Recent Developments

Rare Book Cataloguing and Computers — II

By Terry Belanger and Stephen Paul Davis

The following article describes recent activities in the world of rare book libraries and computers and is becoming of growing interest to the antiquarian book trade. It is developed specifically for antiquarian materials. And there is good news about computer-assisted retrospective bibliography, in part because of the continuing interest and support of such projects by major U.S. foundations and private and federal funding agencies.

IMPACT ON ANTIQUARIAN TRADE

These developments are going to have an impact on everybody, whether as users of library and other sorts of published and computer-based catalogues and bibliographies, or as compilers of these catalogues and bibliographies.

Many of the details will be of interest mainly to specialists in the field of rare book and research library cataloguing. But information about an ever-growing number of old books is becoming accessible through computerized systems, and such information is potentially of immense value, not only to antiquarians but also to out-of-print and antiquarian booksellers, whether through their own public or other libraries, or through bibliographic data bases into which they can buy direct access, through computer terminals (becoming cheaper all the time) installed in their own shops.

We think that it is vital for the whole rare book community — librarians, booksellers, bibliographers, scholars and collectors alike — to stay abreast of recent developments in the field; and in the hope of furthering this goal, we present here a summary of some of the events which have taken place since our February 1979 article along the computer-assisted rare book cataloguing front.

PROPOSALS DRAFTED

With funding provided by the Research Division of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the Independent Research Libraries Association established late in 1978 an Ad Hoc Committee on Standards for Rare Book Cataloguing in Machine-Readable Form. Marcus A. McCorison (Director and Librarian, American Antiquarian Society) chaired this committee, and Stephen Paul Davis (Processing Services, Library of Congress) served as
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committee secretary. Members included Joan M. Friedman (Yale Center for British Art), Barbara A. Gates (Brown University Library), Kay Guiles (LC), John Knapp (Blackwell North America, Inc.), Alexandra Mason (University of Kansas), J. William Matheson (LC), Marion Schild, and G. Thomas Tanselle (J.S. Guggenheim Memorial Foundation).

The Ad Hoc Committee met in Washington in March 1979 with a preliminary agenda. Tasks were outlined and assigned to members, and work progressed through the spring and summer. An Interim Report containing 17 draft proposals was issued in September 1979 and circulated to more than 150 libraries and individuals in the United States and Canada, the United Kingdom, France, and New Zealand. The Ad Hoc Committee met again in October to review the Interim Draft and the many comments which had been received about it. A final report based on the interim draft is now being prepared.

The Interim Draft reflected the two basic tasks which the Ad Hoc Committee set itself: investigating the MARC format for specific changes needed to accommodate the requirements of rare book and special collections cataloguing; and studying in general terms the question of the adoption of AACR 2 by such libraries. It eventually became necessary to try to clarify the precise purpose of the rare book catalogue.

The two widely agreed-upon purposes of all library catalogues (most recently stated in the Paris Principles of 1961) seem to hold true for rare book catalogues as well, namely:

1. To locate a work in a collection whenever the author, title, or subject of that work is known; and

2. To locate all the works written by a particular author, or on a particular subject.

In addition to these two principles, it seemed to the Ad Hoc Committee that many (though not all) rare book and special collections made two further demands on their catalogues. These could be roughly stated as follows:

3. To locate all items which evidence certain similar features: for instance, those with similar imprint information (printed or published by the same

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person, or in the same place, or in the same year); or all items of similar physical or intellectual genre (broadsides, almanacs); or all items which exhibit similar physical features (illustrated books, books with dos-a-dos bindings); and

4. To locate all items which are associated with a particular person in each of his roles vis-à-vis an item or items, whether as author or printer or illustrator or owner, etc.

This fourth principle can be seen as a corollary to no. 2, above, which calls for a gathering together or collocation of information about all works by a particular author; but it also extends this criterion to include any association between a person and an item. For non-authorial association, the type of relationship must then be specified through the use of “relators” like “illustrator” or “printer,” etc.

Thus many libraries need to distinguish (and on occasion segregate) bibliographic records for works which Benjamin Franklin wrote from those which he printed, or similarly those works which George Cruikshank illustrated from books which he once owned personally.

If not all rare book and special collections catalogues embody both of these additional principles, the Ad Hoc Committee found that many did do so — depending on a number of factors having to do with the needs of particular collections and of particular clientele.

