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At the 2010 ALA Midwinter Meeting, on recommendation by the Council Policy Monitoring Committee, the ALA Council deleted the text of ALA Policy 50.1 Support for "Goals for Action" of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science because the NCLIS no longer exists.

~~50.1 Support for "Goals for Action" of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science~~

~~The American Library Association concurs in concepts and recommendations contained in "Goals for Action," a report of the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science, and commits the Association and its units to maximum cooperation with the National Commission in implementation and further development of "Goals for Action."~~

NOTE TO READER:

The Council Policy Monitoring Committee proposes to leave the number 50.1 vacant to provide flexibility for possible future insertions and/or reorganization of policies.

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Item: LIBRARY RESOURCES & RESPONSIBILITIES Item Number: 107.3.1
 Approved by: ALA COUNCIL Page: 1 of 1
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"TOWARD A NATIONAL PROGRAM FOR LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES"

WHEREAS, Provision of library and information services and resources to all the people of the United States is a major objective of ALA, and

WHEREAS, Provision of leadership for interlibrary cooperation leading to a nationwide information delivery system which equalizes access to information resources is a priority of ALA and its members, and

WHEREAS, cooperation to achieve increased access to library and information resources must be supported and encouraged by ALA, and

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WHEREAS, The "Goals for Action" prepared by the National Commission on Libraries & Information Science and published as "Toward a National Program for Library & Information Services" provides elements of a plan for achieving these goals and objectives of ALA, and

WHEREAS, the "Goals for Action" statement is the product of testimony and comment from a wide spectrum of public and professional interests, and

WHEREAS, The statement provides valid directions by which national objectives can be accomplished,

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED, That the American Library Association, assembled at San Francisco, July 4, 1975, expresses appreciation to the National Commission on Libraries and Information Science for its leadership in producing this document, and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, That the American Library Association concurs in concepts and recommendations contained in the report and commits the American Library Association and its units to maximum cooperation with the National Commission on Library & Information Science in implementation and further development of the "Goals for Action."

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Fair employment practice laws

Libraries have generally played a passive role in the application of fair employment practice laws. Many library suppliers are unaware of, or indifferent to, the application of these Federal laws. Most libraries do not routinely seek compliance with fair employment practices from their suppliers. The lives of thousands of people would be benefited by a concerted effort on the part of libraries across the nation to enforce fair employment practices in their business dealings. The profession would thus be a leader instead of a follower. However, before librarians attempt to seek such compliance from suppliers, they will naturally want to be certain that libraries themselves comply with these same statutes at all levels. Libraries will need assistance and guidance in the implementation of procedures to gain compliance with the fair employment practice laws.

We therefore petition Council to instruct the Library Administration Division

- (1) to guide libraries in the process of soliciting fair employment practice information from their suppliers,
- (2) to advise libraries on the enforcement of fair employment practice laws in their own employment policies and decisions,
- (3) to submit an annual report to Association membership on the status of such actions.

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National Library/Information Program

IMPROVING ACCESS TO INFORMATION

A RECOMMENDATION FOR A NATIONAL LIBRARY/INFORMATION PROGRAM

Introduction

In March of 1966, at the invitation of Robert Vosper, President of the American Library Association, representatives of the American Library Association, the Association of College and Research Libraries, the Association of Research Libraries, the Council of National Library Associations, the Federal Library Committee, the Library of Congress, the Medical Library Association, the Special Libraries Association, and the American Documentation Institute,* met in Chicago to consider the RECOMMENDATIONS FOR NATIONAL DOCUMENT HANDLING SYSTEMS IN SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY as proposed by the Committee on Scientific and Technical Information (COSATI) of the Federal Council for Science and Technology. The discussion at this meeting indicated a consensus that the recommendations made by COSATI, purely aside from the merits or demerits the individual proposals made, were basically inadequate to the real needs of the situation by virtue of their limitation to science and technology. Not only did they fail to consider the urgent needs for improved access to information in the social sciences and the humanities (which is not attributed to any lack of awareness or understanding on the part of COSATI but only to the limited charge given it) but in the opinion of those present this failure vitiated even some of the proposals made by COSATI. The close and essential relationships between the physical and biological sciences, the social sciences, technology, and the humanities, prohibit clear-cut divisions between them, and most libraries are therefore compelled to serve all of these fields to at least some extent. Any real improvement in their service to any field must therefore involve their total system. This does not mean that all fields will be served in precisely the same way, or that different techniques and methods may not be employed to best satisfy different needs, but only that these must be systematically compatible and coherent if any field, including those in science and technology, is to be adequately served.

