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News and Events

Electronic Library Workshops, India 13-29 January 2002

a report by Alan Hopkinson and Mirna Willer

Alan Hopkinson, Head of Library Systems, Middlesex University, London, and Mirna Willer the Chair of the Permanent UNIMARC Committee who is Systems Consultant at the National and University Library of Croatia, visited India from 14-26 January 2002 at the invitation of the Indian Library Association (ILA). They conducted workshops in New Delhi and Mumbai. The aim of the identical workshops was to demonstrate how with appropriate technology and the use of international standards any librarian can set up an electronic library. Altogether there were over sixty participants.

The course had been conceived some three or four years ago in discussions at the IFLA Annual Conferences with Mrs Kalpana Dasgupta, Director of the Central Secretariat Library in New Delhi (from which she retired 31 December 2001) and President of the ILA. IFLA was instrumental in securing funding from the US National Commission on Libraries and Information Science (NCLIS) for travel and accommodation for the two experts.

Since choice of a national bibliographic exchange format is currently a topic under extensive discussion among librarians in India, Mirna Willer covered various aspects of UNIMARC and Alan Hopkinson described MARC21. Both concentrated on pointing out sources of information available on the World Wide Web. The UKOLN website provided DCdot[1] which is a very useful Dublin Core converter. It is very easy to access a page on the web and to use this converter to provide a Dublin Core record (which those participants who were accessing their own websites could then add to the metadata on their own pages). The next stage was to convert this to MARC21 (also on UKOLN's converter) and then the records were imported into a CDS/ISIS database to form what could be the core of a catalogue of web resources. One day of the course consisted of a course on the windows version of CDS/ISIS for those familiar with the earlier DOS version which is very commonly used in India. Those features of the package were highlighted which make it suitable as a database on which to build access to an electronic library. Finally participants were shown how to develop a website which would act as the gateway to electronic resources.

The question that seemed more than anything else to exercise the participants was whether electronic resources would prove to be the death of the book! It seemed to us that this was unlikely to happen in India of all places where new technology never seems to kill off the old. Where else can one see the latest model of western car swerving to avoid a car reminiscent of those in Britain just after the Second World War, a bullock cart, a cycle rickshaw and a hand rickshaw all in the same street?

In Delhi the course was held in a room hired from the Lalit Kala Art Gallery; in Mumbai, the course was hosted by Harsha Parekh, Director of the Library at the SNDT Women's University. Since it was held there in the Computing Centre, this venue benefited from a permanent internet connection.

Many of the participants were very grateful for this introduction to the electronic library. Others who were already familiar with the concepts were able to learn new ways of implementing the electronic library and hopefully will be able to apply this in their own institutions.

At one time the ILA course had been planned for a week in Hyderabad but because of a course on digital libraries taking place from 24-31 January it had not been possible to accommodate the ILA course as well. So it was decided to hold the second week in Mumbai. However, the British Council and the Association of British Scholars (Hyderabad Chapter) kindly arranged for Alan Hopkinson to spend some days in Hyderabad hosted by Professor N. Laxman Rao of the Department of Library and Information Science, Osmania University, who also happens to be the President of the Indian Association of Teachers in Library and Information Science. Alan Hopkinson gave the first of a series of guest lectures for the Association, on the electronic library.

1   Powell, Andy *DCdot: Dublin Core metadata editor*. Bath, UKOLN, [1998 ?] http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/metadata/dcdot/

The Italian Library Association OPAC

The Library of the Italian Library Association (AIB) in Rome is specialised in Library and Information Science (LIS). It is amply integrated with the activities of the AIB and it is one of the most impressive and visible components of the Italian Library Association. It is frequented by many students of the University LIS courses and by librarians that want up to date information. This information can now be searched through the Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC) which, although not yet completed, is still a very valuable bibliographic resource.

It was through the library staff's continued efforts and collaboration that, to our great satisfaction, we carried out and implemented the OPAC on the Internet last year. The arduous task of collating the bibliographic records took quite a long time as they were checked and double-checked by the librarian (Vittorio Ponzani), with the invaluable help of our supervisor, Professor Alberto Petrucciani (University of Pisa).

The deadline for completion was extended because of some technical problems, related to the difficulty of managing the online catalogue. As a matter of fact, the cataloguing software (TINlib, produced by IFNET, Florence, Italy) works on Windows NT, while the AIB-WEB server works on Linux. At the end, the solution was to set the catalogue on the server of the Province of Padua, which already manages the collective catalogue of the Library Consortium of Abano Terms.

At present, the OPAC searches bibliographic records of more than 7,100 monographs and 460 periodicals (117 of which the library currently subscribes to). The Vittorio Camerani special collection is part of the library. Camerani was an Italian librarian who worked in the 1930's in the library of the Institut International d'Agriculture, which became FAO of the United Nations, in Rome. He had a strong working relationship with librarians all over the world. Furthermore, the AIB Library collects almost all LIS books and journals published in Italy: for this reason, it is one of the most important sources of information for the Italian LIS bibliography *BIB:bibliografia italiana delle biblioteche del libro e dell'informazione*, a CD-ROM edited by Alberto Petrucciani e Giulia Visintin.

Searching topics on the online catalogue does not present any difficulty for all levels of users' skills and knowledge. The web site of the Italian Library Association, called AIB-WEB, is accessible at http://www.aib.it, while an English version of the library web page is at http://www.aib.it/aib/default-e.htm. One can choose between two levels of searching, *Basic* and *Advanced*. The *Basic search* engine allows you to enter keywords for authors, titles and subjects. The *Advanced search* engine offers more complex options, such as the possibility to set up filters and use Boolean operators. If the search was not

successful, the software points out, in an alphabetical list, where the word requested should be.

With the OPAC, the AIB Library provides its users a more complete and satisfying service. The online catalogue will let worldwide users seek bibliographic information from home through the Internet. Users will be able to verify what the library owns and then to request it through the document delivery and the interlibrary loan services. Although the OPAC is a useful resource, it is not complete, as we are still introducing records from the old card catalogue. At the same time, we are going to catalogue, in a simplified form, the great collection of grey literature, including various documents about Italian and foreign libraries, international library associations (IFLA, EBLIDA, FID), Italian legislation about libraries and professional training for librarians.

The OPAC is a very important event for the whole Italian Library Association and the AIB Executive Committee, particularly the President Igino Poggiali, who has shown a great interest in the project and has greatly promoted the growth of the library. The AIB Library is growing daily as a complete resource of knowledge for the improvement and the update of librarians and information professionals. It also helps realizing the fundamental function, sanctioned by the AIB statute, the primary goal being "to promote, to support, to develop any action that could be helpful to guarantee a qualified professional training [. . .]" and "to provide all the technical and scientific supports for the updating of librarians".

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Journal of Internet Cataloging*

Special issue on CORC

The *Journal of Internet Cataloging*, the International Quarterly of Digital Organization, Classification and Access, has devoted its Volume 4 (1/2) to OCLC's Cooperative Online Resource Catalog (CORC). This special issue entitled *CORC: New Tools and Possibilities for Cooperative Electronic Resources* is also published as a monographic "separate" by Haworth Press. Guest editors of this publication which documents all issues involved in the creation of a new cataloging system for electronic resources, are Karen Calhoun (Cornell University Library and Chair of the Program of Cooperative Cataloging Standing Committee on Automation) and John J. Riemer (Unversity of Georgia and GALILEO CORC Representative in the state of Georgia).

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*   See *ICBC*, 26(4), October/December 1997, p.74.