Formal proposals, accordingly, were developed by the Ad Hoc Committee for changes and additions to the MARC format which would speak to each of these additional requirements of the rare book and special collections catalogue, in the full realization that no library would be likely to wish to implement fully all of these proposals, but that the way would be made easier for those libraries wishing to use any part of the package.

NEED FOR UNIFORMITY

One of the problems which arises in the environment of the computer-assisted bibliographical network when dealing with the special needs of rare book libraries is that, because there has been no formalized approach to cataloging at the national level which acknowledges such special needs, they have been dealt with until now in a purely local and non-uniform fashion. This diversity presents certain problems as regards the MARC format, which — because it is a “communications format” for the exchange of bibliographic data — demands certain standards of uniformity.

The Ad Hoc Committee thus found it necessary to study the possibility of beginning to standardize certain kinds of descriptive terminology for rare books, and it began (for example) to assemble a list of terms designating both intellectual genres (e.g. prospectus, playbook, or trial proceedings) and physical genres (carte de visite, hornbook, or volvelle). It is expected that work will continue on this and similar lists and thesauri in the future, in part by the RBMS Standards Committee described below.

SPECIFIC COPIES

A second major problem addressed by the IRLA Ad Hoc Committee is that of “copy-specific” information, that is, information pertaining only to one or a few copies of an item (e.g. provenance, binding, or manuscript annotation), as opposed to “copy-general” information, that is, information pertaining to all copies of an item (e.g. author, title, or imprint). This problem can also be expressed as the need to distinguish between features of an item dating from before its publication (which tend to be copy-general) and those features originating after publication (which tend to be copy-specific).

Copy-specific information is extremely important in cataloguing rare books, because of the very nature of rare book collections. One raison d’être of such collections is to preserve books and other printed items as physical objects reflecting the history of culture and society; thus a library might own a quite insignificant edition of a 16th-century Bible which is nevertheless very valuable because it is known that Mary Queen of Scots carried it with her to the scaffold in 1587. Or it might own a valueless 19th-century edition of the works of Shakespeare, but with extensive manuscript annotation by Walt Whitman.

Another raison d’être of rare book collections is to preserve books and other printed items as physical objects reflecting the history of the book: papermaking, printing, editing, illustration, binding, and so forth; and here again, certain features adhering to individual copies can frequently be more significant to the collection owning them than those features common to all copies of the work — an extra-illustrated copy, for

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instance, or one with a special binding, or with manuscript markings made by the printer or editor while preparing a later edition.

The MARC format has so far not been structured to accommodate and identify copy-specific information in a systematic way. The Ad Hoc Committee has therefore proposed several possible additions to the format to accommodate and properly identify those copy-specific data that are of interest to the rare book and special collections community.

The problem presented by local and copy-specific information has received increasing attention in several areas of the library community in recent months, with the result that it is about to be studied at a broad level by the Council on Library Resources (CLR). It is possible that the Ad Hoc Committee’s proposed MARC format changes in this area will not be acted on by LC and ALA until the findings of the CLR study are available in mid-1980. The Ad Hoc Committee intends to forward its own work to CLR, ALA, and LC, so that the particular needs of rare book and special collections libraries will be taken into account in whatever overall solutions are developed.

The general problem of using AACR 2 for the descriptive cataloguing of older materials was originally to have been on the agenda of the Ad Hoc Committee. But LC has now begun work in this field (on which, see below), and the committee therefore decided to postpone consideration of the matter until the results of LC’s work were available.

The Ad Hoc Committee did, however, study the possible ramifications that changes in form and fullness of names insisted on by AACR 2 will have on rare book and special collections libraries. The importance of authority control for all access points in a bibliographic record has become widely recognized in recent years. Authority control is necessary for personal names (Churchill or Marlborough?), for corporate and geographic names (Istanbul or Constantinople?), for series (Transactions of the Bibliographical Society or The Library?), and for uniform titles (Robinson Crusoe or The Life & Strange Surprising Adventures of Robinson Crusoe of York, Mariner...?). Both for consistency within an individual library’s files, and for uniformity of access among a number of libraries communicating via a bibliographic network or other computer-assisted method, it is essential for authorities to match precisely.

In the more distant future it may be possible for libraries with different authority standards to communicate by computer; but this seems to be neither feasible nor cost-effective at the moment.

