

## Public Library Joint Database Workshops

In 2001, the NCL was put in charge of a program to enhance library information systems through national database and book purchasing, as part of a government plan to expand domestic demand. The acquisition of a joint database for public libraries was completed in 2002, and workshops on the use of the new system were offered in June, September and October that same year at eight locations across Taiwan, with 348 people attending.

While the joint database project has in fact been promoted for several years, it became the responsibility of the NCL only in 2002. In 1996, the Ministry of Education (MOE) sought to address the insufficient material and human resources available to public libraries, the need for librarian training, and the lack of funds for automation of library operations by drafting a three-years public library development plan, which was completed in 2001. In 2000 and 2001, the National Taichung Library and NCL Taiwan Branch were respectively put in charge of completing and implementing the plan. In 2002, the MOE entrusted the NCL to draft a plan to enhance the development of library information systems and to take charge of acquisition and promotion of joint databases for public libraries.

In 2002, joint database procurement consisted mainly of continuing subscriptions following the previous two years. In order to introduce public libraries to the content, functions, and traits and use of joint databases in Taiwan, the NCL invited the National Taichung Library, Tainan Municipal Library, Tzu Chi University, and the Lianchiang, Penghu, and Kinmen county cultural centers to jointly organize the "2002 Public Library Joint Database Workshop." A handbook was also published on the design and schedule of the workshop activities, joint database records and user instructions. Workshops this year introduced seven databases, including the NCL's READncl, CLISA, and other systems.

During the general discussion, participants looked at the following issues:

1. Database usage: Exchanges focused on the lack of a website integrating the three separate joint databases and the separation of the databases on different servers at the three organizations.
2. Study location and methods: Workshop participants suggested that instruction could be reinforced through hands-on use of the systems through Internet-connected computers. They also made some recommendations concerning the timing and content of the workshops.

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