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Access in the United States to Foreign Language LIS Scholarly Journals Through Indexing Services

Michele Pope

Serials/Government Documents Librarian

Loyola University Law Library

7214 St. Charles Avenue

Campus Box 903

New Orleans, LA 70118

W(504) 861-5546

H(504) 865-7153

Fax: (504) 861-5895

mpope@loyno.edu

Abstract

This paper reviews results of a research study examining the availability of foreign language LIS scholarly journals through indexing services at ALA accredited LIS graduate and PhD programs in the United States. Ulrich's Periodical Directory was used to formulate the title list (273 titles) of foreign published LIS scholarly journals. Ulrich's provided a systematic method of aggregating titles to measure against the title lists provided by indexing services. For the purposes of this study, foreign language journals are defined as those published from countries other than Ireland, New Zealand, Australia, the United Kingdom and the United States, and not solely published in English.

The impact of indexing services on the availability of foreign language LIS scholarly journals in the United States will be explored.

Access to foreign language LIS scholarly journals is not widely available in the United States. Indexing services are a primary source for accessing research published in non-English speaking countries. If a journal is published in a non-English speaking country, it does not mean that it will automatically be published in a foreign language. Out of approximately 100 indexing services listed in Ulrich's for foreign published LIS scholarly journals, only two indexing services are commonly available in United States LIS programs. LISA and Library Literature and Information Science Abstracts (LLIA) carry 58 (21%) and 30 (11%), for a total of 88 titles, or 32% out of 273 titles. A further breakdown of the 88 titles emphasizes the critical relationship of translation to accessibility; 29 titles are published in English, 41 are published with some English translation and 18 had no translation. Ulrich's does not list all foreign published LIS scholarly journals and the final paper will examine titles found in LISA and LLIA, but not in Ulrich's.

Indexing services are in a powerful position to impact the LIS knowledge base and its development. Indexing services can make editorial decisions based on what they think the market will read. The selection criteria for indexing services will be examined. Attributes of Ulrich's list of journals will be evaluated against the selection criteria in LISA and LLIA. Both universities and indexing services make journal acquisition decisions based on whether journals are included in resources such as Ulrich's and competing indexing services. Since an issue in the concept of journal quality is coverage in indexing services, foreign publishers would be prudent to investigate the selection process of indexing services to widen their market potential.

An effort is needed to increase access to foreign language LIS scholarly journals in the United States. The process of providing knowledge to a global market needs review, revision and support. Journal editors, publishers and distributors all have an essential role in making information accessible. This paper will examine the front-end of information delivery and offer ideas for support, including easier access to translation, cooperative indexing, and nonprofit oversight.

Although there are more than 600 scholarly journals published worldwide in the library and information science (LIS) field, access to foreign published journals is limited, and more so for those not published in English. LIS degree programs need comprehensive access for research, both for a meaningful understanding of library science and for theoretical development. In addition to the fifty LIS degree programs in the United States, there are more than 400 library and information science programs worldwide.ⁱ However, rarely do North American authors use research developed elsewhere. "LIS journals published in languages other than English ... are barely known in the Anglophone world. New ideas are presented in these journals, but they only have limited impact on the discourse because they are not read in North America, the UK."ⁱⁱ Why is this so? This paper reviews the results of a research study examining the availability of foreign LIS scholarly journals through indexing services at American

Library Association (ALA) accredited LIS graduate and PhD programs in the United States. The issues surrounding foreign journal dissemination will also be considered and suggestions made for future development.

Under use of foreign material is a result of a lack of access, a lack of translation, or in many cases, both. Conceptual developments published in foreign journals usually enter the United States via aggregated commercial products like print or electronic indexing services. When libraries do not have the tangible journal, librarians will depend on indexing services to supplement, evaluate, and make acquisition and de-accession decisions. The use of indexing services for assessing journal quality is not recommended however, since “there is a considerable body of evidence to suggest that domestic publications are more heavily cited than publications in foreign languages, which indicates that cognitive and physical accessibilities are among the major factors,”ⁱⁱⁱ and that “citation analysis will always be biased in favour of high circulation journals.”^{iv} Students depend heavily on indexing services for comprehensive access, as do librarians who may rely on databases without checking to see if journals are selectively indexed or whether foreign journals are adequately represented, in both instances causing an “intellectual climate of complacency.”^v Commercial producers make selections for their own domestic market^{vi} from longstanding relationships with foreign publishers, limiting the number of countries represented and often providing only limited resources for translation.^{vii} According to Steele, “as long as US libraries provide a relatively steady market for local content, profit seeking publishers will continue to chum it out.”^{viii} When information products are driven by English language distribution, how equitable can access be to multicultural information?

