

A Regional Serials Program Under National Serials Data Program Auspices: Discussion Paper Prepared for Ad Hoc Serials Discussion Group

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PURPOSE OF THE PROGRAM

A regionally organized program for serials bibliography is proposed because of the large volume of complex data needing control and the many purposes to which the data can be put in support of regional or local needs.

The size of the data base comprising serials bibliography in the United States alone may exceed 2 million titles. Gregory's *Union List of Serials* represents the largest single source of controlled titles—450,000 in the third edition.¹ At a minimum its successor publication, *New Serial Titles* (NST), contains 325,000 titles.² Therefore, some 775,000 titles are under control for identification, interlibrary transfer, and location purposes.

The data base requirements for the ISDS/NSDP record comprise several dozen fields. When added together with other information now found in a MARC serials record for cataloging purposes and when further coupled with explicit holdings information needed for regional networks, the file size would exceed 1 billion characters. Therefore, the systems design basis as well as the functional purposes of such data would encourage us to explore a regionally organized serials program.

Another even more overwhelming factor which gives support to a regional system is the mixture of rules applied in cataloging. The NSDP data establish conclusive identity via the key-title without a full bibliographic record. However, libraries will not suddenly drop their local practices or use of LC cataloging copy, affecting their internal arrangements of collections. Therefore, the most prudent course would seem to be reconciliation of past practice with the new system and development of a machine-readable serials record specification which accommodates the requirements of the ISDS/NSDP and the cataloging rules of present libraries. A regionally organized program should be highly responsive to such a reconciliation.

THE REGIONAL SERIALS PROGRAM

Within the framework of the ISDS and its respective National Center (NSDP in the U.S.), each country will proceed to develop its serials program. The United States program must be organized with NSDP at its center. Figure 1 is a schematic showing the relationships of NSDP and the other units within this proposed regional program. This figure also shows the bi-directional communications flow between the various units.

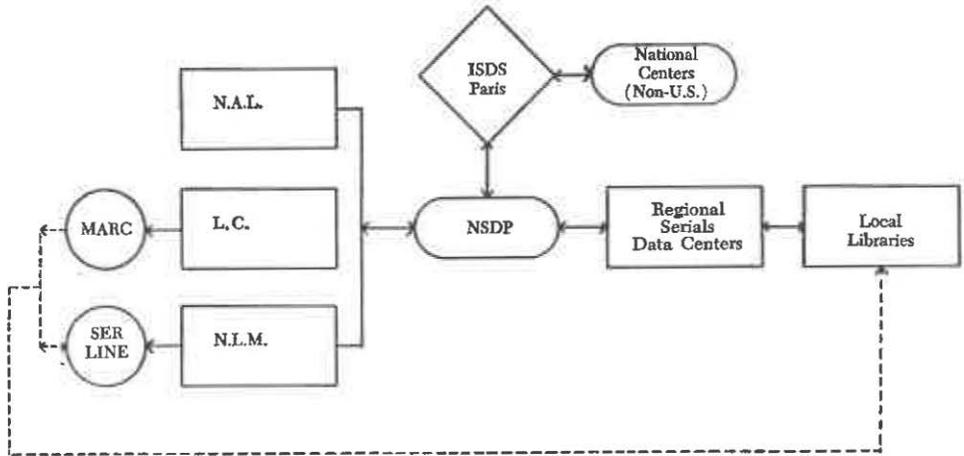


Fig. 1. A regional serials program organization and lines of communication.

The three national libraries originate bibliographic data for use in the NSDP system and also can continue to function as providers of cataloging data to the library community via cards, MARC tapes, the National Library of Medicine's SERLINE, and any new services of this type. MARC, SERLINE or other machine readable sources should ultimately be the method by which raw data from the national libraries would enter NSDP.

The Regional Serials Data Centers would receive information from NSDP and also would provide certain kinds of data for the NSDP data base which would be nonduplicative of the national libraries input. Local libraries would interface to their Regional Serials Data Center, supplying information for the region in a shared environment. Hopefully, the regional centers could take over the functions now performed by the MARC serials service, supplying products requested by the libraries locally and obviating the need of local libraries subscribing to MARC serial tapes.

The serials environment may be organized into:

- a local library serials management component;
- a network serials management component; and,
- an international/national serials system component.

A regional program can address itself to these three facets of the environment, in the following manner.

The local library, whatever its size or type, must develop some system for internal control of its serials collections. This author feels that the local library should be free to adopt either NSDP or Anglo-American Cataloging Rules for current serials but need not change its retrospective records unless it can really afford to, if such data became available in the future through the program herein proposed. Ideally, such a conversion and uniformity has much to offer the library user, but costs would be too high for most libraries. Also, small libraries and certain libraries, because of their physical conditions, may need to preserve differences. Therefore, the local library can be urged to adopt NSDP/AACR as standard but cannot be forced to standardize because of the large retrospective conversion problem. The local library can develop its serials system independently or through partial or full support through a network—the Regional Serials Data Center under this plan. Independent of whether it chooses to use the Regional Serials Data Center for such services its needs remain the same:

- to identify the serial in hand;
- to obtain cataloging copy for it;
- to service its subscriptions, claims, binding; and
- to produce some form of catalog showing its holdings and arranged to reflect its specific shelf arrangement.

The networking serials management component represents the development of union catalogs, wherein members of the network can:

- identify a serial;
- identify who holds a specific issue;
- provide interlibrary loan/photocopy service to obtain the actual document; and
- provide a way to consolidate fragmentary sets, eliminate unnecessary duplication or provide more copies when needed, and broaden subject coverage among the network.

Union catalogs, document delivery services, and bibliographic reference assistance comprise the products that are used by the network component.