For the time being, libraries which are members of bibliographic utilities or which are planning eventually to join one will need to reconcile their authorities to a national standard — meaning AACR 2 — beginning January 2, 1981. Those libraries which have joined or will join a bibliographic network by 1981 will be required to use those AACR 2 forms of names which have been established by the Library of Congress.

The Library of Congress is preparing to publish quarterly versions of its Automated Name Authority File on microfiche, and all the major networks have announced plans to provide the LC authority file on-line before 1981. With either method, libraries will be able to find the AACR 2 forms of names — for those persons and corporate bodies which the Library of Congress has

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established or used since 1978, when its name authority project began assigning AACR 2 forms.

This change to AACR 2 will present some difficulties to rare book and special collections libraries, who will have to take measures to preserve the consistency of their card catalogues. But a greater difficulty is likely to be that of finding (or creating) AACR 2 forms of names for those persons and corporate bodies which LC has not yet provided in its Automated Name Authority File. LC will eventually provide AACR 2 forms of names only for those headings already existing in the MARC data base (which began in 1968), and for those headings which have been used in the ordinary course of cataloguing at LC from 1978 on. Many of the headings needed for older materials will not be available from LC for a long time, if ever. If the bibliographic networks require that all headings — whether available from LC or not — be in AACR 2 form after January 2, 1981, it will be up to individual institutions to create their own versions according to the new code.

This complicated state of affairs may have a solution in sight in the Council on Library Resources’ Bibliographic Services Development Program. According to C. Lee Jones (director of the program), specifications are now being developed for a national system for the establishment of name authorities that would allow a de facto standard to be established, and possibly verified, by sources other than LC. Such a plan of distributed national authority work might ultimately solve many of the problems associated with the adoption of AACR 2. However, until this or a similar program actually exists, individual rare book and special collections libraries can do little more than to keep themselves informed about the problem, whose solution must clearly be found at the national, rather than the local, level.

The IRLA Ad Hoc Committee will dissolve as soon as its final report is completed. The final report will be made widely available; it will be sent to all those who asked for a copy of the Interim Drafts, and it will be sent as appropriate to the bibliographic networks, the RBMS Standards Committee, the ALA Committee on Machine-Readable Bibliographic Information (MABRI), the Library of Congress, the Council on Library Resources, and the National Endowment for the Humanities, as well as to individuals and libraries requesting copies. The Ad Hoc Committee’s unfinished business will be turned over to the RBMS Standards Committee.

THE RBMS STANDARDS COMMITTEE

Sparked in part by the work of the IRLA Ad Hoc Committee, the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) established a Standards Committee at a meeting of its Executive Committee at the ALA Dallas Conference in June 1979. Since the standards to which research libraries must ultimately conform are largely developed in ALA, it was thought that such a committee would help give the rare book and special collections community more control over its own bibliographical destiny.

Helen S. Butz (Head, Rare Book Cataloging Division, University of Michigan Library) was named Chair, and the Committee will meet for the first time at the ALA Midwinter meetings in Chicago in January 1980. Among its tentative goals are the following:

• To encourage the thoughtful and participatory development of standards in all areas of rare book and special collections librarianship;

• To encourage the implementation of those standards;

• To establish itself as the chief conduit within the RBMS community for developmental work on standards;

• To serve as an educational medium and clearinghouse for information about new events, standards, and technologies which are of consequence to the rare book and special collections community;

• To study and make available information about the performance record of the various networks and vendors of computer-assisted data with regard to their processing services for rare book and special collections libraries; and

• To work to make the networks and vendors more responsive to the values of research and bibliography embodied in these collections.

The new Standards Committee will work whenever possible through the already-established ALA committees, providing advice and comment to those who maintain AACR and the MARC format.

High among the tasks on the RBMS Standards Committee agenda will be to...
continue working on the issues which the IRLA Ad Hoc Committee identified and reported on. The Ad Hoc Committee has asked that all comments on its final report be forwarded to Helen Butz for consideration by the new committee.

Such a committee can succeed only if it has the support of the community it represents. It is essential that rare book and special collections libraries direct their concerns and comments to the committee and, further, enable staff to attend its meetings. The first meeting of the RBMS Standards Committee meeting will be in Chicago, on Sunday, January 20, and all members of RBMS (as well as other interested persons attending ALA Midwinter) are invited to attend.

THE LC MANUAL

In June 1979, the Library of Congress announced plans to produce a manual for the descriptive cataloguing of older imprints which would expand AACR 2 in light of the near-final draft of the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) International Standard Bibliographic Description for Antiquarian Materials (ISBD(A)). One in a series of application manuals which LC proposes to produce over the next year or so, it will be implemented for the cataloguing of LC's own rare materials beginning January 2, 1981.

