Marine Science Information: an International Commodity
(e.g.) Grundy, Ford & Beardsley
IAMLIC. 1986.

PUBLICATION CONTROL IN IAMLIC LIBRARIES

Norman Howden
Wetlands Information Repository
Louisiana State University
Baton Rouge, Louisiana 70803

ABSTRACT

Procedures for acquiring research documents produced by an institution's own researchers vary greatly in format and success. Since Marine Science researchers often restrict study to a single geographic area or topical area, having locally produced documents is important to continuation of their research traditions. A survey of IAMLIC libraries is used as a foundation for assessing acquisition procedures and for suggesting a management strategy for acquiring published and unpublished documents needed to support researchers.

INTRODUCTION

Researchers in ecology, geology, fisheries and other subfields of marine science must often relate their research to a unique local environment or to a very specific approach to a topic. Information to support such scientific endeavors therefore requires not only information about the state of the art in a particular scientific field, but also historical information about the local area or documentation of research methods and assumptions built up over several generations of researchers. This historical data usually is coextensive with the publications of local authors.

PROBLEM

The library or information center together with the data archive can provide the elements necessary to a complete body of scientific evidence describing the local research environment. Most librarians would probably consider it necessary when they set up a new library to build either a compilation of institutional publications or a collection of monographs and serials large enough to include most local publications. The problem that follows is one of how to obtain the documents and how to provide access to them. The oldest technique seems to be a collection of documents designated as a reprint series, contributions, or a report series with a list of some type to serve as a quick checklist for the collection. Much has been written about keeping such lists on computers, for
instance we have Susan Means paper in the last IAMSLIC proceedings. Experience seems to indicate varying degrees of success with obtaining the actual documents both because of cost and availability. It seems altogether reasonable to obtain copies of publications from authors who usually obtain free reprints from journals or are able to charge such costs off to research grants. This problem is probably more serious for smaller libraries than larger ones since the variety of serials available does not automatically bring these documents to the library. An associated problem in collecting documents is scope of collection. A comprehensive collection of local research documents would include unpublished documents and a variety of publication formats.

DISCUSSION

The local information agency within a research center is the best archive of publications that describe the local environment for comparative and empirical research. We assume this to be true because the local agency probably has:

- initial access to most publications by its researchers.
- a vested interest in preserving access to such publications.
- the largest user group for such publications.

No other institution will of course maintain a complete collection with the same scope as that of the research center.

Of equal importance with historical perspective may be the value of local bibliography in supporting the natural need for accurate self-citation between local authors. As two gardeners working in the same flower bed share tools, so two researchers in the same institution will share references. This self-citation is evidenced by their citation of each other's previous work and by citation of the common corpus of previous local literature.

Self-citation is also an important index of the role played by previous research. A quick look at one year, 1980, of the publications produced in my own institution and noted in Science Citation Index (SCI) provided me with the following portrait:

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<th>Total citations by CWR authors:</th>
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Percent of total citations to local authors 22.7%

The percentage of self-citation is close to the twenty-five percent (25%) DeSolla Price estimates for the most productive authors. This is
a reasonable coincidence since SCI chooses only articles cited several times through the year or appearing in a certain type journal, thus filtering the quality of articles in their database. If these articles are of importance to the most productive authors in the organization, then they certainly ought to be kept available to succeeding groups of researchers and students.

In addition to supporting self-citation, it is also clear that displaying the research record of an institution is an important activity in providing evidence of success to parent agencies and to prospective funding institutions. Many other purposes are served as well, such as providing a primary resource to the public and to state and federal agencies that usually work in cooperation with university researchers in formulating public policy and in reaching resource decisions.

While the creation of a publications archive is usually realized in research units by maintenance of a "publications list," there are many ways to compile the list. A central secretary or word processor may collect information and publish the list, the library may produce the list, or individual departments and institutes may maintain their own lists. Familiarity with professional library quality record keeping, however, makes the library a likely preference whenever resources allow. Few secretaries, word processors, or student workers have the time or knowledge to create as complete a collection of documents or as accurate a set of records as a librarian.

**APPROACH**

Each research unit has its own traditions and empirically derived procedures. Some cross-fertilization of management practice occurs as personnel change locations, but local management style, institutional resources, and chance provide a wide variety of solutions and near solutions to producing a publications list. Without a systematic mandate for standardizing marine science bibliographic processes, the most effective approach to improving publications list procedures seemed to be to collect a collage of current procedures and hybridize those.

In the Spring 1985 IAMLIC Newsletter a survey was conducted to identify procedures used to compile the contents of publications lists. Respondents were asked to identify who collected publication information, whether this was a mandatory process, whether researchers cooperated, something about whether copies of publications are kept centrally and then positive or negative factors in the current system.

