

The JAL Project in 2 years

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Acknowledgement:

I would like to extend my sincere gratitude to the JAL project Executive Committee and specialists who attended JAL 2016.

Background:

The JAL (Japanese Art Librarian) project was a 3 year programme which took place between 2014 and 2016. The JAL project's primary aim was to disseminate information on Japanese Arts by providing inductions and trainings on Japanese Art Resources to information professionals who were working in this area. Supported by the Japanese Government's Agency for Cultural Affairs, the project invited librarians, archivists, curators and researchers from overseas working on Japanese Arts to Japan. Furthermore, Japanese information professionals were invited to attend in order to acquire better understanding about institutions, libraries, galleries and museums which are specialised in Japanese Arts outside Japan. The project provided networking opportunities between these information professionals in Japan and outside Japan. The project also aimed to review and rethink the current state of Japan's art libraries and related information systems from the perspective of Japanese Art Librarians and information professionals from outside Japan, providing an objective view of any apparent underlying issues.

I was lucky enough to participate in the programme in 2015 and 2016, as a selected invitee (JAL project, 2015) and as a Programme co-ordinator (JAL project, 2016).

It's about people - Overview of attendees:

Over the 3 years, 25 information professionals in total participated in the project. A breakdown of attendees by continent and profession is listed below.

By continent:

Location	Number of Attendees
Europe	8
USA	7
UK & Ireland	4
Scandinavian	3
Asia (Korea)	2
Australia	1

[Table 1. Overview of attendees by continent]

By profession:

Profession	Number of Attendees
Librarian	13
Curator	6
Researcher	5
Archivist	1

[Table 2. Overview of attendees by profession]

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[Picture 1. JAL 2015 Attendees]



[Picture 2. JAL 2016 Attendees]

It became apparent that the project put ‘people’ at the heart of the project. Information professionals from various fields were chosen as the medium of information dissemination. Over the 3 years, the project became more inclusive in terms of diversity, including nationality, professions and bilingual services provided.

- 2014 (7) Mainly Librarians, who were Japanese, specialising in Japanese-art related materials and information abroad.
- 2015 (9) Librarians, curators, researchers and an archivist of various nationalities. Japanese language proficiency was required.

- 2016 (9) Librarians, curators and researchers of various nationalities. Professional English interpreters and language support was provided to overcome language barriers.

As shown in the tables, attendees were predominantly from Europe and North America. To make it more global, future JAL projects could perhaps extend collaboration and involvement to Africa and the Middle East.

It was a great experience for me not only to discover the wonderful resources at the various institutions visited, as well as meeting the specialists in Japan, but also to appreciate my role better. It was a good reminder that the main role of a librarian is to select and collect important information

and resources and preserve them in order to pass it on to the next generation.

Making it more accessible:

In modern society, the quantity and format of information changes rapidly. In response, users' expectations and their information behaviour have changed. As a Subject Librarian, I have noticed that the academics and students I support have adapted to technology and demanded greater availability. Electronic resources started with a few articles on internet in 1980's, followed by whole journals and now fully-fledged databasesⁱ. These days, database aggregators are required to search across multiple databases. SOAS Library (my institution) certainly embraces these electronic resources as evidenced by our recent Library Materials Budget management principle: To increase the proportion of e-formats we acquire, moving toward a digital-first policy. As consequence of this policy, I hope that more books and journals on the Japanese Arts are accessible in electronic formats in near future. However, although Japan is well known as technological country, Japanese resources have not kept up with the trend toward electronic formats. For example, there are fewer Japanese databases than Chinese and Korean databases in SOAS Library.

Databases related to East Asian Studies	Number
Chinese databases [中文資料庫]	21
Japanese databases [日本語データベース]	7
Korean databases [한국어 데이터베이스]	9

[Table 3. Databases related to East Asian Studies in SOAS Library]ⁱⁱ

Considering Japanese Studies has always been more mainstream than Korean studies in terms of student and staff numbers at SOAS, as well as having a larger print

collection in the Library, it is interesting to note that there are more electronic databases specialising in Korean Studies. As was mentioned during the open workshop discussion (JAL Project, 2016), lack of easily accessible digital resources may deter potential students and researchers from taking Japanese Studies to the benefit of other regional subjects with more accessible resources.