The library associations represented at this meeting have long recognized that stronger and more unified systems organized on a national basis are essential to significantly improved library and information services. They have already been instrumental in establishing a number of programs directed toward improving the nation-wide access to information through such systems as interlibrary loan, union catalogs, the Farmington Plan, and most recently, the centralized cataloguing scheme at the Library of Congress. It has also been recognized that further

*Name of American Documentation Institute changed to American Society for Information Science in 1968.

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significant advances must be dependent upon substantial participation by the Federal Government.

Accordingly, the representatives at this meeting recommended the establishment of a joint committee to be called the Ad Hoc Joint Committee on National Library/Information Systems (CONLIS), to have several functions:

With due regard for all types and levels of library service to,

1. Be responsible for drafting a program directed toward improvement of the access to and availability of information through national systems of libraries and information centers;
2. Be responsible for continuing advice to and liaison with appropriate federal and other bodies on behalf of the library associations represented;
3. Through its members, keep the associations fully and regularly informed of committee activity and the recommendations formulated by the committee.

Representatives on the committee have been designated by the following six major national library associations: American Association of Law Libraries, American Documentation Institute, American Library Association, Association of Research Libraries, Council of National Library Associations, Medical Library Association and Special Library Association.

In accordance with its charter the committee presents the following as its report and recommendation for the first essential step toward the establishment of an effective national library-information system.

William K. Beatty, Medical Library Association
William S. Buddington, Special Library Association
Laurence B. Heilprin, American Documentation Institute
William D. Murphy, American Association of Law Libraries
James E. Skipper, Association of Research Libraries
Bill M. Woods, Council of National Library Associations
Gordon R. Williams, American Library Association

REPORT TO COUNCIL

A Report of the Ad Hoc Joint Committee on National Library/
Information Systems (CONLIS)
1968 Midwinter Meeting

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Assured Access to Information¹

The basic hypothesis proposed by the Committee is that the national interest requires assured and ready access by all citizens to all unrestricted information. In simplest terms, information as a commodity is essential to our development as individuals, to optimization of our activities, to the strength of our nation and to the progress and survival of mankind. To have access, difficult, slow or restricted only to a few, is to limit utilization, which thus diminishes our total national accomplishment and welfare; it is in everyone's interest that all that is known be readily available to all so that it can be used. No one--doctor, scientist, lawyer, engineer, teacher, public official, or plain citizen--should have less access to information merely because he is not located in a major center of population or research. The national interest is best served by equality of access by all elements of the economy, wherever located, to insure equality of opportunity and competence. Minor differences in speed and convenience of access will undoubtedly remain inevitable because of differences in location, but even the slowest and least convenient access must not be so slow and inconvenient that, practically, as in many cases now, it amounts to no access.

It is recognized, of course, that distinctions must be made between users and their purposes in order to prevent abuse and overload of the system. The high school student writing a theme, and the doctor, do not need, or want, the same amount and detail of information about the cause and treatment of cancer, for example. But this is a minor problem and solvable, as it is solved now, by common sense. What is important is that safeguards and limits not be sought in payment schemes. Access to information should not be a function of the ability to pay for it.

¹The reader must guard against misunderstanding the term "information" as it is used here, and throughout this report. Commonly, most people tend to use the word "information" to mean specific facts and data; to mean what scientists are concerned with as opposed to what the humanist, the philosopher, the novelist, and the poet are concerned with. But as used here the term is to be understood in its more general sense as the meaningful content of any communication as opposed to the random, meaningless, interfering, "noise" or "static" that may also be present. In this sense the text of a poem, a novel, a history, and an engineering handbook, are all equally "information." We know of no other simple term that covers the content of any communication regardless of its subject matter, and so have used this one, but caution again that it must not be understood as meaning only "scientific information."

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Access Is Equally Urgent for All Fields of Knowledge

The need for maximum information exists in all realms of human thought; any consideration of the problem must encompass the social sciences, basic sciences, humanities, technologies, etc. The complexities, interrelationships and fluidities of today's disciplines, and the unpredictability of tomorrow's, require initial acceptance of this total approach to the information problem. An advanced society is unquestionably dependent upon advanced technology, but it is no less dependent upon advanced social sciences and a sound humanistic understanding. Our purpose is to build a society in which humans can live happily as well as machines.

Inherent difference in information characteristics, modes of analysis and storage, and types of need in various subject fields, may require somewhat different systems of solution in different fields, and different timetables for development will result not only from this but from recognized priorities of need. But independent uncoordinated developments by type or discipline cannot hope to solve even their individual problems. The inherent interrelations and overlaps between subject fields makes them interdependent and requires a common system even though that system in turn functions through a multiple switching capability.

