



Date : 20/07/2006

**Microfilming and Cataloging the Newspapers  
in the National Diet Library (NDL)**

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<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>79 Newspapers</b>
<b>Simultaneous Interpretation:</b>	<b>No</b>

*WORLD LIBRARY AND INFORMATION CONGRESS: 72ND IFLA GENERAL CONFERENCE AND COUNCIL*  
**20-24 August 2006, Seoul, Korea**  
<http://www.ifla.org/IV/ifla72/index.htm>

**1. Outline of newspapers held by the NDL**

Newspapers are a medium which reflects the trend of the times most acutely. They have unique value and carry information which cannot be provided by other forms of publications. On the other hand, when we look at their physical characteristics, newspapers are made of low quality paper, and thus present librarians with the problem of how to make them available to users while preserving them intact for as long as possible.

The Newspaper collection of the National Diet Library (NDL) started with newspapers inherited from its predecessor, the former Ueno Library, and those held by the former House of Representatives and the House of Peers. The NDL has added to its collection newly acquired newspapers since its foundation in 1948. The NDL has been helped by the legal deposit system to collect domestic newspapers comprehensively and it also tried to collect foreign newspapers from countries important to Japan. The oldest newspaper in

the NDL holdings is “Batahiya Shimbun” published in 1862. The NDL hold 8,707 titles of Japanese newspapers which are kept in bound volumes, reduced editions, photo-reproduced editions, or as microfilm reels or microfiches. Including the foreign newspaper collection of 1,756 titles, the NDL newspaper collection amounts to 10,463 titles as of May 2006.

The domestic newspaper collection includes national papers, regional papers, trade papers, political party papers, and sports papers. One of the most characteristic features of NDL’s newspaper collection is the collection of newspaper clippings from major domestic papers, that is, articles filed by classification from 1948 to 1992 (about 2 million articles).

Most of the newspaper collection is available in the Newspaper Reading Room in the Tokyo Main Library while the major Asian language newspaper collection is available in the Kansai-kan. Most NDL stacks are closed to users, but 123 titles of major national and regional newspapers, their reduced editions, and three foreign newspapers are freely available on open shelves in the Newspaper Reading Room. FY2005 statistics shows that about 167,693 users visited the Newspaper Reading Room and that 199,250 items were requested and 61,609 items photocopied. The Room is one of the most heavily used special materials room in the NDL.

To preserve newspapers, we bind original newspapers and make microforms of them at the same time. This is also to prevent deterioration of materials and to provide users with efficient access to frequently used materials. For this purpose, the NDL launched a cooperative project, still ongoing, with the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (from 1998 with the Japan Newspaper Foundation for Education and Culture, a project unit of the former organization) to make microfilms of the newspapers published by the members of the Association. The Association members provide and entrust the NDL with original newspapers and their master negatives. The NDL’s role is to preserve original papers and negatives.

Apart from this project, the NDL has also been working on projects to microfilm old newspapers in its holdings for the purpose of preventing the materials’ deterioration.

Another pillar of the NDL’s projects to promote access to the newspaper collection is the Union Catalog of Newspapers in Japan Database. This is a nationwide database which

provides bibliographic information and holding data of newspapers held by libraries in Japan. The Union Catalog aims to promote information-sharing among libraries in the country on their activities of microfilming, photo-reproducing and reprinting newspapers for the purpose of preservation. The database has been available to the public since February 2003 on the Internet.

Today I would like to talk about our microfilming projects which aim at the long-term preservation of the newspaper collection and also about the Union Catalog of Newspapers in Japan to promote access to the collection.

## **2. NDL's project to make microfilms of newspapers**

### **2.1. Newspapers microfilming cooperative project**

#### **2.1.1. Outline**

As I mentioned earlier, in 1953, the NDL launched a cooperative project still ongoing with the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (Nihon Shimbun Kyokai; NSK) to make microfilms of the current newspapers. The project has been operated since 1998 with the NSK's project unit, the Japan Newspaper Foundation for Education and Culture. At the beginning, the number of filmed newspapers was 37 and some 136,000 frames were made per year. Now the foundation annually films 54 titles of national and local newspapers and deposits 700,000 frames of master negative films with the NDL. The number of reels of master negative films is some 1,250 per year and the total number of reels made through this project reached 43,261 as of March 2006.