Both developing and industrialized countries suffer from an information deficit, although for different reasons. Products, particularly on the internet, are being produced for English language consumption^{ix} limiting access to non-English speaking countries, which consequently narrows and distorts foreign discourse.^x Many countries do not have the capital to produce their own resources^{xi} and only have the option of using foreign products.^{xii} But the current worldwide economy has put imported materials out of reach of developing countries.^{xiii} Although the majority of the online population (63.5%) lives in non-English speaking areas,^{xiv} 90% of internet hosts are in English speaking countries.^{xv} Even though North American users make up only 26.7% of all world users of the internet,^{xvi} a disproportionate number of information products are produced and marketed to the English speaking demographic. For librarians, “the challenge of obtaining and analyzing information to produce knowledge about international topics... is considerable.”^{xvii}

Whether information is on the internet or in databases, librarians need improvements made to subject access tools.^{xviii} The multilingual network environment is creating new challenges for subject access because of the complex problems posed by technology in penetrating the language barrier.^{xix} Even when material is translated and indexed, intellectual access must be supported by topical subject headings, translated abstracts, correct name forms, and in the case of reader advisory services, an adequate number of book reviews for foreign titles. Without this effort, foreign language material is ‘ghettoized’ in the very databases that are supposedly providing access.^{xx}

North American authors in library and information science are largely unaware of multicultural developments^{xxi} and interest in diversity fluctuates.^{xxii} Foreign publications are perceived as less important.^{xxiii} According to Hoge, international news reporting has declined.^{xxiv} Regarding American law librarianship, “we do not have a deep and strategic appreciation for world history as it relates to current events; our knowledge of foreign cultures is limited and often even stereotypical; our mastery of foreign languages is limited and... frequently based on languages of our own language group and alphabet; our understanding of other legal systems is at far too basic of a level to be of any real professional use to us.”^{xxv} Our research is “narrowly focused” and American librarians have limited knowledge, or are “ignorant” of research and current events outside North America.^{xxvi} Because of this, we risk duplicating research^{xxvii} and are “failing to benefit from the experience and insight of foreign colleagues.”^{xxviii} Many librarians see the ALA and American libraries as leaders of the world and therefore see no need to know what is happening around the world.^{xxix} If we neglect knowledge developed in other countries, we limit the potential of our own development, for “to ignore people’s knowledge is almost to ensure failure in development.”^{xxx}

Lack of access is an end result of the cyclical relationships involving authors, publishers, distributors and buyers, all playing a role in strengthening or weakening the indigenous/western cultural divide. What amounts to a lack of foreign material in databases also reflects the trend of a number of foreign national journals dropping off because more authors are submitting English manuscripts to English language journals in order to reach a wider audience.^{xxxi} This means that fewer members of the wider public in non-English speaking countries can read the research published by their own scientists.^{xxxii} The most powerful player in the distribution of information would appear to be the distributor who maintains the passage of knowledge from one culture to another, having the greatest epistemological impact on library and information science theoretical developments. Problems of access to foreign language resources are not limited to LIS but are also affecting other disciplines such as, but not limited to, bioethics, general academics, sciences, literature, international development, law and business.^{xxxiii} In LIS, the two most influential distributors of foreign and domestic LIS research in North America are Library and Information Science Abstracts (LISA) and Library Literature and Information Science (LLIS). Both indexing services are separately owned yet function similarly. Both research potential journals, take solicitations, prefer refereed journals, use a handful of editors to make selection decisions, ‘sometimes’^{xxxiv} selectively index articles based on content, but most importantly, rarely index journals published in foreign languages^{xxxv} mainly because they need translation.^{xxxvi} Translation is intellectually difficult, costly, and time consuming, and is a key attribute impacting distribution. As Bordons and Gomez point out, “the use of English makes international dissemination of knowledge easier but does it mean that all journals need to be written in English to adjust themselves to the international character of science?”^{xxxvii} Does publishing in English qualify research as more legitimate science? Are the authors the influential theoreticians, or are commercial database producers holding the strings to library and information science theoretical development?