Make it simple - Providing resources via international educational databases:

I was very happy to hear that Japanese librarians are working on database aggregators for a wide range of databases developed by various institutions across Japan. I also hope that Japanese information professionals will consider providing content of currently available electronic resources to established international educational databases such as Jstor, ARTstor and EBSCO etc. Furthermore, although e-books on Japanese arts and culture published in Japan are available via the publishers' own platforms, it would be beneficial in terms of discoverability and accessibility if these resources were also available via the international e-resources platform.

Copyright:

Whenever I asked about the limited availability of electronic journals databases, I often got an answer that it was due to very strict copyright laws in Japan. I would like to highlight that copyright is also a serious matter in other countries. As an example, the length of copyright protection in Japan is 50 yearsⁱⁱⁱ after the death of the author while in the U.K. it is 70 years^{iv} after the death of the author. Furthermore, "a part of work" which can be copied in Japan generally means no more than 50 %^v. U.K. universities own a CLA (Copyright Licensing Agency)

licence, which allows students to copy up to 10%^{vi} of copyright-protected printed books, journals and magazines or 1 Chapter/ 1 article (whichever is greater) of a text. This suggest that it is not the copyright regulation which limit the availability of Japanese electronic journal databases. There might be other issues concerning copyright which prohibit digitising back issues of well-established journals such as Kokka (國華), Bijutsu techo (美術手帖). However I am still hoping that legislation can be reassessed and applied to new journals (including born-digital journals) to make electronic databases more accessible. This would set a good precedent for improving accessibility to electronic journals thereby promoting effective dissemination of valuable content.

Interlibrary loans:

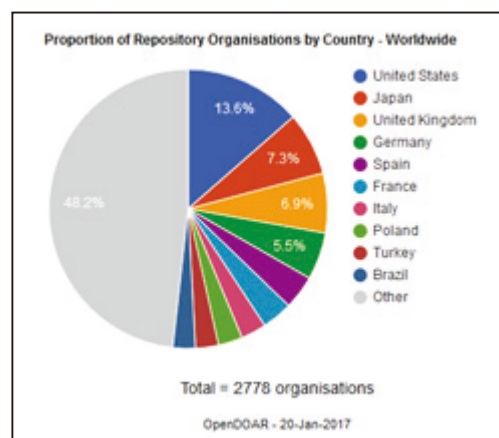
Interlibrary loans is a popular procedure for overseas institutions to get access to physical resources that are only available in Japan. Japan has a sophisticated union catalogue CiNii which helps researchers from overseas to trace books/journals and send an enquiries. The Global Interlibrary Loan Framework (GIF) Project between North American, Oceanian and Japanese academic libraries and research institutes is being implemented, with the National Diet Library taking an important role in the International Interlibrary Loan process ^{vii}. Overseas librarians were concerned that the National Diet Library excludes original materials which have been digitised. Unless all digitised materials can be accessed from outside Japan, this could be a possible impediment for overseas researchers.

Open Access:

Open Access is a buzz word everywhere. Open Access forms an important part of the new mode of scholarly communication and will continue to do so in the U.K. Many

research funders support and mandate Open Access so that research is accessible to anyone able to use the internet, rather than just those already inside the Higher Education community. Open Access has become an essential part of the requirements for the next Research Excellence Framework (REF) 2020, a new system developed by Higher Education Funding Council for England (HEFCE) for assessing the quality of research in UK.

Japan has been working on Open Access focussing particularly on the sciences. Directory of Open Access Repositories ^{viii} presents that the number of organisations that host repositories in each country. Japan is currently ranked No. 2 (7.3%) in the world with 203 institutions having one or more Institutional Repositories. The U.K is in third place with 192 institutions (6.9%).



[Figure 1. Proportion of Repository Organisation by Country^{ix}]

During the JAL programme, I found out that the International Research Centre for Japanese Studies (Nicibunken) has built the Nichibunken Open Access Platform ^x and made research papers, forums, and newsletters publicly available. Moreover, Ristumeikan University is known as a pioneer in Digital Humanities concerning Japanese arts and culture to the World. Using advanced technology and computational techniques, Ritsumeikan's Digital Humanities Center for Japanese Arts

and Cultures has been working on a digital archive project collaborating with overseas museums and art galleries contributing to the global research infrastructure. Japan has already built an excellent information infrastructure. The next step is how to make contents more available and how to promote this to the world.

