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|  | <p style="text-align: right;">Date : 08/06/2007</p> <p>The South African National Bibliography: 1933-to date From isolation to co-operation</p> <p>Susan Battison Project Leader: SANB National Library of South Africa</p> |
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Abstract

This paper gives a brief history of the South African National Bibliography (SANB), illustrating the role that it played within the South African national bibliographic arena and how it has moved into the international bibliographic arena. The standards used by the SANB and the newly formed consortium of places of legal deposit in South Africa are also highlighted. The importance of standards within the co-operative cataloguing environment is emphasized. Other bibliographies covering South African published materials are also mentioned.

Introduction

The last decade at the South African National Bibliography (SANB) has been one of change and that change is a microcosm of what has happened in the world of cataloguing. This paper presents a history of the SANB showing the change from a traditionally top-down approach to a more co-operative approach; and how the SANB has moved from the local level, to the national and the international levels with regard to its cataloguing activities. This paper also focuses on the role that international cataloguing standards play in co-operative cataloguing.

History of the SANB

The history of the SANB can be divided into several phases:

1933-1958: monthly lists

The then State Library issued typed author lists of publications received according to The Copyright Act, no. 9 of 1916. These lists were published monthly from 1933 to 1960. From 1938 to 1959 these lists were mimeographed. The first lists were simply arranged alphabetically under author or title and included place of publication, name of publisher and physical descriptions. In 1958 Dewey decimal classification numbers were included with the entries, but the list was still arranged alphabetically by author

and title. No cumulated editions of the lists published between 1933 and 1958 were published. A separate list of periodicals was also published on a monthly basis.

1959-1999: printed national bibliography

The first current SANB annual comprising the South African materials published during 1959, was published in 1960. The entries were arranged in classified order for the first time (Von Beck, p. 81). This is the pattern of the *British National Bibliography* in arranging the entries by classification number. The SANB also included author and title indexes (Lor, p. 27). In 1960 it was decided to replace the monthly lists with 3 quarterly issues with the final quarter included in the annual cumulated edition. The bibliographic records in both the quarterlies and annuals included all printed material published in South Africa. It seems that the first annual accumulation of the SANB covering the period 1959 was compiled from the monthly lists. The 1962 annual issue included South African book production statistics for the first time.

The final compilation of the SANB annuals for 1968-1971 was undertaken by the Zentralstelle für maschinelle Dokumentation at Frankfurt (am Main) in Germany – both the text and indexes sorted by means of computer. A four year compilation of the 1968-1971 annuals was also prepared and printed in Germany. The intention was to publish 5 year accumulations thereafter, but this has never transpired. In 1968 the SANB was the second national bibliography to be computerized (Von Beck, p. 82; Lor, p. 27).

The electronic data processing of the annuals from 1972-1982 was undertaken by the Information Services, CSIR, Pretoria. This involved inputting cataloguing data into two separate systems during the years 1980 to 1982, the DOBIS/LIBIS system and another system that generated the printed SANB.

A weekly card service was also provided from ca. 1967. As online technology became more widespread in South Africa, the need for the card service was reduced and it was ceased in 1996.

The SANB has also been made available on the *South African studies* and *Africa-Wide: NiPAD* databases (published by NISC) and coverage includes 1989 to date. The National Library regularly sends updates to NISC. The *South African studies* database was originally published in CD-ROM format, but is now both databases are available online as well as in CD-ROM and DVD formats.

From 1988-1999 the records were extracted from our library management system (DOBIS/LIBIS) and desktop publishing was used to do the final editing of the quarterlies and annuals.

2000 to date

With the conversion from SAMARC to MARC 21 and in the implementation of the Millennium system at the National Library it was no longer possible to easily extract data in the form required for a printed national bibliography. The plan was to settle into the new system and then look at ways of publishing the SANB in a CD-ROM format. This has not transpired and with the availability of an online catalogue on the

National Library's website the need for a tangible SANB is no longer urgent. The SANB is now scoped on the National Library's online catalogue.