METHODOLOGY

In order to evaluate the extent that LIS school libraries provide access to foreign journals, the databases to which they subscribe were measured to determine the number of foreign journals indexed. Access to foreign journals in libraries could then be estimated based on subscriptions to indexing services. In addition, LISA and LLIS were compared with a foreign journal list formulated with Ulrich's Periodicals Directory,^{xxxviii} a North American resource, to determine the extent to which they provide access to foreign journals. Although there are other sources beside Ulrich's that list foreign scholarly journal titles and could be researched for a more comprehensive list; Ulrich's provided a systematic method for consolidating journal titles and other important information. In addition, Ulrich's lists the publishing language of the journals. Without that resource, determining the publishing language of the journal is much more difficult. As a result, this study provides a broad view of library holdings in foreign journals based on current subscriptions to indexing services.

Ulrich's was accessed between October and December, 2004 to form a list of scholarly LIS foreign language journal titles. For the purpose of this study, foreign language journals are defined as those published from non-English speaking countries, not solely published in English, and from countries other than Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. Using a keyword search, [library and information science] was queried with the limitation of serial type, [scholarly/academic]. This query produced 714 titles. A subject search with the same parameters resulted in 610 titles. The 714 titles were individually searched to eliminate false hits (36), cessations (57), and all titles solely published in English (410), even if they were published in a non-English speaking country. Thus the 410 English language titles included foreign published titles published only in English, and all titles published in the following countries: Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States. The final list of 211 electronic and tangible titles was published in at least one language other than English.

Forty-five countries were represented in the final list. The 211 journals were published in a foreign language or included some English translation. Twelve of the countries represented had no English translations of any of the journals published in that country. These countries are Argentina, Islamic Republic of Iran, Israel, Madagascar, Republic of Moldova, Norway, Peru, Portugal, Russian Federation, Slovenia, Switzerland and Uruguay. Ostensively, journals from these countries are most in need of translation. Of the 211 journals, 76 had some English translation. Five titles listed 'text in multiple languages,' and they were not counted. No translation existed for 130 journals. They included the following languages and number of journals per language: Bulgarian (2); Chinese (23); Czech (2); Danish (4); Dutch (7); French (4); German (39); Hebrew (1); Hindi (1); Hungarian (1); Italian (7); Japanese (6); Norwegian (1); Persian (Modern) (3); Polish (1); Portuguese (2); Romanian (3); Russian (5); Slovenian (1); Spanish (9); Swedish (2). Journals with no translation and more than one language were counted once: Czech and German (1); Danish, Norwegian and Swedish (1); Finnish and Swedish (1); French and Malagasy (1); Spanish and Portuguese (2).

Ulrich's also lists the indexing service that indexes each title. A total of 78 databases index the 211 foreign language journals. Only ten databases indexed 13 to 56 foreign language titles. In other words, the most that these ten databases indexed is 6% to

3	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	8	
4	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y			5	
5	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y			5	
6	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y			Y	6	
7	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y			5	
8	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	8	
9	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	8	
10	Y		Y				Y				3	
11	Y						Y	Y		Y	4	
12	Y						Y				2	
13	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	10	
14	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	9	
15	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	9	
16	Y		Y				Y				3	
17	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y			6	
18	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y			6	
19	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y				5	
20	Y	Y		Y			Y			Y	5	
21	Y		Y				Y	Y		Y	5	
22	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	9	
23	Y		Y	Y			Y	Y			5	
	STOOHDS	AMERICA (13)	BIBLIO (13)	RILM (16)	INFORM (18)	IBR (22)	IBZ (22)	LIBRARY (24)	INSPEC (25)	RUSSIAN (52)	LISA (56)	TOTAL DATABASES
24	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y		Y	8
25	Y	Y	Y	Y				Y	Y	Y	Y	8
26	Y	Y	Y					Y	Y		Y	6
27	Y	Y		Y				Y	Y		Y	6

28	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y		Y	7
29	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y		Y	7
30	Y						Y			Y	3
31		Y		Y			Y			Y	4
32	Y			Y			Y			Y	4
33	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	9
34	Y		Y				Y			Y	4
35	Y			Y			Y			Y	4
36	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y	Y	Y	8
37	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			7
38	Y						Y			Y	3
39				Y			Y			Y	3
40	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	9
41	Y		Y				Y			Y	4
42	Y		Y				Y				3
43	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y		Y	8
44	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	9
45	Y						Y				2
46	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	9
47	Y	Y	Y	Y			Y	Y		Y	7
48	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	9
49	Y	Y	Y		Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	8
50	Y	Y	Y				Y			Y	5
T	48	33	38	30	9	16	50	33	13	37	

Out of fifty schools, only two had current subscriptions to all ten databases. None of the school websites directed their LIS students to all ten databases for the most complete coverage of foreign language LIS journals. This may be because librarians do not know which databases contain the highest number of foreign language LIS journals. Schools averaged 6 databases each which may appear fair, but this depends on which indexing services are selected. If the set of ten databases are divided into two sets of five,

the first set of five having low journal counts, and the second set of 5 having high journal counts, then the numbers begin to have more meaning.