#### **2.1.2. Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association (Nihon Shimbun Kyokai)**

The Japan Newspaper Publishers & Editors Association (NSK) is an entirely independent and voluntary organization funded and operated by newspaper publishers of Japan. The NSK was established in 1946 to raise ethical standards in reporting and protect and promote the Japanese newspapers' common interests. The NSK is a member of the World Association of Newspapers.

#### **2.1.3 Japan Newspaper Foundation for Education and Culture**

The Japan Newspaper Foundation for Education and Culture was established in 1998, founded by the NSK and authorized by the Minister of Education. The foundation is a

nonprofit organization with an endowment fund of 8.3 billion yen. Its main purposes are to preserve and develop newspaper culture and to contribute to education.

#### **2.1.4 Roles of the Japan Newspaper Foundation for Education and Culture and the NDL**

Both parties share the cost of this project. The original newspapers are provided by member newspaper companies of the NSK and the foundation makes master negative films and deposits them with the NDL. The NDL also holds the original papers. It makes positive films from the negatives and provides them to the public.

#### **2.1.5 Problems**

##### **(1) Deterioration of films**

Because the master films made at the beginning of the project used TAC (cellulose triacetate) as film base that deteriorates over time emitting an acetic acid odor, we duplicated the master films from 1993 to 2001. The positive films that we are providing to the public also show deterioration and we need to duplicate them.

##### **(2) Use of color films**

Recent newspapers have a lot of color pages. Microfilms made in this project are black-and-white and users often ask for photocopies in color. Some newspaper companies have also been asking us to use color films. Color microfilms are available commercially, but they need to be kept at sub-zero temperatures. That makes it difficult for us to use color films in this project and other microfilming projects of the NDL.

##### **(3) Withdrawal from the contract**

While there are new participants, some newspaper companies withdraw from the contract of this project for reasons such as shortage of money. We should maintain stability of the contract and call for new participants in consideration of the importance of this project in the long-term preservation and availability of newspapers.

### **2.2. Microfilming projects carried out independently by the NDL**

#### **2.2.1. Outline**

Besides this project, since 1965 we have been microfilming newspapers published in the Meiji and Taisho eras (1868-1926) which the NDL took over from its predecessors, for the preservation of all the original materials. This is also because they are important as

materials for research on Japanese modern history. We started from microfilming newspapers published in the 19<sup>th</sup> century and have completed microfilming those of before around 1955. We also purchase microfilms of frequently used foreign newspapers and those produced and distributed by newspaper companies.

### **2.2.2. Plan for digitization**

Some say that we should digitize newspapers directly by scanning them without making microfilms. Several newspaper companies publish CD-ROMs of reduced-size editions and provide PDF image data as a pay service on the Internet. In 2004 and 2005 the NDL carried out an experimental project of making image data samples from the existing microfilms. However, we do not have a positive plan to digitize newspapers because the digitization policy of the library gives relatively low priority to newspapers as compared with books.

## **3. The Union Catalog of Newspapers in Japan Database**

### **3.1. Outline**

The NDL provides a database named the “Union Catalog of Newspapers in Japan Database.” By using this database people can search locations of newspapers including reprints, reduced editions and microfilms held by 13,000 libraries, universities, newspaper publishers and other institutions in Japan as well as the NDL. The database is available to anyone through the NDL website. It consists of three files different in format – “member institution master”, “bibliography master” and “holding master” – which are linked by institution ID and bibliography ID in order to facilitate the update of data and online search. As of November 30, 2005, the database includes information on 1,253 institutions, 37,081 bibliographic data and 71,525 holding data.