The Problem Arises from the Large Quantity of Information

The amount of significant information existing and being added daily is beyond the grasp of any individual; he cannot hope to be familiar with all of that now existing or to keep current with the new additions to it. The impossibility of this, together with other limitations such as his memory capacity and time available for work, has resulted in the now familiar phenomenon specialization by individuals in only one area of knowledge. But the number of publications is so great that the individual cannot hope to acquire for his personal library even that portion of the total pertinent to his own specialty, and he must therefore depend upon library/information centers as sources for needed publications. Yet none of these, in turn, can cope with the requirements in acquisition and processing of the potential input, at anything approaching comprehensive and uniform levels. At the same time, the individual, even with specialization, is still left with the problem of having to locate within the large and rapidly growing body of communications that information that is pertinent to his needs and interest, without missing any of importance, when he has not time enough to scan all of it to find those parts that are pertinent to him. Present tech-

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niques for recording the existence of information, for analysis and evaluation, for creation of surrogates (abstracts, indexes, catalogues, etc.) for retrieval by users are inadequate, and adequate new methods are not yet fully developed. This is true both in conventional libraries and in other informational, pilot, and experimental efforts. Everyone now lacks access to information he can profitably use by reason of the mass to be screened, the inadequate bibliographic controls, his own lack of time, and his library's inability to possess all the information he needs.

It is obvious that the only solution to this difficulty is one that will enable any user to identify with only a short expenditure of his own time--and it must be short if he is to have sufficient time left to read what he identifies and then put the resulting information--all of that smaller segment of information within the larger body that is important to his needs.

Local Resources Are Limited

As just indicated, no library supported by some relatively small community (university, corporation, city, county, or state) can afford to obtain all published information and to analyze and classify it so that any part is readily identifiable and quickly available for use. Even if they could, this would obviously be a wasteful duplication of effort. The only solution is to enlarge the community that shares access to the information so that the cost, being more widely spread, can be afforded. For overall economy and accessibility to all, an integrated system based on the nation as a single community is required; systems that deal with all forms in which information is published, all types of information, and all fields of knowledge. It is taken for granted that each local community will continue to provide for itself most of what that community requires, and that the national system, which each community supports in part through its taxes, will not be afforded only if all share in supporting it for their common use.

It is readily apparent that bibliographic analyses--catalogs, indexes, abstracts, and the like--can easily be supported and shared nationally (and even internationally). It is this ability that has already made possible such significant tools as CHEMICAL ABSTRACTS, MATHEMATICAL REVIEWS, THE NATIONAL UNION CATALOG, PSYCHOLOGICAL ABSTRACTS, and all others. Experience such as that provided in the United States by the National Library of Medicine and the Center for Research Libraries, and in England by the National Library for Science and Technology, has also demonstrated that libraries and scholars across the nation can effectively share in using many kinds of publications that they cannot afford locally provided that

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they are readily, and assuredly, available from such a central location geared to serving the nation-wide community whenever those publications are needed locally.

Federal Government Action is Required

The foregoing sections assert that maximum access to information is in the national interest, that present systems are inadequate, that concerted and comprehensive planning must occur, and that local resources as presently constituted are limited. It is evident that a national base of operations is in order, and it follows that the federal government is the most logical body to carry responsibility for a problem requiring nation-wide support and coordination; indeed it is precisely to provide an instrument for national affairs that a federal government was established.

The distinction bears making between the total "national" information problem and the "federal" information problem. The latter has been the subject of several studies in recent years. While directed in some respects to national needs, these have inevitably been influenced by agency requirements, notably R and D effort in science and technology, and the viewpoints therefore tend to be restricted. But no central agency now exists within the federal government with responsibility and authority for cognizance of the total information problem as it affects all the nation. Certain provisions have been made according to discipline (medicine, agriculture), mission (nuclear science, space, defense), branch (legislative), etc. Other provisions have sprung up in the private sector because of demonstrated need (engineering, metals, translations). Information, however, is not divisible into mutually exclusive areas of forms. Final responsibility cannot be so based or excessive duplication and yawning gaps will continue to appear in the structure of our information resources.

Furthermore, such assignment (or default) of responsibility encourages proprietary philosophies, both within the government and without. While this may generate and is generated by enthusiasm, it does not necessarily work toward the overall welfare. The expenditure of money, time, effort and emotion by a single group or body, without some overall direction, feeds this proprietary character of development, and the passage of time hardens the situation. The very essential elements of compatibility and coordination are growing increasingly remote even now.