The international/national serials system component must be the vehicle to provide a uniform bibliographic description and local components. The ISSN and the NSDP record provide the means to this end.

The machine-readable record at the Regional Serials Data Center would comprise at least the key elements of the international record, i.e. key-title as supplied via NSDP from either national library or regional center input and the ISSN. Beyond that, the regional center bibliographic data base should be structured to provide full bibliographic description according to AACR rules for current publications, accommodating the retrospective data as it is found in its region—at least until some national effort at conversion of superimposed records can be mounted. Moreover, the regional center should be tailored to perform the functions that its local libraries deem important. This obviously will vary with the region and with time as regions will vary in size and their mix of libraries.

Figure 2 enumerates the functions and responsibilities of the respective parts of the regionally organized serials program illustrated in Figure 1. This list is not meant to be all inclusive as other functions could be recognized by other libraries or regions.

National Serials Data Program

1. Assign ISSN/Key-title to titles reported via National Libraries and Regional Serials Data Centers.
2. Create and maintain data base, indexes of key-titles, ISSN's, etc.
3. Create and maintain or accept surrogates from Regional Serials Data Centers.
4. Maintain essential ISDS data elements, other ISDS elements.
5. Maintain essential non-ISDS data elements or national library extensions via other data elements.
6. Publish indexes to the data base at NSDP for use by Regional Serials Data Centers and National Libraries.
7. Transmit ISSN's and key-titles as assigned to the Regional Serials Data Centers and the National Libraries.
8. Carry out publisher relations to convince publishers of the need to use ISSN, etc. as well as foster some additional uniformity wherever possible.

National Libraries

1. Provide cataloging copy—surrogate for newly cataloged titles—using new or available mechanisms such as MARC, SERLINE or NST to NSDP for key-titles/ISSN assignments.
2. Provide subscription card/tape cataloging copy to local libraries until a dual definition National Serials Data Program record can be developed and revised through the regional centers.
3. Maintain National Union List functions via NST, eventually coordinating with NSDP to provide key-title and ISSN entry points.

Regional Centers

1. Create and maintain regional center serials data base reflecting holdings of libraries in the region.
2. Forward new title bibliographic/surrogate data to NSDP for ISSN/key-title assignment if not processed by NSDP through national libraries or another regional center.
3. Publish union catalogs or holdings in region for network library use.
4. Process and provide machine/manual cataloging data for region use with MARC, SERLINE, NST type processing.
5. Forward retrospective data to NSDP converted to their requirements for

Fig. 2. Functions and Responsibilities of the Respective Parts of a Regionally Organized Serials Program.

retrospective ISSN/key-title assignment and addition to the central store at NSDP.

6. Develop local library services as required. For example:
 - a. Catalog card production.
 - b. Book catalog production.
 - c. OCLC type serials check-in, claiming, binding, subscription system.
 - d. Document/photocopy delivery system for interlibrary loan.
 - e. Coordinated acquisitions program for new serials, added copies.
 - f. Coordinate interlibrary transfers and consolidations of retrospective holdings.
7. Communicate with other centers or NSDP to locate titles not supplied by local region.

Local Library

1. Notify regional center of new titles, changes, corrections to maintain regional data base.
2. Use local library services as deemed necessary from regional center.
3. Participate in document delivery/resource sharing/set consolidation within the region network.

Fig. 2. (continued)

Figure 3 shows the basic tasks and their current status with respect to developing such a program, provided that funding became available for at least a pilot regional center. The ISDS record specifications are presently available and implemented through the NSDP data base. The NSDP/University of Minnesota contract for a feasibility study will determine the costs and required bibliographic and programming support to convert locally generated data bases, i.e., the Minnesota Union List of Serials (MULS) to NSDP requirements. The results of this feasibility study will determine the prospects for funding any proposals for actual conversion of local data bases such as MULS. The current MULS data base represents one model of a regional center data base, with the addition of ISSN and key-title as the links to the NSDP system and/or augmentation to provide other kinds of services to local libraries participating in MULS. Creation of the system of regional centers would depend upon proposing and funding such a program based on the above work. Establishment of a pilot regional center would be one manner in which such a plan could be tested, followed by further center establishment based on the results of the pilot program. With such a system in routine operation, the NSDP in its central role could focus its attention on the retrospective conversion—ISSN and key-title assignment possibly via some nationally coordinated cooperative venture among the regional centers or other contractors.

CONCLUSION

Obviously, any system for a serials program will have its problems. A re-

Task

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| 1. Development of ISDS record specifications for NSDP and other centers. | Presently Available |
| 2. Development of software/systems to convert locally generated MARC based serials data bases to NSDP requirements. | Feasibility study contracted. |
| 3. Conversion of locally generated MARC based data bases to NSDP requirements and ISSN/key title assignments for unique titles. | Future |
| 4. Design of regional center data base record—basic data element specifications. | Future—Model
Available in MULS with addition of key-title/ISSN as linking fields between NSDP record and regional center record. |
| 5. Creation of regional centers—Pilot center establishment, followed by other regional centers and full implementation of a regional plan. | Future |
| 6. Possible retrospective serial title conversion. | Future—on a nationally coordinated basis. |

Fig. 3. Requirements for Establishment of a Regionally Organized Serials Program.

gionally organized system would have greater responsiveness to local and networking needs than a large centralized program. Moreover, certain technical problems of data base manipulation would be easier to solve under this organization. No attempt at greater specificity has been made here, as the purpose of this paper is to describe the nucleus of one way in which a serials program for the U.S. could be structured for maximum local library and networking benefit. Let the discussion flow!

REFERENCES

1. Winifred Gregory, *Union List of Serials in Libraries of the U.S. and Canada* (2d ed.; New York: Wilson, 1943).
2. *New Serial Titles* (Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1950).