### **3.2 History**

The NDL published the “Union List of Reduced, Microfilmed and Reprinted Newspapers in Japan,” the catalog of microfilm of newspapers held by libraries and other institutions in Japan, in book form every 5 years from 1970 to 1994. In 1997 we started to develop a system inputting the data of the catalog as the “Union Catalog of Newspapers in Japan Database.” After completion of the development in 1998, we started inputting data into the database. The range of the data covered was extended to the original paper form. The data inputting ended in 2000 and we made it available to the limited institutions providing the data for the NDL, followed by the opening to the public in 2003.

### **3.3 Functions**

#### **3.3.1 Search by bibliographic information**

As with the NDL-OPAC, the online catalog of the NDL, users can search newspapers by title, place of publication, publisher, year of publication, country, text language and so on. Users can also search by selecting forms such as original, reduced and microforms corresponding to the characteristics of newspapers.

The search result shows bibliographic information with a link to the full listing of institutions holding the newspaper. The name of the institution is linked to the page containing its contact information such as the address and the phone number, and the collection details indicating the periods of holdings and volume numbers.

#### **3.3.2 Search by locations**

Users also can search a holding institution by specifying its name or address. The detailed page of the search result has a list of newspapers held by the institution. This page also has links to the bibliographic data of each newspaper.

### **3.4. Future tasks**

#### **3.4.1. Review of the method of updating data**

In cases data need be updated, each institution informs us by e-mail, phone, fax or letter what should be renewed. Then the staffers of the Newspaper Information Section of the Newspapers Division upload the data on a web page specially made for the purpose. The current system is not a suitable method for updating a large quantity of data all at once because we need to update page by page just for one institution, one title or one location. It is preferable to add a function which will enable us to update all the data at once by preparing the text files in CSV form. Moreover, holding institutions have requested that they do not want to inform the NDL about updating each time but wish to connect remotely to the web so that they can upload the data by themselves. These are the considerations including technical capability.

#### **3.4.2. Integration with the NDL-OPAC**

Update of the NDL's holding information should be reflected on the Union Catalog Database as well. When the data of the NDL-OPAC are updated, the department concerned sends a printout of the data to the Newspapers Division. Referring to the

printout, the staffers of the Newspaper Information Section update the Union Catalog Database. This procedure creates duplication of work inside the NDL. There are also more or less time lags. Even worse, users are obliged to do double work in many cases: search by both the NDL-OPAC and the Union Catalog Database. Integration of system and implementation of seamless interfaces needs to be achieved in the future.

### **3.4.3. Correspondence to newspapers in Asian languages**

With increasing frequency, users ask us about the institutions holding newspapers in Korean, Chinese and other Asian languages. At present, since the database system does not correspond to Unicode, newspapers whose bibliographic data is written in languages other than Japanese and ASCII code cannot be registered. We are aiming to change the specifications when the system will be replaced next time.

## **4. Conclusion**

The newspaper microfilming cooperative project based on the agreement with the Japan Newspaper Foundation for Education founded by the NSK bore fruit and significantly accomplished its mission to preserve newspapers in Japan. As the national library of Japan, we consider that this project should be carried on in the future, though under the conflicting proposition of whether it is for use or preservation. Now the technologies for digitalizing materials are progressing, more efforts for further cooperative relations between the Japan Newspaper Publishers and Editors Association and the NDL are required in order to utilize and preserve newspapers effectively.

In addition, as the Union Catalog of Newspapers in Japan Database, it is difficult to construct and maintain a genuine union catalog of newspapers unless the NDL cooperates with other libraries and newspaper publishers. A close cooperative relationship with each institution is essential.

Television and radio broadcasts, the media whose characteristic is quick reporting, as with Newspapers, are not conserved institutionally, at least in Japan. As for the Internet, which has been developed as a huge information transmission system in the past 10 years, automatic collection is technically possible to some extent. However, comprehensive collection has not yet been conducted due to the unresolved rights issues. We consider that the value of newspapers as a source material is invariable even though the information and social environment has been changing.