A final factor requiring the federal approach is the necessity for providing geographical equivalences in accessibility.

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Both Present and Long Range Needs Must Be Met

The magnitude of all requirements in total information needs makes it certain that the most advanced technologies must be utilized, including those now known and those yet to come. Many of the newer means of recording, analyzing, storing, retrieving and transmitting information, are proving technically feasible, though still not wholly useable because of economic factors. Long-range planning must be initiated and capabilities strengthened to take complete advantage of such methods at all stages of the information cycle and to serve the needs of all individuals.

Achievement of success by new systems can be assured only if sufficient resources are made available in development and application. Yet complete achievement is recognized to be still some years away--whether five, fifteen or thirty. The present need is too urgent to be endured without a considerable measure of relief. Therefore, it is also essential that study, planning and implementation occur with respect to short-term requirements. In brief, work must proceed simultaneously on carefully established short-, intermediate- and long-term goals, and not be limited to long-range goals only.

The Committee is quite aware of the magnitude of the task. The problems are complicated and many, reaching well beyond the world of libraries per se. In the following sections, some of the basic elements of total problem and total system are outlined, with major points which must receive consideration.

The process of placing desired information in the hands of an inquirer consists of two steps: first, determination of the existence of the information and its location within the system, and second, obtaining and delivering to the inquirer the information thus identified and located. Automatic systems of the future will probably accomplish these steps in a way that makes them so nearly simultaneous, as far as the user is concerned, that he thinks of the process as only one step. Indeed, the response in some present-day operating systems gives this impression. Nonetheless, in any system these two distinct operations are involved, however simultaneous they may seem, and they are here considered separately for this reason as well as because immediate improvement in access to information will most probably require improving each of these steps by different methods.

Intellectual Access

The complexity of the identification process is not always well recognized and better solutions to the problems, in many cases, have yet to be achieved. The identification process includes subject analysis and classification, as well as

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the physical description of the publication, and in some cases, note of its location(s). There has been decreasing success in control, and increasing dissatisfaction. One cause is the high degree of knowledge and training required for the task; personnel with greater specialization and in larger numbers have been needed, yet they have not generally been available for this endeavour. Other causes are the mass of publication, which has increased to the point of near-suffocation, and the new forms of publication (separately published research reports, for example) not easily fitted into established bibliographic patterns. Finally, analyses that have been prepared are not always widely available, or compatible with those done elsewhere, resulting either in unnecessary duplication with waste of manpower and resources, or in deprivation of wider access.

Particularly because, as seems most likely for some considerable time yet, every local library collection cannot contain every publication its particular community of users requires, every library must at least be able to provide full intellectual (bibliographic) access to all significant information and not merely to that in its own collection.

Improved intellectual access requires, initially, enlargement of coverage. In simplest terms with infinite implications, all documents and records must be subjected to some or all parts of a screening and analysis process. This must occur not in some subject fields only, but eventually in all fields. The importance now attached to science and technology, and the services presently operating therein may bring about activity in this sector more immediately. Yet the need in other disciplines is no less urgent, and in some possibly more so, in the light of social, political and artistic implications of our times. No discipline can flourish in the absence of information exchange; it is quietly recognized that adequate provision is simply non-existent in many--if not most--of the social sciences and in the humanities. While certain non-science disciplines are undertaking programs of improvement, their requests for assistance have not been satisfied to nearly the same extent as have those in the sciences. It is certain that there are degrees of need by economists, for example, no less urgent and important, if with less glamor, than the needs of physical scientists.

An obvious problem will be the screening of publications and other input to any store of information, to admit material of deserving significance. This significance cannot be determined by simple and arbitrary rules applied to a communication, nor can future needs and purposes be precisely predicted. This does not imply that all communications must therefore be treated as equally important, or that prior judgments cannot be made with a high degree of reliability. It does mean that judgments to exclude a particular document or, having once included it, later to eliminate it, must be made only with the greatest care.

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The essential content communications must be identified and tagged for potential retrieval, and accommodation made for changing terminology, interpretation and language. Each unit of the record should be so digested and prepared that it may respond at any appropriate level and in a wide variety of forms, as may be needed. Demands for example, may require statements of data, bibliographic citations, abstracts, distillations or digests, locations of documents, or the complete documents themselves. Information from related units should also be incorporated in continuously updated larger summaries and reviews. Thus, provision must be made for storage not only of the original records but of various surrogates representing or substituting for such units.

In addition to access to the content of all recorded information, it should also be possible to obtain current, short-term, periodic reports of information newly received. The parameters of such continuing reports should also be readily modifiable, to reflect changing interests and developments. Any system must also have the capability of referring an initial query to the most relevant sources, of switching a request to an appropriate store of information, and to succeeding stores as required.

