

## *Full Length Research Paper*

# **Bibliographic networking and law libraries in Nigeria**

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**Cooperative cataloguing is a means by which libraries share resources. In modern library services, cooperative cataloguing is the only means that libraries can cope with the challenges of the digital age. This paper discusses cooperative activity from the 15<sup>th</sup> century to the present. Some of the benefits of networking such as increase in production, cost effectiveness and production of high quality products and services are discussed extensively in the paper. Two major challenges towards networking of bibliographic resources of law libraries in Nigeria – absence of automated systems and lack of training for law librarians are discussed. The paper positions that the way forward towards networking will include automating systems and services, creating network centers and training for librarians.**

**Key words:** Nigeria, cooperative cataloguing, online catalogues, law libraries, information and communication technology (ICT).

## **INTRODUCTION**

The Internet has provided a platform for libraries and information systems to cooperate in order to increase access to all kinds of information locally and globally. Presently, 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 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 (LC), 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. The 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. The best known is OCLC's World Cat in the United States, followed by the Research Libraries Group with their RLIN system. BLCMP in the UK, Dansk Biblioteks Center in Denmark, and PICA in the Netherlands, SABINET in South Africa, CATNIP in Pietermaritzburg, DELNET in India are some other examples.

The invention of computers and the advancement of information communication technology moved cooperative activities to the next level. The 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 need for a cooperative programme to ensure bibliographic access of legal information resources in Nigeria. The paper advocates for the creation of a bibliographic database of legal information available in all the legal information centres in Nigeria.

## **BIBLIOGRAPHIC NETWORKING**

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 (CIP) 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.

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 pressure. 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).

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. The International Federation for Information

and Documentation and International Federation of Library Associations provided forum 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.

## **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. This 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. Ikpahindi (2006) highlights the aims and objectives of networking and resource sharing as follows:

- (i) To promote free flow of information resources;
- (ii) To ensure better access to information resources;
- (iii) To ensure maximization of information resources;
- (iv) To save resources and avoid duplication of effort;
- (v) To ensure faster provision of information and literature support to the users;
- (vi) To facilitate reciprocal exchange of local publications.

Kaul (2010) 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% of

member libraries found DELNET useful and 86% of library users are benefiting from it. Santos (2005) comments on the advantages of cooperative cataloguing in the age of information explosion:

Nowadays, the diary appearing information volume is a fact that deserves prominence. To make it possible for these information to develop its functions it would be interesting if they were internationally interchanged, hastening and amplifying their access forms just like does the cooperative cataloguing, which is presented as an Librarianship activity and informational retrieving facilitating agent.

Palfrey (2010-11) while illuminating on law libraries in an era of digital age-plus pontificated that law librarians have no choice but to collaborate. No serious library can do it alone . . . . On a global basis, law librarians need to work together to envision what we want the information ecosystem in law to look like over time.

## **NETWORK ACTIVITIES AND PROGRAMME**

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). 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 bureaus that built up union catalogues.

Libraries who have participated in programmes such as Programme for Cooperative Cataloguing (PCC) has 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 Today, PCC has four components of its programs: NACO – the name authority program, SACO – the subject authority program, BIBCO – the monographic bibliographic record

program and CONSER – the cooperative online serials program. Authority control is an essential and critical element that serves to lead a user to all the works represented in the same intellectual entity. It is indeed one of the most time-consuming and expensive part of cataloguing. 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. Popoola 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.

## **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, OCLC/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 has improved library services. Egberongbe (2000) observes that the expansion of access points to entries in an online catalogue has introduced a level of search and retrieval flexibility not found in catalogue card, book or Computer Output Microform (COM) catalogues. She cites Lancaster who also observes that online subject searching capabilities, increases the proportion of subject searches performed by library users as well as increase in catalogue use.

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 this networks already existing are established in South Africa, Ghana, Kenya, Zimbabwe, Namibia, Malawi, Swaziland, etc. Most National Union Catalogues (NUC) are now accessible online, for example, LC Online Catalogue and Adelaide University Law Library Catalogue.

### **OCLC World Cat**

Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC) World Cat has become a unique library resource that is consulted by librarians and library users around the world. Shared cataloguing not only increased the productivity of library Staffs, but it also increased the availability of information for library users. Using OCLC World Cat, a cataloguer searches the database for bibliographic record for the item being catalogued. If a record is found, the cataloguer uses it for their library's catalogue. If no record is found the cataloguer creates a new record and input it into World Cat. It makes possible for only one library to create an original catalogue record for an item and provides a means for other libraries to use that same record for their catalogues. For every 100 books catalogued only about six required original cataloguing. It is possible to catalogue up to 14 titles an hour when records are resident in World Cat compared to with two to an hour when original cataloguing record must be created.

To ensure the quality of World Cat, all participating libraries are required to comply with specified cataloguing standards. The quality control programme includes both manual corrections and records or elimination of duplicates by OCLC staff and selected participating libraries, and automated software that corrects headings and other items automatically. OCLC and a member of OCLC member libraries participate in the Programme for Cooperative Cataloguing (PCC) an international cooperative effort coordinated by the LC and aimed at

expanding access to library collections by providing useful, timely, and cost effective cataloguing. In 2002, more than 7000 libraries outside the U.S. in 81 countries participated in the OCLC global library cooperatives.

### **Biblios.net**

Biblios.net is a shared metadata store which offers technological support for cooperative cataloguing. Hosted by LibLime and offers open access, and anyone can use and also edit records to add or fix information if they make mistake someone else can fix it. You can pay LibLime for a hosted Biblios cataloguing editor solution and for work to integrate Biblios with your interlending system. Biblios.net does not track which individual library hold which titles, it does not compete with OCLCs important support for ILL and discovery but does compete with World Cat as a source of cooperative cataloguing providing exactly the kind of innovation we need in a shared cataloguing environment. As a cataloguer what we should be planning is to share our records far and wide in as many places as possible.

### **BIBLIOGRAPHIC NETWORK FOR LAW LIBRARIES IN NIGERIA**

A bibliographic network of law libraries in Nigeria is seriously needed at this point in time. This will enhance bibliographic control of legal information materials. The proliferation of Law books, reports, journals both in print and electronic formats is driving the need for cooperative acquisition and cataloguing. Moreover, these information resources are very expensive to purchase and also to catalogue that no one library can afford to do alone.

The standard for most law libraries worldwide is Elizabeth Moys Classification Scheme for Legal Materials. Most University 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 classification 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. The sharing partners will be:

1. National Library.
2. Public law libraries for example, legislative and court libraries.
3. University law libraries.

4. Research law libraries.
5. Law school libraries.
6. Private law libraries.

## CHALLENGES OF THE TIME

The law librarianship profession in Nigeria 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 bi-annual workshop for law librarians. The Institute is the centre for Moys in Nigeria having started using Moys since the early

80's. Nigerian Association of Law Libraries (NALL) and other international law library associations such as American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) are also organising annual conferences.

Individual law library is required to commit funds to purchasing softwares and hardwares and pay Internet subscriptions. 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 corporate organisations like 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 information to those who need them at their convenience and with a lot of precision. This is based on the premise that the gateway to physical access to 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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