**RESULTS**

Twenty-four (24) libraries or librarians responded. All of them informed me that their organization maintained a publications list. The library maintained this list in seventeen (17) cases, in one case the department maintained it, and in three cases secretaries were responsible. In answer to whether the research unit registers or reviews each publication,
fifteen (15) answered positively. For twelve (12) of these the registration/review process is mandatory. Fourteen (14) of those requiring publication registration/review seem to have success because they also indicated that their researchers generally cooperate with the process. Slightly more than half (13) keep publications in a file or pamphlet box and the same number maintain a comprehensive collection of local publications. Many libraries index publications, a total of sixteen (16) of the twenty-four (24). Five (5) libraries use computers for indexing.

Comments about problems and techniques for solving them were described by twenty-one (21) respondents. The problems, as expected, described the lack of cooperation by researchers and the lack of systematic controls on the publication process. Other problems were also noted, particularly finding researchers who had moved. Techniques for systematically obtaining documents included:

1. Use a processing form for routing publications from the author, through typing, through editing, to the journal, and finally to the library.

2. Break the staff into small groups or subgroups and approach these more manageable units for their cooperation.

3. Ask for reprints to be distributed to and even through the library.

4. Know what is produced, by knowing how it is produced and something of the word processing and publications habits of the authors.

5. Only list papers brought to you in the official "contributions" or "technical report" series.

6. Have the receiving department pull copies of reprints before forwarding them to authors.

7. Use a computer database that allows status changes to keep an inventory of publications.

8. Use resumes as a starting point for a retrospective accumulation of publications.

9. If one central word processor is used, work with the operators to acquire documents through them.

10. Find additional support from Sea Grant and other funding sources who want the sponsoring agency and contract number included in publications. This helps locate copies for users when
CONCLUSIONS AND DEVELOPMENT OF A STRATEGY

The many techniques described by the respondents to the survey and a working knowledge of the publication system suggests that publication control may be applied three ways. Publications may be gathered through the publication process, that is, during word processing and submission; they may be gathered after publication; and publications may be gathered as the product or byproduct of some organizational clearance policy.

Two criteria for the best form of publication control are that the procedure should cause the least friction between researchers and librarians and the procedure should have the most comprehensive results. Direct collection of documents available after publication requires both administrative procedures and a great deal of library manpower. The least difficult form of administrative procedure that will work is probably a less direct approach in the form of a procedure that benefits the researchers. The processing form provided by one library seems like a useful and unobtrusive technique. (Appendix I) The addition of a "motivational" technique should be the clincher.

Official motivation through policy seems like not only a real enforcement problem, but in the collegial research environment may be considered one more bureaucratic procedure that it is a challenge to avoid. Pulling copies in the receiving department may spark internecine warfare in some institutions and is not a comprehensive approach. The best motivation is probably, again, self-interest. Inclusion in the "contributions" or publications list is a strong motivator, especially if it is pointed out to researchers that such inclusion is the path to a potentially higher citation rate. Researchers recognize that a high citation rate to articles is superior to merely having lots of publications published in refereed journals. This motivation is most effective when the list is updated at least annually and is actively distributed.

Publications lists are not simple, in contrast to the brevity of my short questionnaire with only 7 questions asked. Investigation of this complexity was particularly engineered into the form-of-publication question asking about final reports. Final reports are the format least likely, I would imagine, to be controlled by the librarian because it requires liaison with the research coordinator or the equivalent and because those reports are essentially unpublished. So why even consider them in the publications control problem? If there is one area which gives both authors and librarians more sharp pains it is obtaining and properly citing end-of-project reports. Most of us are familiar with the ghost citations that circulate of NTIS publications that are poorly microfilmed and of closed file reports that allude to serious research problems but are totally inaccessible.
Since it requires extra effort, collecting end-of-project reports does show the commitment of an agency to bibliographic control. Eighteen (18) respondents report some requirement to retain reports and in sixteen (16) of those cases the library or the department is the repository. Another five (5) agencies require reports to be retained in some other office or library. These reports are the type of literature that:

a. Even the university archivist won't know about

b. Your researchers will want

c. May partially justify having a special library.

While end-of-project reports may in many cases be amenable to management in the same manner as other departmentally generated publications, in an equal number of cases they may not. Some measure of pre-publication confidentiality may be required and in some cases security or proprietary rights protection may be necessary. Librarians should not, however, dismiss the whole class of documents due to these limitations. The effort to initially identify these items may be repaid many times over by eliminating future confusion and aggravation in looking for ambiguous citations.

One further component should be added to our strategy. In addition to finding an unobtrusive collection mechanism, motivating researchers, and producing a timely publications list, we should distribute the publications list. Sharing your publications list with other IAMSLIC members in particular will obtain maximum citation exposure for authors.

BIBLIOGRAPHY


### APPENDIX I

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