Implementation of intellectual access requires parallel processing of inquiries, so that needs may be matched with available units of information. Definition, refinement and qualification of requests will have to be as complete as possible, prior to any attempt at access. However, it should be possible to modify requests during the searching process, in the context of information found to be available. Such "dialogue" may take into account a disclosed volume of existing information; it may also involve examination of various surrogates, or restatement of level or character of need, to aid in further refinement of the request.

In contemplating any national system responsive to requests from all geographic areas, in all subjects, and with varying levels and forms of output, the need for compatibility and standardization is obvious. Yet it is recognized that different subject fields present different requirements in all phases of information handling. The requirements will be satisfied best by specific system components and techniques. Furthermore, research and development now under way, already completed, or still to be initiated will employ theories, solutions and equipment of quite specific nature. There is a problem of immense complexity, therefore, in achieving any degree of universal access to information through common channels, by conversion, switching capability or other means, and only substantial capital investment in research and development can hope to find satisfactory solutions. Such an investment is not only of national benefit, but beyond the capacity of any single field or library.

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It is undebatable that any future system must start from and be built upon the existing information structure. A number of surveys have studied some aspects of this present structure, but a much more thorough study of present indexing, abstracting, and cataloguing services is required to discover more precisely the existing gaps, inadequacies, and duplications, in order to determine where improvement is most required and how it can be provided. Delegation to, and support of, existing but inadequate private agencies--commercial as well as non-profit--as well as public agencies providing bibliographic services must be anticipated and provided for.

Production and consumption of information knows no national limits, and the importance of information-oriented activity in other countries is well recognized. The intellectual access to which we refer incorporates publications and resources of all countries and of all time. It follows that consideration must be given to a world-wide approach to the problem, with fullest possible coordination of talent and work in all parts of the world.

Physical Access

Physical access is the second of the two essential steps to information. Once the existence and location of a text or data is determined, it must then be made available. Bibliographic access alone is only a means to an end. It tells the inquirer what it is he needs, but then he must be provided with that material.

As with intellectual or bibliographic access, this physical access must be available to all and in all fields of information. It cannot be limited to certain areas, such as the metropolitan centers of the country. It must serve the scholar, the industrialist, the scientist, the lawyer--all sectors of society--denying no reasonable request from anyone in the country.

Users differ in their requirements for physical access to information. For example, most often the individual concerned with the arts, be it graphic or verbal, needs the original or a reproduction of the original visual representation. The scientist, on the other hand, is often likely to want a distillation of the original and be willing never to see the latter. This does not mean that the scientist never wants to see that original document. Some sciences are less concerned with quantitative data, or the original is needed for the study of methodology or insight into the overall purpose of the study. At the same time the artist may need but a fact or an abstract. Thus the information system which is to provide full physical access must be able to supply the original, and index or abstract of the original (surrogate) and a distillation of the original. How to do this best is the crux of the physical access part of the problem of providing full information service to the nation.

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At the present time it is the user's library or information center, whether it is public, academic, special or government, that provides him with physical access to published information. It must be recognized, however, that the amount of significant information already available and the accelerated rate at which new information appears makes it impossible now for this local library to acquire all the publications its patrons need. Some new approach is needed that will enable every local library to have assured and, most important, ready access from another source to what it cannot provide from its own collection.

Essentially this amounts to the assurance that there is such a source--a national lending library system--from which any library can borrow (or acquire a photocopy), quickly and easily, any needed item not available in its own collection. The user will still apply to his local source, but backing up that local library or information center will be all the stored information elsewhere in the nation and the knowledge that under a national effort all new data is being collected some place as it becomes available. Only when this is a reality will that basic need be taken care of--a copy of all publications somewhere in the country that is readily available to all. Confronting us at this point is the problem of copyright, the means by which enterprise in the intellectual field is given a property right. The whole copyright law is now under study for possible revision. What the exact nature of these revisions may be is not of concern to the problem of access to information so long as the means is retained to make information readily available. Solutions range from free copies of anything to a fee system for all copies. Somewhere in this range is the answer that will protect the author and publisher of information and still make it readily and quickly available to all.

It must be emphasized, however, that any system assumes, and its planning recognizes, continuance and even the strengthening of local resources. The corporation or government agency or school or public library is expected to provide--and may be assisted by various means to do so--a substantial proportion of needed services. The national system is a back-up resource. It is not intended to replace the local resources but to produce what this cannot practically provide for itself. It must also be recognized that there should be relative equivalence of access in all regions and at all necessary levels of complexity. The context of local resources and the means of supporting them will require study and the formulation of measures of need. Considerable evidence can be mustered that costs of information and services drastically handicap educators and researchers in many segments of the country and the world.