During the conversion process all records which had previously been in the *RSANB* and the SANB Supplement collection were converted to the SANB collection. The SANB scope provides a more complete SANB than the printed *SANB* and *RSANB* ever did, mainly because the SANB supplement records which have never been published separately are now integrated into the SANB scope.

The South African book production statistics are now published separately on the National Library's website.

History of the SANB

- 1933-1958
 - Monthly lists
- 1959-1999
 - Printed SANB
- 2000-
 - Virtual SANB

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Subscribers to the SANB

The subscribers to the SANB included national libraries throughout the world, South African provincial library services, abstracting services, academic libraries in South Africa and the rest of the world, government libraries, municipal libraries, research institutes, publishers and bookshops. A market survey conducted during 1996 gave SANB staff insight into the uses of the SANB and the needs of its subscribers. The use made of the SANB is for bibliographic purposes (75.9%), reference purposes (64.8%) and acquisitions (55.65%) (Hendrikz). The SANB is largely used for tracing monographic works (79.6%), followed by government publications, literature, popular works, research reports and lastly maps. The same market research established that both DDC and LCSH were equally important (66.7%). Interest in an authority file of South African authors was shown by 70.4% and South African subject headings by 63% of subscribers. The availability of our records through international and national databases, and our online catalogue ensures that SANB records may still be used for these purposes despite the cessation of the card service and printed SANB. The printed SANB products served an important purpose and within the context of Africa should ideally have been continued.

Subscribers to the SANB

- Other national libraries
- South African provincial libraries
- Abstracting services
- Academic libraries
- Municipal libraries
- Government libraries
- Research institutes
- Publishers
- Booksellers

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Uses of the printed SANB

- Bibliographic purposes (75.9%)
- Reference purposes (64.8%)
- Acquisition purposes (55.6%)

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SANB and cataloguing standards

The SANB has applied international standards adopting the *A.L.A. cataloguing rules for author and title entries*, and *AACR* (various editions and revisions as soon as they were available) for bibliographic descriptions. Dewey Decimal classification was used from 1958 to mid 2006 (various editions) and in 1992 Library on Congress subject headings (LCSH) were assigned to SANB records for the first time. The use of LCSH has through the years been limited to material type – periodicals and school books originally were not assigned LCSH. This situation has changed and LCSH are now used for all material processed by SANB.

The level of our cataloguing is somewhere between 2nd and 3rd level, although our subscribers would be quite satisfied with 2nd level only (Hendrikz, p. 6). We have evaluated the possibility to reduce the level of cataloguing, but found we spent more time deciding what should be left out than to put the information in.

The language of the SANB catalogue was English and Afrikaans up to 1994. When the nine other languages spoken in South Africa were added to the list of official languages and the use of all these languages in our records could have become a reality it was decided to revert to an English only catalogue. The logistics of cataloguing in the 11 official languages was too daunting and the staffing resources inadequate.

Name authority records which had been established for both the Afrikaans and English forms of corporate names, with cross-references from any indigenous language forms, now became English only with cross-references from all the other official languages when found in those languages. The left-over of the bilingual practice is still visible on our online catalogue, but this matter is receiving attention. This decision taken in 1994 proved to be the correct one in light of our cataloguing activities on the WorldCat database from mid-1999.

Cataloguing standards

- Anglo-American cataloguing rules
- Dewey Decimal Classification
- Library of Congress subject headings
- MARC 21

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SANB and co-operative cataloguing in South Africa

The author lists and weekly card service were a form of co-operative cataloguing in South Africa and the delivery of SANB records to SACat (South African union catalogue managed by Sabinet Online) during 1989-1999 was an extension of our role in co-operative cataloguing in South Africa. The SANB records were extracted from the tape loaded from the National Library's local system onto SACat.

During the 1980's South Africa experienced "an increasingly inward-looking approach to librarianship and bibliography, as international condemnation of South Africa's racial policies led to increasing isolation and isolationism" (Lor, p. 26) Likewise, SANB staff was hardly aware of cataloguing activities beyond the walls of the State Library or how the SANB records were utilised on SACat. SANB was concerned more with producing a printed bibliography that matched international bibliographic standards, with little reference to the cataloguing activities taking place in South Africa.

