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# International Dateline-Experiencing the China Society of Library Science Annual Conference 2000

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## International Dateline —

### Experiencing the China Society of Library Science Annual Conference 2000

by **Hu Ming Rong** (Associate Research Librarian and Associate Dean, The Library of Chongqing Normal University) <humingrong@yahoo.com.cn> and **Haiwang Yuan** (Assistant Professor and Web Site & Virtual Library Coordinator, Western Kentucky University Libraries & Museum) <haiwang.yuan@wku.edu>

The **China Society of Library Science (CSLS)** held its second annual conference from July 16 through 22 in Hailar, a city in the northeastern part of Inner Mongolia, an autonomous region of China. In the heart of the beautiful Hulunbuir Prairie bordering Mongolia and Russia, the city was a haven from the summer heat that struck most part of the country this year.

The theme of the conference was "Libraries in the 21st Century: Development and Change." There were six topics: (1) Model of Change and Functions of Libraries in the 21st Century, (2) Strategies, Methods and Ways to Build and Share Document and Information Sources, (3) The Management, Development and Utilization of Information Resources under the Networking Environment, (4) Management and Reform of Libraries in the New Millennium, (5) Enhance Continuing Education and Better the Quality of Librarians, and (6) The Building and Development of Libraries in Ethnic Regions. In addition to an opening ceremony and a plenary session at the end, four tracks were going on each day in between, from July 17-19.

Around 700 librarians attended the conference. Among them were delegates from the **Korean Society of Library Science** and the **Chinese American Librarian Association** of the ALA. Five of the 20 Chinese American librarians delivered presentations before the conference, two as keynote speakers: **Dr. Hwa-Wei Lee**, Dean Emeritus of University Library of Ohio University, and **Dr. James Ho**, Associate Director of Howard University Libraries. Dr. Lee examined the prospect of "Libraries in the Knowledge Age of the 21st Century" and Dr. Ho looked into the issue of "The Digital Divide and Library Community Services." Their insights, as well as their humor, won great acclaims from the 700 plus audience at the plenary sessions. During track sessions, **Ms. Yu-Lan Chou**, East Asia Library of California University at Berkeley, introduced her library to the Chinese fellow librarians, **Mr. Michael Huang**, a librarian of the Stony Brook Health Sciences Center of the State University of New York, co-presented an award-winning paper with a Chinese colleague, and Professor **Haiwang Yuan**, Website & Virtual Library Coordinator of the Western Kentucky University Libraries & Museum described how the building of the first-ever Web-based service, namely, the **Topper InfoPortal (TIP)**, could be a model for all libraries to become "portals of first choice."

In his keynote speech, **Mr. Zhou Heping**, Secretary of the **China Society of Library Science (CSLS)**, gave an overview of the society's achievements in the past year. Since the CSLS was established in 1977, the year that heralded China's new era of economic reform and opening to the outside world, its membership has reached over 11,000. Yet Mr. Zhou was not at all impressed with this already large membership as it amounted to only 5.5% of the librarians in China. He called on the conference to explore ways to increase enrollment, including assisting members in acquiring funds for attending conferences and taking part in foreign exchange activities.

Achievements made by the CSLS were phenomenal in the past year. In addition to its quarterly "Journal of the National Library," it also edited and published "China Library Yearbook" and a collection of research papers, "The Turn of the Century: Retrospect and Prospect of Librarianship." At the time the CSLS Annual 2000 conference was being held, a new collection of the same nature had been published titled: "Libraries in the 21st Century: Development and Change."

After its successful first annual conference in July of 1999 in Dalian, the China Society of Library Science co-sponsored with its Shanxi Chapter the "Panel Meeting and Celebration of the CSLS's 20th Anniversary of Its Establishment in Shanxi." Before this meeting over a hundred papers were presented. Another 18 such chapter topical panels and 14 paper presentation meetings and six research discussions were conducted all over China.

In March 2000, the CSLS set up the Office of Co-Development and Sharing under its National Document Resources Coordination Committee. In May, the Office held its first meeting, "Work on Consortia Cataloging Among All Libraries in the Country." Over 60 catalogers and library system programmers participated in the discussion on cataloging theories and software technological issues. The same month saw CSLS organize another meeting in the southeastern part of China, Fujian. The "Eighth National Working Conference on Periodicals of Librarianship" discussed ways to expand the periodicals and mount them on the Web. Exchanges with librarians abroad included a visit from the Japanese Society of Library Science in July of 1999, the participation in the 65th IFLA General Conference in Bangkok, Thailand in August, participation in the ALA Annual Meeting in Chicago in July 2000.

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The China Society of Library Science attaches great importance to preparing its members for the Digital Age and network environment. Among the nationwide workshops it sponsored in the last year were "Training and Panels for Library Directors on Library Reform and Initiatives" in October 1999 and "Digital Library Technology Training and Panel" in April 2000 in Beijing.

Other activities CSLS sponsored prior to its second annual conference included the "CSLS Science Popularization Day" on May 28, 2000, which was participated in by special libraries all over China.

After the conference, CSLS organized a package tour from July 20 through 21. Conference attendees visited libraries and museums in Hailar and went to the city of Manchuria on the border between China and Russia. In the morning of the next day, the librarians found themselves stepping into one of the darkest episodes of the Chinese history, a freeze-frame of a grand Japanese bunker built during Japan's occupation of China in World War II. Its construction took four years and over 100,000 Chinese laborers, many of them perished in the process. However, the librarians' heavy-heartedness evaporated instantly in the afternoon as a 30-bus fleet transported them to the beauty of the Inner Mongolian Prairie. There the tour reached its climax as librarians indulged themselves in horse riding, watch-

ing Mongolian wrestling, singing and dancing, and enjoying bowls of wine and dishes of Mongolian food. A bonfire party with the hospitable Inner Mongolian hosts brought the conference to a joyous and memorable end.