This new national system to provide ready access to all information is a huge task. Such a system is predicated, of course, on the assumption that library

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service will be available to all within the next few years. Behind this service there will then have to be the over-all coordination of acquisition programs and of distribution programs for the acquired materials. Modern technology already can ease the task greatly, and it is even possible now to visualize the time when such an information system will be able to provide directly the information wanted, rather than the document itself in some form.

Instantaneous recall of some information is essential in our age. However, it is recognized that such speed is not always necessary, another factor easing the burden of this great national effort. The combination of requesting by telephone and receiving by airmail, backed up by TWX or some other similar machine, will take care of the large majority of requests. The technology for this last method of providing physical access is fully developed today, but it is still not truly available to most people. It is essential that this form of service be strengthened and enlarged now. Indications are that machine retrieval may some day be a complete reality in all areas of information, but until this is true, it will be necessary to take care of most physical access by present methods. The accelerated growth of significant information makes it imperative that we adopt machine methods as quickly as possible, but at the same time proceed to strengthen present methods of physical access for use during the interim period, be it ten, twenty or more years.

Recommendation

The essential framework for effective federal action is now lacking because there is no agency within the federal structure with either the responsibility or the authority to see that an adequate solution is developed and implemented. Therefore, our fundamental recommendation as the essential first step is

THAT THERE BE ESTABLISHED WITHIN THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT A SINGLE AGENCY WITH THE RESPONSIBILITY TO ASSURE THAT THERE IS READY ACCESS TO ALL SIGNIFICANT PUBLISHED INFORMATION BY ALL ELEMENTS OF THE ECONOMY, AND WITH THE CONTINUING BUDGET SUPPORT THAT WILL ENABLE IT TO FULFILL THIS RESPONSIBILITY.

It is emphasized strongly that this is not a recommendation for a monstrous, monolithic, federal agency to replace all existing channels for disseminating and providing access to information. There must be many channels for these purposes and basic library service is best provided, as it is now, by libraries directed and supported by the local community of users (whether this community is a city, town or other political division; a university, college, or other school; a corporation, or other commercial organization; or a governmental department or agency), and

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dependent on commercial publishers and distributors, and on scholarly functions in the whole process of access to information and its transfer, dissemination, and preservation. Each such community is expected to continue to provide the basic library services for itself capable of satisfying most of the community's needs, while the national agency's function is to augment these by providing for the common use of all libraries those collections and services that the local community cannot afford but can be supported only by the nation-wide community, and to provide a means for coordinating and standardizing the work of libraries, publishers, and associations, to avoid unnecessary duplication of their efforts and expenditures.

In the provision of these new, augmenting services, the national agency should have the authority to itself establish and support, directly or through contract with other organizations, the national service libraries and bibliographic facilities required.

Which of these alternatives the agency elects in each case should not now be specified in detail, in part because there is insufficient information to do so accurately, and in part because the system requirements, and the techniques for satisfying them will undoubtedly change with time, and the national library/information agency must be free to change its actions accordingly. Indeed, the first function of the proposed agency must be to investigate the present system more thoroughly than any groups and organization now has the resources to do, initiate research on both technical (equipment) and functional problems, and itself determine its own best actions to fulfill the responsibility named above and to accomplish its mission. But what can be specified now are the major organizational requirements if this agency is to perform effectively.

First, the agency's responsibilities should be limited to national library services, that is to services to make equally available to all the nation's libraries, including the federal libraries, rather than for it to attempt to combine basic library service to the federal government itself with service to the nation as a whole. The principle this recognizes is that the divisions, departments, and agencies, or the federal government need access to information for their own use, and as in universities, research establishments, industry, and other elements of the economy, the primary satisfaction of these needs require library directed by and primarily responsive to the needs of the agency being served. It is no more possible for a federal library, merely because it is federally supported, to give first priority attention to the needs of libraries in the nation as a whole from a collection and staff organized and supported primarily to serve the needs of a local community of users than it is for a non-federal library, such as that of a university, to do so. Such a federal library, getting its budget support from the federal agency served in order that the agency's information needs might be met,

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must organize itself so that it can best satisfy those needs, and give first priority in service to the individuals in that agency rather than to the more remote users in the rest of the country. From the other side, a library organized and responsible to serve the nation as a whole by augmenting what the local libraries can provide for their own communities of users cannot without conflict serve as the basic, primary, information source for one particular group. This is even less possible than to expect a single federal library such as the Library of Congress adequately to serve all the information needs of the Department of Defense, the Department of Agriculture, the Department of State, and all the others, and for these to give up completely their own libraries.