The LC manual is intended to be more hospitable to the special requirements of rare book and special collections cataloguing than is AACR 2, and, both for LC and for other libraries choosing to use it, it will in effect supersede Chapters 1 and 2 of AACR 2 for this type of cataloguing.

LC's hope is that the special effort which has gone into this manual will ease the problems which rare book and special collections libraries face in bringing their cataloguing practices into conformity with national standards. The manual will have somewhat the nature of a working draft that can grow and change as it is tried out in actual cataloguing practice.

The first edition of the manual should be published by LC early this year, and rare book libraries should watch for notice of its availability. The American Antiquarian Society has already announced plans to use this manual for the recataloguing in machine-readable form of its 18th-century American imprints as part of its North American Imprints Program (on which, see below), and it is likely that many other rare book and special collections libraries will do likewise — especially those which are or will be members of a bibliographic network and will thus have to conform to an AACR 2 system standard after 1980.

RETROSPECTIVE PROJECTS

It has become a firmly established principle in the English-speaking world that the most effective way to provide comprehensive bibliographical access to earlier printed materials is chronologically and by geographical area of production. Thus we have seen the publication of such national retrospective bibliographies as Pollard and Redgrave's Short-title Catalogue of English Books 1475-1640, Donald Wing's continuation for the period 1641-1700, and, on the American side, Charles Evans' American Bibliography, which covers printed materials in the United States through the year 1800.

Currently, the most prominent computer-assisted retrospective bibliographical project is the Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue (ESTC), which is continuing in the tradition established by the STC.
and Wing. ESTC's scope includes all books and other printed materials published in the English language (no matter where printed) in the 18th century, plus all books, etc., (no matter in what language) printed in Great Britain, Ireland, and British North America.

Under the direction of Robin Alston, the British ESTC team has already catalogued close to 100,000 of the approximately 175,000 18th-century titles owned by the British Library, and many further thousands of records, containing information about the 18th-century holdings of other British libraries, have been pouring into the ESTC office in London over the past couple of years.

On this side of the Atlantic, the ESTC has been divided into two parts, one in Worcester, at the American Antiquarian Society (AAS), the other in Baton Rouge, at Louisiana State University (LSU).

**NORTH AMERICAN IMPRINTS**

The AAS has assumed responsibility for printed materials produced in British North America in the 18th century. The first task of its North American Imprints Program (NAIP) is the cataloguing in machine-readable form of AAS's own 25,000 odd pre-1801 American books, about half the total number thought to survive. This first step of NAIP is expected to take about three years. The next step will involve the cataloguing of those pre-1801 North American imprints not held at AAS, but owned by other libraries in the United States, Canada, and elsewhere. This part of the project will be facilitated by Readex Microprint facsimiles of pre-1801 American books (available for approximately three-quarters of the whole); but the NAIP will eventually have to become a road show for the purpose of physically handling at least one copy of all books catalogued.

It is worth emphasizing that the name, Eighteenth-Century Short Title Catalogue, is inaccurate: in fact, ESTC in all its parts will be a long-title catalogue, and the typical entry will much more closely resemble the descriptive record one finds on an LC catalogue card than the abbreviated entry in, say, Wing.

A database providing access to AAS's recatalogued holdings should be available shortly after the completion of the first step of NAIP, both in machine-readable and hard-copy format, and this tool should considerably simplify the cataloguing efforts of other libraries holding copies of 18th-century American books. As the NAIP file moves toward completion with the incorporation in it of the holdings of other libraries besides those of AAS, the cataloguing efforts of other libraries containing such material should prove even easier, and it may be sensible at this moment for such libraries to hold off on their own machine-readable cataloguing or recataloguing of 18th-century materials, until the first edition of NAIP is available.

NAIP has been funded by $265,000 in outright and matching funds by the Research Division of the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), and by a grant from the Mellon Foundation of an additional $165,000. Program director of NAIP is John B. Hench (AAS Research and Publication Officer).

LSU has been designated the North American center for ESTC (ESTC/NA), and it will have responsibility for listing copies of 18th-century British publications held by libraries in the U.S., Canada, and the Caribbean. Machine-readable records now being produced at the British Library will be used by the LSU project as a base file against which American library holdings can be matched.

