

The Brave New World of Cataloguing

Ross Thrasher, Cataloguing Librarian,

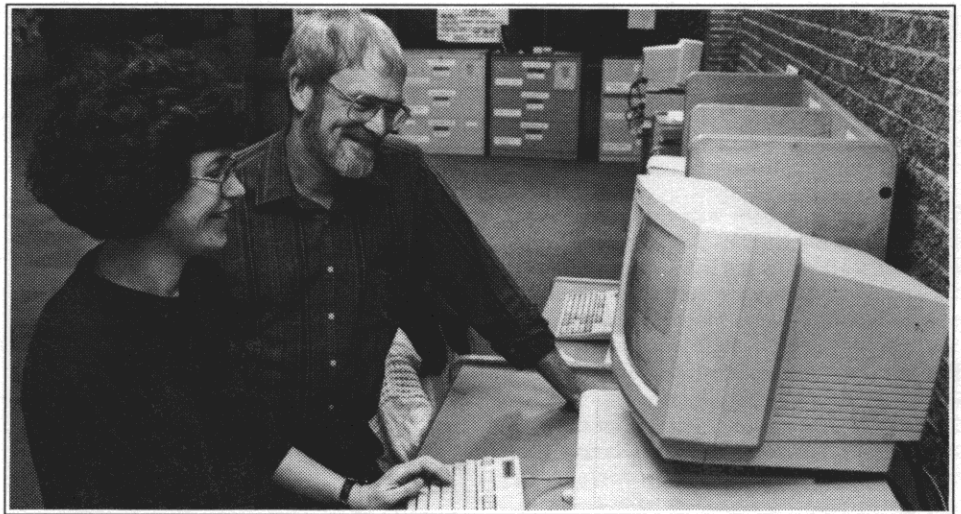
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The Library Catalogue - DRA & HYTELNET

On August 16 1993, the Ryerson Library unveiled a new integrated library catalogue to the Ryerson community.

The library system consists of Data Research Associates (DRA) software which runs on a Digital hardware platform, a VAX 3180. Currently three software modules are operational: a Public Access Catalogue (PAC), a Circulation module and a Cataloguing module. Further modules, Acquisitions, Reserve Bookroom and Serials, will be added to provide a fully integrated system for Ryerson students, faculty and staff.

Before the new system was able to operate, data from the old DOBIS had to be converted into a form usable by the DRA system. Three basic types of data were converted: bibliographic records, patron records, and transaction records which contain circulation data. The first data to be transferred to the new system were the bibliographic records. Out of the 219,571 bibliographic records on the old system only four were rejected during the conversion process. Patron records were transferred next. Circulation information in the form of transaction records were the last data converted. The transfer of the circulation information was the trickiest task. For this to be accomplished, all circulation activity ceased on the DOBIS system on August 13, and manual records were kept until the transfer to the DRA system was completed. By Monday August 16, the entire transfer of data was accomplished, and the DRA system became operational.

During the summer, Data Research personnel visited Ryerson to provide training for library staff on the circulation, public access and cataloguing modules. The library's systems staff and computer operators from Computing and Communications Services (CCS) attended Systems Operator training to familiarize themselves with the VAX computer and the OpenVMS operating system. Subsequently library staff have had acquisitions and advanced systems operator training.

Ambitious projects are planned for converting smaller PC-based files of information into a format that can be integrated with the DRA software and for automating library functions (e.g. Reserves) that are currently manual operations. One of the first collections to be

added to the new system will be the periodicals. Consideration is also being given to collections of material that have never been catalogued so that they too can be accessed in a more convenient manner.

The new system has brought benefits to both library staff and users. The library staff now has better control over the development and maintenance of the collection through reports and statistics generated by the system and by the flexibility to provide access to resources outside the library. For users, the DRA system will eventually become the one place to look for all information about the Ryerson collection and the gateway through which access to sources outside the library can be obtained.

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Outside the library the DRA system is available to all Ryerson students, faculty and staff who have access to the Ryerson Information Network, and the library catalogue is available to all members of the public who have a PC and a modem.