	13 AMERICA	13 BIBLIO	16 RILM	18 INFORM	22 IBR		22 IBZ	24 LIBRARY	25 INSPEC	52 RUSSIAN	56 LISA	

T	48	33	38	30	9		16	50	33	13	37	
	(48+33+38+30+9=158)						(16+50+33+13+37=149)					

The first set of five databases is chosen by more schools (158) and the second set of five is chosen by fewer schools (149). Almost an equal number of schools choose low count databases than high, with low count databases chosen more often. Ideally, schools should choose all databases or more with a higher number of journal counts. It is an obvious point, but subscription decisions are hindered by financial resources and acquisition strategies when coping with limited funds.

CONCLUSIONS

Foreign language LIS journals are less accessible than English language LIS journals. Foreign language journals without translation are far more likely to be inaccessible. They are not comprehensively indexed in Ulrich's and there is no comprehensive directory for foreign LIS journals. LIS schools do not appear to be directing students to resources covering international aspects of LIS. Foreign language material is less likely to be included in databases, and less likely to be noticed if it is. Databases need better pointers to foreign material such as subject headings, and the internet is still in its early development stage of multilingual subject access.

Library and information science programs cannot all specialize in international librarianship. If budgets prohibit the purchase of specialized products, resources may be found in other disciplines that contain material suitable for LIS students. Pathfinders should be prominently displayed and suggest the use of several resources to attain the best results. It is frequently emphasized that searching in multiple databases is necessary to achieve desired results.^{x1} Organizing library websites with resource links, bibliographies and finding aids will attract and guide student interest. If LIS programs have good resources, promoting them indicates to students that money is being put toward international librarianship.

A specialized directory for foreign LIS journals is needed as a resource for LIS programs to direct their students. The possibility of providing a comprehensive directory seems likely if the many organizations committed to information development could be motivated to contribute. Taking into account the international associations, libraries, NGO's, and international LIS programs, surely there is, or could be, sufficient knowledge of foreign LIS journals. A specialized LIS directory would have the resources necessary to be comprehensive as opposed to a general resource with some international titles.

International librarianship is expanding and so should the resources available to meet this demand.

Once a comprehensive list of foreign LIS journals is known, an indexing service needs to be developed that would enable foreign language journals to remain accessible to local populations yet be translated for distribution. Publishing in the language of origin is preferable to enable readers in the local community to access and use the information, but publishers need to find alternatives for disseminating journals if they want to publish in their native languages. One possibility is for local journal producers to partner with local LIS programs to produce their own international database. With over 400 LIS programs worldwide, a cooperative effort could be made to support translation and networked distribution. The local LIS school could contribute by translating article abstracts into English, indexing, and supporting a cooperative network. The English translations could be uploaded, accessed and downloaded again by LIS schools in other countries where the material could be translated into the local language. The English would be available for an English speaking audience, but would also facilitate linking between languages during the translation process. Interfaces could be developed for ease of access by different language groups. Distribution could be managed by a cooperative committee made up of representatives from library schools, non-profit associations, journal producers or anyone with a stake in providing equitable access. Schools that do not contribute would pay for access.

In addition to the journal literature of library and information science, there are thousands of reports, evaluations, guidelines, best practices, policies, local histories, conference proceedings, statements, trial studies and other materials needed for research and practical development. This information is held in local LIS libraries but remains inaccessible to the wider public. Material outside the scope of journal literature could be selected by local LIS communities to form a second database product. Copyright and translation of abstracts would be handled locally. The end result would enable access to rare and invaluable materials in library communities at all levels of need and development.