This conflict between service to the nation as a whole and service to a particular local group is greatest with respect to the provision of physical access, and is substantially less, though far from insignificant, with respect to bibliographic access. In the latter case, bibliographic descriptions and analyses prepared by a library for its own use can be duplicated or in other ways made available to other libraries without interfering with local access or needs. This has in fact been the basis for the Library of Congress catalog card distribution service.

Since the "national group" versus "local group" problem is well illustrated by Library of Congress activity, some description will be useful. Under its program, the Library of Congress has prepared and printed catalog cards for its own use in accordance with its own needs as the Library of Congress, and then merely printed additional copies for purchase by libraries so that they could take advantage of this cataloguing. This was, and is, very valuable in making it unnecessary for other libraries to duplicate the intellectual work of the cataloguing done by the Library of Congress. But this was not a complete solution to the problem of cataloguing even monographs and serial titles in all libraries because in many cases the cataloguing priorities established at the Library of Congress which were intended to be those best satisfying the needs of the users it has primary responsibilities to serve--the Congress itself--were different from the needs of other users throughout the nation, and in a great many cases the Library of Congress neither acquired nor catalogued the publications at all since it was of insufficient interest to the needs of the Congress. To have changed priorities to satisfy the needs of the nation as a whole would have been a disservice to the needs of Congress itself; while to have acquired and catalogued titles out of scope to the Congressional interest could have been done only by diverting funds from other Library of Congress services, thus handicapping its primary mission of service to Congress.

The only practicable way of avoiding this conflict of interest is the one finally arrived at in this particular--that is by giving another agency the funds to pay for the additional cataloguing to be done in the national interest, with authority

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to transfer these funds to the Library of Congress, as the best available agency to do this additional work with assurance that it would be consistent with LC's own cataloguing. This responsibility of the Library of Congress for service to the nation as a whole, being thus separately funded and staffed, does not compete with its services to Congress for support or priority in performance and continuation.

The pattern represented in miniature by this program of cataloguing one particular group of publications in the national interest is thus similar to the one here recommended for implementation of a complete national library system. It separates federal funding and responsibility for library services to the nation as a whole from funding and responsibility for library services to the federal community itself so that they do not come into conflict and neither one is forced into a secondary position. At the same time it does not preclude making available for the national benefit those services that the federal libraries perform for their own purposes that can without conflict be utilized nationally, and indeed establishes an agency to coordinate these more effectively.

In addition to the requirements above, one other appears to us to be of primary importance if the National Library Agency is satisfactorily to meet the national needs. This is that responsibility for determination of the Agency's programs and policies be vested in a board, commission, or committee, of persons representing the communities of users to be served. The actual administrative officers will of course be qualified civil servants, ultimately responsible to the President and Congress, and undoubtedly will come to these positions with experience gained in the user communities. But the needs and problems of these communities vary in detail and with time, and only those persons continually facing these in their daily work can remain fully familiar with them. Unless policies are guided and programs determined by those whom the agency serves there is grave danger of its becoming, despite the best will in the world, out of touch with current needs and too slowly responsive to new problems and new solutions. For this reason the agency and its director must be continually guided by a group representing the users.

Whether this body is a board or commission, legally responsible for program and policy guidance, or a committee charged merely with advising the actual administrators, perhaps practically makes little difference, though legal responsibility is more certain of effectiveness and is therefore recommended. But in any case such a group of experts in a position where its voice must be heard and heeded, without its having to hunt for a channel of communication and fight for an audience, is essential to keep the system continually and most effectively responsive to the national need and interest. This group must represent the ultimate individual users, major types of libraries, and the various agencies concerned with support

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of research.

There are several possible places within the federal structure where the National Library Agency might be placed, and several possible forms it might take. It might, for example, be established:

1. As a bureau or division within the Department of Health, Education and Welfare.
2. As an independent commission, similar in form to the Atomic Energy Commission, or as a foundation similar to the National Science Foundation and the National Foundation for the Arts and Humanities.
3. As an independent division of the Library of Congress.

