



Japanese National Bibliography in the digital environment

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Legal Deposit System and National Bibliography

The legal deposit system mandates that copies of all new publications published in Japan must be sent to the National Diet Library (NDL) in accordance with the National Diet Library Law (Law No.5, February 9, 1948).

The applicable "publications" include books, pamphlets, serial publications, musical scores, maps, and phonographic records and so on.

The National Diet Library Law was amended in April 2000 so that the NDL could include so-called "packaged" electronic publications in its legal deposit system. The amendment came into effect in October 2000.

The NDL publishes the Japanese National Bibliography to supply prompt and precise information on the new Japanese publications collected through the legal deposit system.

History of the Japanese National Bibliography

The NDL has been publishing a national bibliography under the title, "*Nihon Zenkoku shoshi*" (Japanese National Bibliography). The history of the *Japanese National Bibliography* goes

back to “*Nohon Geppo*” (monthly list of deposited materials) which started in 1948, the year of the NDL’s foundation. At the beginning, the number of listed materials in “*Nohon Geppo*” did not even reach the half of the published materials in the country, and thus I am afraid that it is not appropriate to call it a “national bibliography.”

“*Nohon Geppo*” changed its title to “*Kokunai Shuppanbutsu Mokuroku*” (catalog of domestic publications) in 1950, showing the NDL’s renewed commitment to include all the publications published in Japan. “*Kokunai Shuppanbutsu Mokuroku*” was monthly, but there was a plan to publish annual cumulative editions, which meant that the NDL had intended to make it clear that it would produce a national bibliography. “*Kokunai Shuppanbutsu Mokuroku*” changed its title to “*Nohon Shuho*” (weekly list of deposited materials), and again in 1981 to the present title, “*Nihon Zenkoku Shoshi*” (*Japanese National Bibliography Weekly List*).

JAPAN/MARC, a machine-readable form of the *Japanese National Bibliography*, has provided bibliographic data of Japanese monographs since April 1981. Also JAPAN/MARC(S) has provided bibliographic information on domestic serials since August 1988, and JAPAN/MARC(A) has provided authority name files (Japanese authors) since October 1996.

Features of the Japanese National Bibliography

There are four basic requirements for national bibliographies: promptness, minuteness, completeness, and reliability. The first requirement, promptness, has been a problem; in the past the interval between the receipt of deposited materials and their appearance in the *Japanese National Bibliography* once took more than half a year. However, according to the sample survey conducted in November 2004, 99.6% of Japanese monographs and serials were included in the *Japanese National Bibliography* within 60 days from accession.

The policy on minuteness of the *Japanese National Bibliography* changed in April 2002. Before that, the printed version of the *Japanese National Bibliography* carried the whole bibliographic data including description, headings, call numbers, etc. However, the web version of the *Japanese National Bibliography*, which became available from April 2002 (http://www.ndl.go.jp/jp/publication/jnbwl/jnb_top.html), has given priority to an easy and simple view of bibliographic data, and therefore does not provide such minute data as shown in the printed version. For example, the web version does not give most of the information in the general notes, contents notes, author headings, and call numbers.

On the other hand, we put more efforts into creating more detailed bibliographic data which are provided through JAPAN/MARC and NDL-OPAC. In providing bibliographic data on the Internet, the *Japanese National Bibliography* only does not seem to be adequate in achieving the required minuteness, but together with NDL-OPAC we believe that the NDL has achieved more minuteness than before.

Coverage of materials to be included in the *Japanese National Bibliography* used to center on printed materials such as monographs and serials. In recent years, however, the coverage has been extended to include materials in various media as shown below:

- since March 1999 microforms, “packaged” electronic resources, graphic materials, sound recordings, etc
- since January 2003 music scores (sheet material)
- since February 2003 music sound recording, audiovisual materials
- since March 2003 maps (sheet material), residential maps

According to the 2004 edition of “*Shuppan Nenkan*” (*Publishing Year-book*) the number of monographs newly published in Japan and available at bookstores was 75,530 in 2003. The number of monographs included in the *Japanese National Bibliography* in 2003 was about 130,000. From this fact, you can see the completeness of the *Japanese National Bibliography* in covering official publications and self-published materials that are usually not available in the commercial market.

It can be naturally assumed that bibliographic data in the *Japanese National Bibliography* and JAPAN/MARC should be reliable as they are produced by a national library and based on standards such as cataloging rules and classification schemes. However, when only the printed version of the *Japanese National Bibliography* was available, it was mostly purchased by libraries and was not easily available elsewhere. The lengthy time lag between the time of publication and its appearance in the bibliography was also an obstacle to prevent further use of the bibliography. JAPAN/MARC also was only used by institutions which owned large-scale computers.

Even after the advent of J-BISC, the CD-ROM version of JAPAN/MARC, which can be handled by personal computers, JAPAN/MARC has failed to become familiar to the general public. Furthermore, many public and academic libraries have started to use the MARC records produced by private publication wholesalers, which further lowered the utilization ratio of JAPAN/MARC. Under these circumstances with this low usage, we were not yet in a position to proclaim the reliability of the *Japanese National Bibliography*.

Since the web version of the *Japanese National Bibliography* became available on the Internet, however, things have started to change. The easier it becomes to use, the more clearly people see its reliability, and the more people start to use it. We expect that the more people in Japan do information search on the Internet, the more they will recognize the reliability of the *Japanese National Bibliography*, which provides high-quality bibliographic information.

Issues to be solved

The NDL collects domestic publications based on the legal deposit system, which does not include networked electronic publications at present. On December 9, 2004, the 12th meeting of the Legal Deposit System Council was held at the NDL. The report of the Council made it clear that incorporation of networked electronic publications into the legal deposit system is not appropriate in the light of the fundamental principles of legal deposit system. And the Council suggested another method of collecting networked electronic publications: its coverage and means of acquisitions, and ways to look at issues relating to copyright and compensation.

The NDL is now working on basic principles for legislation for acquisition and provision of networked electronic publications. And issues, such as to whether the *Japanese National Bibliography* should incorporate networked electronic publications, or how to develop standards for metadata creation, are very important and need urgent action and decision.

Conclusion

The NDL has continued to work on the matters of national bibliographical services. These matters should be looked upon in a new light and should be adapted to the digital information environment. Especially in the age of digital information, libraries must deal with not only physical artifacts but also networked electronic publications and thus must further advance cooperation with other libraries at home and overseas, regardless of distance and national borders.

I believe that this job is very important and worthwhile. We will continue to work hard on national bibliographical services.

Thank you very much for your attention.