Models for intercultural development are an important part of the future. Funding sources may be interested in contributing to educational networks that foster intercultural exchange as well as promote national identities. Particularly attractive are ideas for networks already in place that can reach a diverse audience across political, financial, economic and linguistic boundaries. “To successfully build new epistemic foundations, accounts of innovation and experimentation must bridge the indigenous /western divide.”^{xli}

It has often been said that library and information science is a ‘soft’ science, that it does not have the theoretical foundations of the ‘hard’ sciences such as medicine. With computers and advanced technologies, there was fear that library science would be absorbed into information science or worse, online collections would finish off libraries altogether. The truth is we are much closer to the beginning of our evolution than the end of our development. By bringing new knowledge systems together, by translating and transferring ideas between diverse cultures, a transformation of knowledge and beliefs

will occur.^{xlii} As stated by the World Commission on Culture and Development, “it is the development that is embedded in culture and not the other way around.”^{xliii}

FOOTNOTES

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- ⁱ Tom Wilson, InformationR.net (updated February 22, 2005), available at <http://informationr.net/wl/index.html>; GradSchools.com (2005), available at http://www.gradschools.com/programs/library_info_science.html.
- ⁱⁱ G.E. Gorman & Philip J. Calvert, *LIS Journal Quality: Results of a Study for the IFLA Library and Information Science Journals Section*, World Library and Information Congress: 69th IFLA General Conference and Council (2003) at 15, accessed at <http://www.ifla.org/VII/s45/conf/slisjconf03.htm>.
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- ^v Juris Dilevko & Keren Dali, *Electronic Databases for Readers' Advisory Services and Intellectual Access to Translated Fiction Not Originally Written in English*, *Library Resources & Technical Services*, 47:3 (July, 2003) at 93.
- ^{vi} Beth Luey, *Translation and the Internationalization of Culture*, *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 16:4 (Winter, 2001).
- ^{vii} Maarten Asscher, *The Challenge of Being Small and Unknown*, *Publishing Research Quarterly*, 9:2 (Summer 1993), in Luey.
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- ^{ix} Justin Chisenga, *Global Information Infrastructure and the Question of African Content*, 65th IFLA Council and General Conference (August, 1999), accessed at <http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla65/papers/118-116e.htm>; Robert Wedgeworth, *A Global Perspective on the Library and Information Agenda*, *American Libraries*, 26:6 (June, 1998).
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- ^{xi} Steele.
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- ^{xiii} Wedgeworth.
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- ^{xvi} Internet Users by Language, Internet World Stats; Usage Population Statistics (updated February 3, 2005) at <http://www.internetworldstats.com>, accessed March 21, 2005.
- ^{xvii} Paul Zarins, *International and Foreign Information Services in the Expanding Global Community*, *Journal of Library Administration* 20:3/4 (1995) at 82.
- ^{xviii} Maria Ines Cordeiro, *Knowledge Organization from Libraries to the Web: Strong Demands on the Weakest Side of International Librarianship*, *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 37:1/2 (2003).
- ^{xix} Cordeiro.
- ^{xx} Dilevko at 92-93.
- ^{xxi} Gorman.
- ^{xxii} Alma Dawson & Connie Van Fleet, *The Future of Readers' Advisory in a Multicultural Society*, in Kenneth D. Shearer & Robert Burgin (Eds.), *The Readers' Advisor's Companion*, Colorado: Libraries Unlimited (2001) in Dilevko.

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- ^{xxv} Roberta I. Shaffer, *Mobilize to Globalize: An Essay Checklist for the Borderless Law Librarian*, *Legal Reference Services Quarterly*, 17:3 (1999) at 73.
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- ^{xxix} Ron Chepesiuk, *ATG Interviews Dr. Ravi Sharma: International Librarianship and Diversity in the Profession*, *Against the Grain*, 12:2 (April, 2000).
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- ^{xxxii} Bordons.
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- ^{xxxvi} Zarins.
- ^{xxxvii} Bordons at 189.
- ^{xxxviii} R.R. Bowker LLC., *Ulrich's Periodicals Directory*, (2005) available at <http://www.ulrichsweb.com/ulrichsweb/>.
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- ^{xlii} Martin Nakata, *Indigenous Knowledge and the Cultural Interface: Underlying Issues at the Intersection of Knowledge and Information Systems*, *IFLA Journal* 28:5/6 (2002); Dianne Oberg & James Henri, *Information Transfer and Transformation in Teacher-Librarianship: Synergy Across the Pacific*, 34:1 (March, 2002); Wang Ning, *Translation as Cultural '(De)colonization,*' *Perspectives: Studies in Translatology* 10:4 (2002).
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