing records for the duplicated resources libraries can use cataloguing records from other libraries.
- Produces high quality records. Dunsire (2006) observes that trained, experienced metadata creators are expensive and that globalisation, cooperation creates a bigger pool of good records.

Anderson (1993) enumerates the goals of cooperative cataloguing in the 21st century as:

- Increase availability of cataloguing records (a) more (b) better (c) faster (d) cheaper
- Provide forums for discussion and planning
- Develop mutually acceptable standards
- Exploit international linkage
- Distribution of expertise.

Kaul (2010) also observes that access to union catalogues created and developed by library network remains the most highly used services by member libraries. The union

catalogues help users to find available documents in their own regions, state and country as well as internationally. His survey of the use of the DELNET reveals that 86 per cent of member libraries found DELNET useful and 86 per cent of library users are benefiting from it.

Resource sharing is not just an option but a necessity in the face of problems and advances that will outstrip the unprepared and unsupported (Massil, 1977). Uba (1972) sounded a note of warning to librarians in Nigeria:

“It is above all, necessary that we begin to cooperate in order to standardized and streamline our processes. There are too many loose ends in our technical methods which need to be tied up, if we are to take advantage of innovations and developments originating elsewhere. Otherwise, if we continued muddle-headily with outmoded techniques, we shall ultimately find our system like one marooned in a desert island. As a foretaste of what will surely come, we cannot now order LC catalogues cards except on the machine- readable order slips. America’s shared cataloguing programme has already by- passed us because we have not a well- organized book trade and national bibliography. Much will eventually come. When it does, the high cost of computers will whether we like it or not, force us into cooperating with one another. If our processes are at variance with one another, we shall be facing a period of great difficulty when that time comes.”

More than three decades after Uba gave the warning, no serious resource sharing is going on among Nigeria libraries. We just have to speedy up our efforts towards automation, digitization and networking if we are to benefit from the provisions made available by the new communication systems.

### **Network Activities and Programmes**

In 1902, LC began producing catalogue cards for purchase so that libraries that purchased the same book could buy those cards, rather than having to catalogue the book themselves. That service continues to this day, although now bibliographic data are machine- readable and are shared over networks. Today’s technology facilitates the contribution by any number of libraries to the pool of available bibliographic records (On the Record, 2008). The sharing of records and the effort that produces them, result in considerable cost savings for U.S. libraries. Library of Congress cataloguing records

have traditionally been considered to represent the highest quality cataloguing and libraries throughout the world rely on LC cataloguing. Sharing, however, is not a strategy for Library of Congress alone, but that of the entire library community. Rather than relying as heavily as it has on Library of Congress, the community needs to acknowledge that in at least some areas, Library of Congress may need to be able to rely on the work of others. In Britain, the Central Library for students became the National Central Library in 1930 and became the centre of a network of regional library bureaux that built up union catalogues.

Libraries who have participated in programmes such as Programme for Cooperative Cataloguing (PCC) have become at least as much bibliographic experts as Library of Congress. The Program for Cooperative Cataloguing is an international cooperative effort aimed at expanding access to library collections by providing useful, timely and cost-effective cataloguing that meets mutually-accepted standards of libraries around the world. The PCC offers cataloguers an opportunity to contribute high quality bibliographic and authority records. PCC has grown to more than 500 committed members in North and South America, Europe, Africa, Asia and Australia. Over forty libraries are contributing headings in one of these areas in East Asian cataloguing. SABINET's SACat is a South African Bibliographic and Information Network that contains bibliographic information for all materials from libraries in South Africa. The Basic Medical Sciences Library of the Northern Ohio Universities College of Medicine provided a cooperative cataloguing service to fourteen of its affiliated hospitals' libraries since 1978 using the OCLC system, providing the foundation an online integrated library system to serve the consortium (Miller, 1983). Kaul (2010) notes that the Developing Library Network is a major operational resource sharing library network connecting 1674 libraries in India and seven other countries. He observes that cooperative cataloguing and cooperative collection building is still not in existence in India. Thus, there is much duplicate cataloguing. What DELNET does is to collect cataloguing data from member libraries in the default exported format and convert them into standard ISO 2709 format.

The National Library of Nigeria in 1963 embarked on National Union Catalogue project but it was not successful. The major problems were that support and enthusiasm from contributing librarians were lacking. Poopola et al (2001) observe that apart from the attempts by the National Library, library cooperation in cataloguing has not gone beyond the proposal stage. The Nigerian Library Association has organized a number

of conferences, seminars and workshops on international acceptable cataloguing rules and standards. The Classification and Cataloguing section of the Nigerian Library Association completed work on the revision of the LC subclass DT for African History. The association has also embarked on the compilation of Name Authority File for Nigerian authors, to promote uniformity of name headings. These activities are in the right direction but there is need to employ modern technology without which the benefit of collaboration will continue to elude us. Omekwu et al (2007) observes that the University of Lagos Digital Library has access to both SaCat and World Cat databases but there has not been any cooperation between local libraries.