**N.E.H. ROLE**

It is estimated that there are between one-and-a-half and two million 18th-century British books in American libraries, and ESTC/NA will list a substantial proportion of them, with later additions to the data base filling in the corners. The project has been funded by $216,000 in outright and matching funds by NEH, and by a grant from the Mellon Foundation of an additional $116,000. The director of ESTC/NA is Henry L. Snyder (Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at LSU); assistant director is Judith Singleton, formerly head cataloguer at the Lilly Library, Indiana University.

The strength of the NEH's commitment to machine-assisted bibliographical projects may be clearly seen in its grant of nearly $400,000 to the two U.S.-based parts of ESTC, as well as in its earlier support through planning grants and through the funding of the New York Public Library Operational Test of the ESTC. Margaret Child (Assistant Director for Research Resources) and George Farr (Assistant Director, Division of Research Programs [for Research Materials]) have in recent
years had much to do with both computer-assisted data bases for research tools and with computer-assisted bibliographical projects. Farr, for example, worked closely with the original ESTC organizing committee, and his advice was of the utmost importance in ensuring the success of the NYPL Operational Test. It is to be hoped that he will soon be able to take the time to write down some of his thoughts on the organization, administration, and funding of such projects, for publication either by NEH or in the library press.

The Research Division stands ready to offer advice to potential applicants putting together proposals to NEH, and has available on request a set of guidelines for the application of computers to the humanities (write to Division of Research Programs, Mail Stop 350, National Endowment for the Humanities, Washington, D.C. 20506).

The entry of the Mellon Foundation into ESTC funding is a welcome development which further enhances this foundation's distinguished reputation of service to librarianship.

RBMS AND CONTINUING EDUCATION

One favorable recent development in rare book and special collections librarianship is the emergence of the ACRL Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) as a unifying force in the field. The RBMS Section's annual pre-conferences have attracted a steadily growing number of librarians, booksellers, scholars, and others with rare book interests (300 persons are expected to attend the 1980 pre-conference in Boston next June), partly because of the opportunities for continuing education which are now a regular feature of these programs. There have been workshops on various aspects of computer-assisted cataloguing at all of the recent RBMS pre-conferences, and there will undoubtedly be further opportunities for both formal and informal information exchanges in Boston — the more so because of the interest in these areas sparked by the Athenaeum Group.

We hope that the Standards Committee of RBMS will be able to pursue a vigorous policy of information dissemination to RBMS members and others regarding the matters which will be coming before it, both through the ACRL's C & R L News, and through the hospitality of such journals as AB. There is great interest within the rare book community in machine-assisted cataloguing and related matters, but our ways of communicating with each other are still sketchy, and the possibilities for post-library school education remain limited.

Here we hope that there will shortly be more activity, both nationally and regionally. Cataloguers in rare book libraries, like those in most public and academic libraries, are going to find it in their best interest to learn about AACR 2 by January 2, 1981, when the largest American research libraries will generally adopt the rules this new code sets forth for cataloguing both new and old books. Rare book cataloguers will need to have advance knowledge, not only of the intricacies of AACR 2, but also about the ways in which the LC rare books cataloguing manual (mentioned above) will ease their task.

It should be possible to organize workshops (along the lines of those already planned by other special subject interest catalogue librarians) in which informed personnel from LC and/or from appropriate ALA committees meet for two or three days with rare book cataloguers interested.

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in learning about the new code and its implications. Such a workshop would seem especially appropriate for the Boston area, for instance, with its heavy concentration of rare book and special collections libraries, and with the keen interest in the subject of the Athenaeum Group.

Besides workshops specifically on AACR 2, other educational possibilities need to be developed. Many rare book and special collections librarians have admitted that the Interim Draft of the IRLA Ad Hoc Committee made tough reading, because of the somewhat technical level of some of its vocabulary. Here the library schools can help. Many of them have continuing education programs both for their own graduates and for other librarians within their geographical catchbasins. Mini-courses providing an introduction to machine-assisted cataloguing for rare books and other research libraries would be as useful for reference librarians and administrators as they would be for rare book cataloguers themselves. It is becoming broadly recognized that no area of librarianship will be uninfluenced by computer applications. One is much better equipped to make of computers a useful servant rather than a harsh master if one has at least some knowledge of the basic vocabulary of the field.