1. If the responsibility for this function of assuring ready access to information by all elements of the economy is to be assigned to an existing executive department, the Department of Health, Education and Welfare is a more logical choice than any other, and indeed it has already been charged for some time with administering various programs of library aid. It is important to note, though, that no such National Library Agency is here recommended, and as is required adequately to solve the problem, now exists within the Department, and in fact the administration of even existing library legislation is now diffused through the Department so that there is no unified direction of all efforts toward the same goal. But only a single agency competently staffed with men and women of expert knowledge in the fields of librarianship and information handling, with the assigned responsibility to assure that all elements of the economy have ready access to all information, and with authority not limited to just one way of accomplishing this, or to only some aspects of the problem, can hope to insure a solution that avoids both unnecessary duplication and gaps in coverage.

2. The operational functions required of the Agency in fulfillment of its responsibility, and particularly its need to have the freedom to initiate research and to act dynamically and promptly in an environment of rapidly changing technology, might be better satisfied through the establishment of an independent commission, similar in form to the Atomic Energy Commission, or a Library Foundation similar in form to the National Science Foundation, reporting directly to the President and Congress. Either one would undoubtedly make the complete centralization of responsibility and administration, and thus the unified approach that is essential to an economically practical solution to the information problem, easier than inclusion of the agency within the already complex bureaucratic environment of a large executive

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department such as Health, Education and Welfare. But despite these advantages, there are also disadvantages from the point of view of public administration in adding still another agency budgeted outside of a cabinet department.

3. Locating the National Library Agency under the Library of Congress would have the advantage of placing it more closely in connection with the largest single library within the federal establishment, and one that, although intended primarily to serve a federal agency (the Congress), is now also serving in some ways the library/information needs of the nation as a whole. But it has already been pointed out that the same agency cannot without disservice to one or the other serve the nationwide need when it also must satisfy the primary information need of a federal agency. This conflict could be avoided only by establishing the National Library Agency as a wholly separate agency from the Library of Congress itself, and with a wholly separate budget, the only connection being that both would be administered by the Librarian of Congress.

The major disadvantage of this location of the agency is that, even with separate budgets for the Library of Congress per se and the National Library Agency, under this arrangement the National Library Agency budget still remains on the Legislative Branch side rather than the Executive Branch side, and thus gives an unfair impression of the actual purpose of the expenditure. A second disadvantage lies in the bifurcation of the responsibilities of the Librarian of Congress himself.

Balancing the advantages and disadvantages of these several possible locations and forms for the National Library Agency, we believe that although any one of them can be made workable, the administrative and budgetary relationships will be more logical and less conflicting if the Agency is made a separate office with the Department of Health, Education and Welfare. But we emphasize again that wherever located, and whatever form the National Library Agency takes, responsibility for assuming all national library/information needs are satisfied must be concentrated in a single agency; its function must not be weakened by combining responsibility for service to the nation as a whole with responsibility for primary service to the federal establishment itself; the agency must have broad authority to act directly or through grants or contracts with other federal, public, and non-profit agencies; and policy and program guidance must be provided by a board or committee representing the immediate and ultimate users of the system, to insure responsive and responsible guidance in the national interest.

Summary

1. The national interest requires that all users throughout the nation have ready access to information; such access should not be limited to a few geographic areas or to a few elements of the economy.

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2. The problem of access to information is equally urgent for all fields of knowledge and not only natural science and technology; it includes no less importantly and no less urgently the information in the social sciences and the humanities.
3. The volume of information is so large that a great proportion of an individual's needs can be met only through library/information centers (which are here defined as any store, in any form, of information intended for the common use of some community of users).
4. The volume of information is so large, and is growing so rapidly, that even every community of users cannot afford to support for their own use a library/information system that can acquire, analyze, organize, and house, all of the information to which that community from time to time needs access.
5. The only practical solution to this dilemma, regardless of the techniques used (whether automated data processing, microforms, conventional publication forms, or a combination of these) is a system operating nation-wide that makes it possible for every library to do two things: identify readily the publications containing the information the patron wants and then to provide him, within a reasonably short period of time, with a copy in some form of all publications thus identified. Such a system can be achieved only by organization and coordination at the national level at least.
6. Since it is in the national interest, meaning by this the interest of all citizens, to assure ready access to information by all elements of the economy, and since this can be assured only by organization and support at the national level, therefore, support by the federal government is necessary to assure such access is not only justified but is its obligation.
7. The essential framework for effective federal action is now lacking because there is no agency within the federal structure with either the responsibility or the authority to see that an adequate solution is developed and implemented to serve all fields of knowledge and all users.

Recommendation

8. Therefore our recommendation as the essential first step toward an effective solution is that there be established within the federal government a single agency with the responsibility to assure that there is ready access to information by all elements of the economy, to develop the most effective techniques and methods for accomplishing this goal, and that it be given the continuing budget support and operating authority that will enable it to fulfill this responsibility.