### **Online Searching of Bibliographic Databases**

The expanding and evolving bibliographic environment is today very much Web-enabled and, as such, it crosses international boundaries. The continued sharing of effort will be one of the keys to the future success of libraries (On the Record, 2008). LC Online, OGLC/World Cat, British Integrated Online Catalogue, Adelaide Law Library Catalogue Online are some of the networked bibliographic databases which offer free online searches of bibliographic data. Oyegade (2000) emphasizes how online searching of catalogues and databases through the Internet have improved library services.

Today, OPACs have enhanced usability over traditional card formats. Many libraries have their catalogues accessible via the Internet. Online searches could be from a far or local workstation. Jalloh (1999) observes that African countries are also involved in developing library networks like the developed countries. A number of these networks already existing are established in South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Malawi, Swaziland, etc. Most National Union Catalogues (NUC) is now accessible online. For example, LC Online Catalogue is available at <http://www.loc.gov> and British Library Integrated Catalogue at: <http://www.bl.uk>.

### **Bibliographic Network for Law Libraries in Nigeria**

Elizabeth Moys Classification Scheme for Legal Materials is used worldwide for the classification of law collection. Most law libraries in Nigeria use Moys as a standard for the organization of legal materials. It is important that all law libraries use the same standard as it is a sine qua non of deep resource sharing. Hopkinson (2004) also shares the same opinion that the prerequisite for any library traditional or digital which aims to interoperate with others is the adoption of common standards which allows their respective systems to talk to each other. We as law librarians know the difficulties we

face in using this Scheme. Most law librarians in Nigeria are not experts in the use of the Scheme. This is more reason to create a network where expert knowledge will be shared. Moreover, the legal profession requires timely, accurate and enormous information for the administration of justice and legal research. The creation of a legal bibliographic data base will hasten the process of cataloguing which will invariably enable access to current legal information. The sharing partners will be:

- National Library
- Public law libraries e.g. legislative, judiciary and court libraries
- University law libraries
- Research law libraries
- Law school libraries
- Private law libraries

To participate in the cooperative network, the participating libraries must be members of a bibliographic utility. For example to participate in PPC, one must be trained and also be a member. Massil (1977) enumerates the requirements for cooperative network as:

- ❖ a national committee of its necessity
- ❖ a basis of legislation to ensure coverage
- ❖ a basis of standards
- ❖ trained manpower and expertise
- ❖ a body of knowledge and techniques
- ❖ technology, and
- ❖ organization procedures for harnessing the sources of information and agencies capable of handling it.

## **Challenges**

The law librarianship profession is faced with a lot of challenges. The greatest challenge is the low speed at which changes are employed in Nigerian libraries. The world today is a global village. To belong to this global information network we must be digitised. Almost all libraries in Nigeria have undergone one form of automation or the other. But, in most cases no success story is told about the projects. Except for the universities in Nigeria, few institutions have really automated their operations. Most libraries still operate the manual card catalogue system. We all know the problems with manual systems. This of course is the reason why few libraries in Nigeria are connected to the world wide databases (Omekwu et al, 2007). A recent survey of four research libraries



in Lagos State reveals no web-based library services (Fadehan and John-Okeke, 2009). This is the obvious reason why we cannot participate in PCC or OCLC. Apart from this, most librarians are not receiving enough training which will enable them to manage network systems. In most cases employers see librarians as support staff and have not seen why they should pay attention to training librarians.

### **The Way Forward**

It is only automated systems that can interoperate in this environment. It has been stated that our greatest challenge is the manual system. Automated generation of card catalogues started in the 70's. At the moment Nigerian libraries are just beginning to use computers to generate their records. Most libraries still use typewriters to create their cards. It is obvious we cannot make any headway with our manual operations. A web-accessible catalogue is a gateway to any cooperative activity. The conversion of manual catalogues into OPAC systems is a must if we must cooperate with others.

Again, to create a cooperative network, we need to have a local centre for the network. For example the Library of Congress is the centre for all U.S. libraries and also the secretariat for OCLC. A union list of all law libraries should be compiled. The National libraries of Nigeria and the National Association of Law Libraries should work out plan for the creation of a bibliographic database for legal information.

Training is an important aspect in the formation of a cooperative cataloguing programme. The Nigerian Institute of Advanced Legal Studies organizes a biannual workshop for law librarians. The Institute is the centre for Moys in Nigeria having started using Moys since the early 80's. NALL is also doing a good job in organising annual conferences.

Individual law library is required to commit a lot of funds to purchasing software and hardware, pay Internet subscriptions and all that. As a network group we will need funding in the areas of quality training, hosting a server and coordination. We may want to solicit for funding from MTN Foundation or renowned law firms to assist in the project.

### **Conclusion**

The basis for a networked bibliographic access is to increase the provision of quality intellectual access to 'physical' or 'real' information to those who need them at their

convenience and with a lot of precision. Our clients, the legal practitioners deserve such services as this regarding their intensive information need and use. This is based on the premise that the gateway to physical access to legal information is intellectual access. Without bibliographic control information which might be right there might never be used by those who desperately need them. In the present day information environment, we can only achieve this through a network of bibliographic database.

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