HYTELNET

Hytelnet, a hypertext based interface to the Internet, was installed on the library public access catalogue (PAC) in January. This piece of software, which was developed at the University of Saskatchewan by Peter Scott, provides a gateway to a vast number of libraries, gophers, WWWs (world wide webs), Free-nets, etc. on the Internet. Information resources and libraries are presented in a series of menus that guide a user to appropriate resources. Once a library or database has been selected, a link is automatically made through the Internet to give the user access to the remote database. By using Hytelnet a user may access libraries (University of Iceland, National Central Library in Taiwan, Hong Kong Polytechnic, Oxford University, etc.), electronic books (Complete Works of Shakespeare, Roget's Thesaurus), Free-nets, databases and bibliographies.

ACCESSING THE LIBRARY FROM THE MATRIX SYSTEM

Accessing the Library catalogue and the full range of Library Internet offerings from your Matrix account is simple. Once you log on through "Tools" menu or into your Matrix account, type RYELIB. You will be immediately presented with the same menu available on all the library terminals. You can then search for items in the Ryerson Library or at any other library worldwide. ■

TORONTO FREE-NET INC. and the Ryerson Library

The Toronto Free-Net (TFN) started in March, 1993 as an idea. A steering committee of between 3 and 6 members held inaugural meetings in March. In April 1993, the committee went public and started to solicit volunteers. The first public meeting of the TFN organization was held in April 1993, and attracted over 150 individuals to its meeting.

A formal board of directors and committee structure was established in May, 1993, and it was incorporated as a not-for-profit company in July, 1993.

Having the administrative headquarters here in the Ryerson Library strongly links the TFN with Ryerson. Such a link not only reinforces the outreach of the Library into the community but also of the commitment of Ryerson as an active community player in the centre of Metro Toronto.

Throughout the last year, public and committee meetings have indicated significant support from the community for a TFN. In addition, official expressions of support have come from public and academic libraries, from other community social organizations and from corporations in the Toronto area. It has been through the donations by these community groups and the hard work of the many volunteers that the TFN has come so far in one year.

Many of you have read in the Globe and Mail, the Star and in Toronto Computes! and the Computer Newspaper about the 'information superhighway' and about the Toronto Free-Net. The support by large corporations like Roger's Shared Services and Sun Microsystems as well as from several smaller businesses has defrayed the costs substantially.

It would be expensive and inefficient for each community agency to try to develop and to maintain its own application specific, computer based information service as the TFN is doing. Centralising the TFN enables all community agencies to share a single, cost-effective, interactive and sophisticated computer facility.

Each organization that joins with the TFN can have its own dedicated space on the central network and determine with some autonomy how it is used. Organizations as well as information providers and users access the TFN network by a common telephone number, and so get "one stop shopping" and a

common interface for all the community information that they seek.

The mission of the TFN is, in other words, to bring the communities of Metro Toronto together by offering electronic communication connections to as many information providers and information users as is possible.

The objectives of the TFN are best described as free and open. Specifically they include:

- offering free public access via electronic connection within Metro Toronto to worldwide computer readable information.
- providing a means for information providers to disseminate their information as widely and economically as possible.
- building new and supporting existing networks among information providers and users.
- facilitating user education with regard to information technology and its use by, its impact on and its benefits to Metro Toronto community.

To fulfil these objectives the Toronto Free-Net Inc. intends to provide a wide variety of services to the Metro Toronto community. The services are offered to the general public without charge or obligation and are designed to appeal to all levels of computer users. The services are not to conflict with but support other community organizations and business with overlapping mandates.

Some of these services are:

- distributed remote access to textual information concerning government, community and recreational activities,
- worldwide electronic mail,
- electronic discussion groups on local topics and services,
- remote access to other systems,
- interactive access to Free-Nets in Canada and the USA,
- access to the worldwide electronic discussion groups carried by the Internet.

By providing these varied services the TFN seeks to improve communications among individuals and organizations within the region by facilitating the delivery of services to the community. The TFN also expects to assist in educating the local community in the capabilities of computer and telecommunications technology. In addition, the TFN wants to be a model for Free-Net systems in other communities and provide assistance to these other groups in starting their Free-Net systems.

For those interested in the TFN, further information can be obtained by phoning the TFN information line at 905-568-9944 or dropping into the Ryerson Library office (L284) and picking up a brochure. ■

the CANSIM

CANADIAN SOCIO-ECONOMIC INFORMATION SYSTEM

The CANSIM (Canadian Socio-economic Information System) Time Series Data Base is available to all computer account holders through dedicated telephone lines as a result of a resource sharing arrangement between Ryerson Library and EPAS (a computer services group) at the University of Toronto.