SANB on the international field

It was only when South African cataloguers first started cataloguing on WorldCat that the true spirit of co-operative cataloguing came to the fore at the National Library. Whereas in the past SANB was free to adopt its own cataloguing practices, they now had to consider the use SANB records in an international database.

It was with trepidation that SANB cataloguers catalogued their first record on Worldcat. The USMARC format and new cataloguing interface were unfamiliar and this proved to be a steep learning curve for the cataloguers. These cataloguing activities on WorldCat however, prepared the SANB staff very well for the conversion of the records from the DOBIS system (DMARC and SAMARC) to USMARC (later MARC 21) for the implementation of Millennium.

The National Library of South Africa also contributes South Africa name and series authority records to the Library of Congress' authority files. In many instances these authority records differ from those established by the Library of Congress, but we make use of the equivalent heading field to list the South African form and ensure that our in-house catalogue uses the South African form.

Co-operative cataloguing on an international level has highlighted the need to balance cataloguing practices between local, national and international needs. It has become a balancing act between our national bibliographic agency role and the needs of a multitude of other libraries and library types. Furthermore, interpretations of cataloguing rules in South Africa are sometimes different from interpretations of rules elsewhere. Decisions regarding which cataloguing practices we would keep and practices from other institutions which we would adopt, were made. In a true co-operative cataloguing world cataloguers at all levels should be thinking of the broader cataloguing community's needs before their own local needs; and internationally recognized standards should be applied consistently at this level.

National bibliographies should be in the position to show leadership in the application of international standards. This however, is easier said than done if resources are lacking.

SANB and co-operative cataloguing

- Printed products
- SACat (South African union catalogue)
- WorldCat
- Places of legal deposit in South Africa consortium

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Current status of the SANB

The participation on national and international level has blurred the distinctions between a national bibliography, catalogue of a national library, a trade bibliography and a national union catalogue (Lor., p. 31). The current questioning in the international cataloguing world regarding the relevance of cataloguing, also begs the questions:

“Where do national bibliographies fit into this bibliographic universe?”

“Are national bibliographies to become dinosaurs in the age of the Internet?”

“What has happened to the ideal of Universal bibliographic control?”

Steadily declining resources threaten the existence of the SANB. The lack of resources and the subsequent backlog that has resulted has already been seen as the National Library letting other libraries in South Africa down with regard to copy cataloguing activities.

Lack of skilled and experienced cataloguers in the South African job market also presents a problem as we do not have the staffing capacity that can support people in training – we need people who can be productive as soon as possible. This situation is by no means unique to the National Library of South, or for that matter to South Africa. It is a problem seen in many parts of the globe.

Furthermore, the reduced staffing resources have also led to a scaling down in the subject cataloguing of SANB records. During 2006 the assignment of Dewey decimal classification numbers was ceased, based on the reasoning that the National Library does not use these numbers to arrange the items on their shelves and that we no longer print a national bibliography. This may seem to have been a rash decision and we may still regret it at a future date, but without the necessary staffing resources we had little choice but to take this decision. It is hoped that the cataloguers at the other places of legal deposit (see below) will be able to enhance the SANB records with Dewey decimal classification numbers as they require the numbers for shelving purposes.

Future of the SANB

The places of legal deposit consortium

A significant development at the National Library of South Africa is the implementation of the consortium for places of legal deposit in South Africa. The planning for a consortium of the places of legal deposit started in the early part of this century. The places of legal deposit in South Africa include the Library of Parliament, Mangaung Library Services, Msunduzi Municipal Library, and the National Film, Video and Sound Archives. The progress on the implementation of the consortium was not all plain sailing and stalled during 2005. During that time the Library of Parliament decided to withdraw from the consortium.

The Msunduzi Municipal Library records were loaded onto Millennium during October 2006, while the Mangaung Library Services records will be loaded during the second quarter of 2007. As with any other merge of databases there will be many duplicate records on the database and database clean-up will be an important activity in future.

It is hoped that the places of legal deposit consortium will add to the cataloguing resources 'available' to the SANB. There is an overlap in the material we collect and our shared staffing resources and co-operative cataloguing could help alleviate the pressure of the backlogs we each have. In preparation for co-operative cataloguing the cataloguing policies and manuals of each library has been aligned and a shared cataloguing manual is available to the cataloguers via the Internet.