In the open workshop, Group2 raised a very important point: Art belongs to all. Art in Japan is not only for Japan. Cultural heritage belongs to everyone in the world. It is therefore imperative that effort is made to disseminate this information on Japanese Arts and culture to everyone in the world and to preserve it for the next generation. In the presentation, Mr. Mizutani set a big question:

They do not need it because they do not know it

They do not know it because they do not need it.

知らないから必要ないか？必要ないから知らないか？

My view is that these valuable resources have been underused because many people do not know what is available and where is located. Furthermore, I believe research is only meaningful when it is read and used by other researchers as a platform for new research. Librarians, archivists and curators can play an important part by guiding users to find relevant information, by making sure the collection stays relevant to current research needs.

Concluding remarks:

We are in the profession which has been facing rapid changes over last few decades. Change is likely to continue. How we can ensure the integrity of the information we collect and stay relevant in this rapidly changing world of work is the main challenge for every information professional

in this world. Challenges will be always there whether it is strict copyright laws, inflexible local policies or subject differences (e.g. Visual Arts and archaeology are the one of areas where e-resources are still in their infancy). This information needs to flow. I'd like to conclude my thoughts with the wise advice from a guest speaker who came to our class when I was studying to become a Librarian:

“Change is a must as the world develops. The challenge and the excitement should be how we adapt.”

ⁱ Wright, J., 2014. Academic Libraries In The Digital Age: Best Practices For Modernizing The Library. *The Online Journal of Distance Education and e-Learning*, 2(2).

ⁱⁱ SOAS Library (n.d.) *A-Z list databases* [online]. Available at

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/library/resources/a-z/>

ⁱⁱⁱ Copyright Research Information Center (n.d.)

Copyright Law of Japan [online]. Available at

<http://www.cric.or.jp/english/clj/ocl.html>

^{iv} The National Archives (n.d.) *Copyright, Designs and Patents Act 1988* [online]. Available at

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1988/48/part/I/chapter/I/crossheading/duration-of-copyright>

^v National Diet Library (n.d.) *著作権にかかわる注意事項* [online]. Available at

<http://www.ndl.go.jp/jp/service/copy/copyright.htm>

^{vi} **From August 2016 the copyright allowance increased, from 5% to 10%** Copyright Licensing Agency (2016) *New Higher Education Licence 2016-2019* [online]. Available at

<http://he.cla.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/05/HE-Licence-2016-2019-Summary.pdf>

^{vii} University of Iowa Libraries (2017) *Japanese Studies: Interlibrary Loan Services from Japan: GIF Project* [online]. Available at

<http://guides.lib.uiowa.edu/c.php?g=131994&p=864043>

^{viii} University of Nottingham (2017). *OpenDOAR* [online]. Available at

<http://www.opendoar.org/onechart.php?cID=&ctID=&rtID=&clID=&lID=&potID=&rSoftWareName=&search=>

[http://www.opendoar.org/onechart.php?cID=&ctID=&rtID=&clID=&lID=&potID=&rSoftWareName=&search=&groupby=c.cCountry&tallyby=DISTINCT\(o.oID\)&orderby=Tally%20DESC&charttype=pie&width=600&height=300&caption=Proportion%20of%20Repository%20Organisations%20by%20Country%20-%20Worldwide](http://www.opendoar.org/onechart.php?cID=&ctID=&rtID=&clID=&lID=&potID=&rSoftWareName=&search=&groupby=c.cCountry&tallyby=DISTINCT(o.oID)&orderby=Tally%20DESC&charttype=pie&width=600&height=300&caption=Proportion%20of%20Repository%20Organisations%20by%20Country%20-%20Worldwide)

^{ix} *Ibid.*

^x International Research Center for Japanese Studies (n.d.) *Nichibun Open Access* [online]. Available at <https://nichibun.repo.nii.ac.jp/>