Ryerson contributes to subscription costs with EPAS developing the software and CCS assisting with computer linkages. The CANSIM Catalogue can also be searched on-line to find a relevant matrix or time series number.

Available at the reference desk on the 5th floor of the library, the three-volume CANSIM Directory has information on suggested search strategies, a subject index, cross references to printed Statistics Canada publications, and a full list of the 6218 matrices and the related time series numbers.

The CANSIM Time Series Data Base is an electronic product of Statistics Canada containing over 500,000 time series with statistics on many aspects of business and the economy. These include agriculture, finance, investment, labour and income, manufacturing, population, price indexes, services and the system of National Accounts.

Time series information on CANSIM contains material for several decades covering a wide variety of topics on social and economic aspects of Canadian life. The data system is useful for market strategies, population estimates and development planning.

The data base is accessed by typing CANSIM at the Matrix prompt. An on-line help function outlines options including *browse* (the title index), *search* (the title index by keyword), *inquire* (for a brief description of a time series) and *select* (to select series). After locating the number of a time series containing the required statistical information the new display function lets you view it to decide if you want to download it.

The select and retrieve functions offer a variety of options, such as date and frequency, while the *retrieve* function also allows the format for a post processor such as SAS or SPSS to be selected. Invoking *retrieve* automatically stores the content of the time series in a file called cansim.out that can be transferred to your Matrix directory at the end of the session.

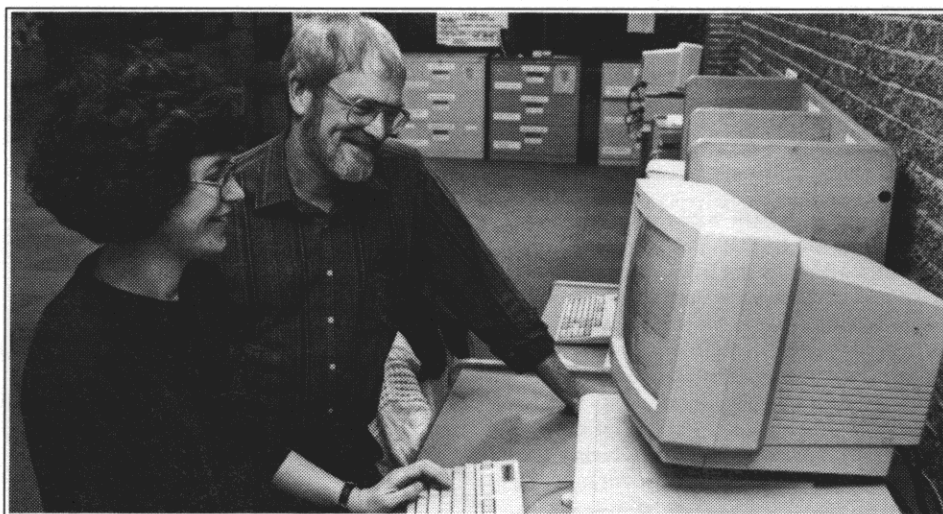
Use the *cansim* command to find thousands of items and to retrieve data to suit your needs. If you don't know exactly what you want to find, you can search for likely topics with a few keywords. After you examine the data you can retrieve what you need with commands that will rearrange the frequency of the data or convert them into sums or averages. You can see a plot of the data points on your screen with the plot command.

After the data have been retrieved you can use them in your favourite software. For users who want to use the data with TSP, SAS, RATS, SHAZAM or SPSS the software will format the output according to the proprietary requirements of these manufacturers. Spreadsheet users will find a Lotus format and the postscript configuration is a plot of the data points that covers a whole letter-size page in landscape format.

Until recently the "backspace" did not work on CANSIM. EPAS, however, recently found the problem in their software and now the backspace is fully functional. The EPAS group is slowly perfecting its software. With the DISPLAY command, the upgraded CATALOGUE command giving the ability to search for "Matrix" numbers and the correction of the BACKSPACE, the CANSIM system continues to become an easier to access tool. ■

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