Whilst the National Library is a full OCLC participant, the other places of legal deposit are not. The aim is to have all cataloguing departments at these libraries aligning their cataloguing activities to the South African co-operative cataloguing model.

The virtual SANB

The virtual SANB exists on the National Library's online catalogue. In this form it is far more complete than the printed SANB ever was. The reasons for this are:

- SANB supplement records are included in the scope (these were records created for items received outside the time period of the current SANB annuals)
- Some official publications which were never sent to SANB for processing are now included in the scope
- Retrospective SANB (RSANB) records are included in the SANB scope
- Older material is available in the SANB scope as soon as it catalogued
- The retrospective conversion project currently underway at the National Library is adding non-computerised SANB records (1960-1980) on a daily basis. The older cataloguing practices are upgraded to current cataloguing practices
- SANB item information is added from the SANB card catalogue to existing records on the database
- Online SANB records include a history of the impressions that each edition has undergone. This information was previously published in the printed SANB and later separately on microfiche. Reprint information is added daily

- Records are continuously upgraded as the consortium duplicate records are merged
- Database clean-up is done continuously

The National Library also plans to tape load all the older SANB records on WorldCat, but the bilingual cataloguing practice prior to 1994, and the multilevel analysis records created before 1989 require clean-up before these records can be loaded.

Other South African bibliographies

Some other bibliographic activities in South Africa prior and during the time period of the SANB include:

- Sidney Mendelssohn's *South African bibliography*, which was published in 1910; the updated edition *A South African bibliography to the year 1925, being a revision and continuation of Sidney Mendelssohn's South African bibliography (1910)* (commonly known as *SABIB*) was published in 1979 (1st four volumes); a fifth supplementary volume was published in 1991 and volume 6 comprising the subject and title indexes to the first five volumes was published in 1997 (Lor p. 28-29).
- The *Retrospective SANB (RSANB)* was published by the State Library (now the National Library of South Africa, Pretoria Campus) in 1985. This comprised both South African and Namibian publications, but excluded indigenous language materials, government publications and periodical titles (Lor, p. 29).
- To accommodate the indigenous languages the State Library published the following bibliographies (Lor, p. 30):
 - *Bibliography of the Tswana language to the year 1980* (This bibliography is currently under revision)
 - *Bibliography of the Xhosa language to the year 1990*
 - *Northern Sotho bibliography to the year 1993*
 - *Bibliography of the Zulu language to the year 1998*

These bibliographies include records for items published throughout the world, not only those published in South Africa, with the scope of items in the specific indigenous language and about that indigenous language.

- Between 1943 and 1967 P.J. Nienaber published his *Bibliografie van Afrikaanse boeke* in six volumes
- P.C. Coetzee compiled lists of books in English, Afrikaans and African languages in his *South African catalogue of books*, published in five editions between 1943 and 1956 (Lor, p. 26-27).

Other bibliographies

- *South African bibliography*
- *South African bibliography to the year 1925, being a revision and continuation of Sidney Mendelssohn's South African bibliography (1910)*
- *Retrospective SANB (RSANB)*
- *Bibliography of the Tswana language to the year 1980*

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...cont.

- *Bibliography of the Xhosa language to the year 1990*
- *Northern Sotho bibliography to the year 1993*
- *Bibliography of the Zulu language to the year 1998*
- *Bibliografie van Afrikaanse boeke*
- *South African catalogue of books*

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Conclusion

SANB has operated from isolation and a top-down approach to participation and co-operation first nationally and then internationally. The evolution from simple printed lists, to a printed bibliography and now the virtual SANB has kept pace with cataloguing practices throughout the world. Despite the isolation that South Africa experienced through the 1980's, the 1990's brought greater co-operation both nationally and internationally and SANB was there to participate. Without shared standards though, the viability of co-operative cataloguing is not possible, thus the SANB conforms to these standards and commits itself to making South African

bibliographic and authority records available to the national and international cataloguing community.

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