The CSLS is now planning for its next annual conference in July in Chengdu, a city close to the Three Gorges of the Yangtze River. It welcomes librarians all over the world to the conference to promote exchanges. Libraries in China today are at a crossroads of making choices among different library systems and options of digital and virtual libraries. They hope that they will learn from the exchanges. They also promise that the next conference will be an even more fruitful and enriching experience for all participants.

## International Dateline —

### South Africa et.al.

by **Martin White** (Intranet Focus Ltd) <Martin.white@intranetfocus.com>

To counteract the rather pro-European bias of this column, in the past I thought I would start in South Africa. In early September I took part in the **2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Conference on World Wide Web Applications**, organised by **Profession Pieter van Brakel** of the Department of Information Studies at the **Rand Afrikaans University** in Johannesburg. Around 300 delegates attended the conference to hear some very interesting papers on a wide range of Web applications. One of the reasons for me attending the conference was to run a workshop on electronic journals, which attracted librarians, publishers and authors. The sheer scale of South Africa (close to the size of Europe) means that resources are very dispersed around the country, and there is a keen interest in distance learning. However, Internet access costs are high, but not as high as the price of journals. Coming from the UK I found that my pound had a 300% increase in buying power because of the low value of the Rand, and the economic base of the country. This made purchasing food and gifts very inexpensive, but a visit to a bookshop was a real awakening, as European and US books, and CDs were converted at current exchange rates. The result is that, in US\$ terms a CD would cost perhaps US\$45. Now think of the price that you pay for journals, especially electronic journals, and think of the impact on your budget if they cost at least twice as much. The teaching of information science is strong in South Africa, but the opportunities for career development seem rather limited. For details of the conference see <http://general.rau.ac.za/infosci/conf/default.htm>. **Pieter van Brakel** is also the Editor of the *South African Journal of Information Management*, and there is a good article on Internet access in Southern Africa at <http://general.rau.ac.za/infosci/raujournal/default.htm>.

From South Africa a jump to the Netherlands seems rather appropriate. UKB, the consortium of Dutch university libraries, the **Koninklijke Bibliotheek** (Royal Library) and the library of

the **Koninklijke Nederlandse Academie van Wetenschappen** (Royal Dutch Academy of Sciences), signed a five-year agreement in June with **Elsevier Science**. This agreement provides for electronic access to the full-text of all **Elsevier Science** journals. The nature of the agreement is that the universities will, from 2001, pay annually a slightly increased amount for these services compared with their base year 2000 subscription package. The UKB are hoping to arrange similar deals with other publishers. The contact person for UKB is **N. Verhagen**, chief librarian of the **University of Amsterdam**.

**Dr. Hans Roosendaal**, Director of Scientific Information of the **University of Twente**, one of the main negotiators of the agreement, is a speaker at the **International Coalition of Library Consortia (ICOLC) 2nd European Conference** in Berlin, which takes place from 1-3 December at the Harnack-House in Berlin-Dahlem. The aim of the conference is to discuss progress in, and to share experience of, consortia purchasing of electronic information resources. There are three interesting discussion groups on the final day considering licensing models, cross linking / cross reference, and developments in online information. For more information see <http://www.physik.fu-berlin.de/library/ICOLC-01.html>.

In the UK the **Association of Subscription Agencies** <http://www.subscription-agents.org/> is now the **Association of Subscription Agencies and Intermediaries**. My old friend **Rollo Turner**, Secretary General of the ASA says that as the ASA membership now ranges from the small to the largest traditional subscriptions agents around the world and intermediaries such as **CatchWord** and **ingenta** to traditional companies with extensive electronic services such as **RoweCom**, **EBSCO** and **Swets Blackwell**, the new name would enable the ASA to present a more forward looking image to the world and reflects the changing pattern of membership. (The ASA is not the only group adding to its title. The Di-

rectory Publishers Association is now the **Directory and Database Publishers Association**)

The ASA has recently been highlighting an emerging problem in electronic journal management. Some customers who renewed their subscriptions to a printed journal with an electronic version as part of the subscription found their access rights terminated on December 31<sup>st</sup> - even though they had renewed and paid through their agent in good time. This in spite of the fact that both customer and agent had followed all the publishers' instructions on renewals and provided the necessary information. The paper subscription was unaffected.

It appears that for a number of publishers there is insufficient time to update the electronic access system before December 31<sup>st</sup> after updating the subscription system once the renewal has been received. This is the case even when the renewals are automated and provided electronically.

This is probably just another teething problem with electronic journals, but the suggestion made by **Rollo Turner** on behalf of the ASA is to "grace" the first few issues of each year to enable customers to receive continuity of service and the publisher to catch up with the large numbers of subscriptions all coming in during the last part of the year or early in the new year. For electronic journals, gracing the first few "issues" is relatively easy and what is more should cost little or nothing (unlike print where the first few issues of the year had greater print runs and resulted in issues being posted to non-renewals). With electronic journals there are no costs of distribution, all it requires is the cut off date being changed from 31 December to 28 February for example. Since the overwhelming majority of subscribers do renew each year, the number receiving content without paying will be small (just as it was for paper).

The **Canadian Association of Research Libraries** <http://www.carl-abrc.ca> is practising international linking in a big way this year, taking their Fall General Meeting to Australia and New Zealand, taking in the **Australian Library Association Conference** in Canberra at the end of October.

The **UK National Electronic Site License Initiative** project has recently been the subject of an interim evaluation and a report of

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