In many larger academic libraries, rare book cataloguing staff has had the opportunity to learn about machine-readable cataloguing on the job, since the rare books at their institutions are catalogued in the same systems used for current materials — indeed, trends in the United States are very much in this direction, and rare book cataloguers within large academic libraries are discovering that they have no choice but to cope with machine-assisted systems which are being imposed, campuswide, on all cataloguing operations, including their own.

Unified systems offer many advantages, but rare book department special files (imprint, chronological, or genre) may be lost in the machine-readable wash if appropriate rare books personnel are not sufficiently conversant with the possibilities and limitations of machine-readable cataloguing to be able to discuss the ways and means of creating and retaining machine-readable information for these files; and the trailblazing work of the IRLA Ad Hoc Committee will need to be supported locally by informed rare book cataloguers who have mastered those basic principles of computer-assisted cataloguing which will enable them to talk intelligently about these matters with the appropriate automation and systems personnel of their main university cataloguing operations.

For independent research libraries without a direct connection to a larger university research library’s technical services department, opportunities for continuing education will be even more vital. In a fast-moving field, balkanization always looms as a problem; cataloguing personnel in the independent libraries must be urged to inform themselves on computer-assisted cataloguing matters by taking the fullest possible part in regional workshops and national conferences, as these mechanisms of information and education emerge.

STANDARDS

It is important to bear in mind that the great flurry of recent activity in the United States and elsewhere in regard to standardization of rare book and special collections cataloguing is not simply for its own sake. Making standards of this sort is by no means always an elegant task, but it is a necessary one — for when we use the word standards throughout this report, we mean standards of uniformity, not standards of excellence or standards of completeness.Both of these latter two kinds of standards need always to be addressed. But for our purposes here, the vital matter is not whether it is better to call him Churchill or Marlborough, better to use Istanbul or Constantinople, better to call it Robinson Crusoe or The Strange and Surprising Adventures, etc. — but only which term we are going to use, and the devising of mechanisms to tell us the decisions we have already made as we have gone along.

Rare book libraries may look forward to an environment in which they will routinely be able to communicate with each other with the aid of computers in one or more of several ways. Many of the pieces of such a system are already in place. While not all of the bibliographic utilities yet provide the basic requirements of rare book and special collections libraries, some come close: RLIN and WLN can already provide libraries with on-line access to their own and others’ cataloguing records.

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Furthermore, each library in a bibliographic network already routinely subscribes to periodic machine-readable tapes containing the library's cataloguing. This is referred to as an "archive tape." It is now possible for libraries in a bibliographic network to pool their archive tapes off-line (after some processing) in order to produce automated union catalogues of their holdings. The consortium of divinity school libraries call PHUY (Princeton, Harvard, Union Theological, and Yale) is already producing a computer output microfilm (COM) union catalogue (on microfiche) in this manner.

A promising development has been the decrease in cost of mini-computer systems. One possible (and not unlikely) prospect is that the large bibliographic networks will prove unable or unwilling to fill all of the needs of special interest libraries. These libraries will, therefore, look to in-house mini-computer systems to maintain their catalogues, do special request searches (of the kind described in our earlier AB article, and which computers can do so well), produce on-demand bibliographies and finding lists, and serve as the basis for periodic or on-going publication projects.

At the same time as it used its mini-computer, a library might retain membership in a bibliographic utility for its more book cataloguing needs, and to show the holdings of its rare materials.

The exciting prospect here is that one can conceive of a time in the not especially distant future when many rare book and special collections libraries have their own mini-computer systems which can be accessed, long-distance, from any other library in the country (or indeed, in the world). This sort of arrangement is already commonplace with commercial databases, and it will surely be possible for databases of individual libraries, as well; and it may prove to be the most feasible way in which libraries will be able both to maintain control over their own machine-readable catalogues, and still be able to access those of other libraries as needed.

Whether such a mini-computer network develops in the near future or not, we think it essential for rare book and special collections libraries to begin to bring their own cataloguing practices into conformity with national standards, and to work to make those national standards conform, in turn, to their needs. This kind of standardization, if properly managed, should never preclude a library's serving the needs of its
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News Notes

L.B.F. GENERAL ASSEMBLY

☐ The 1980 General Assembly of the International Booksellers Federation (formerly the International Community of Booksellers Associations) will be held from April 15 to 18, 1980, in Bath, England. Much of the discussion will concern Tele-ordering and will include a survey of worldwide developments in this area. There will also be a talk devoted to the role of the bookseller and publisher in the field of scientific information.

The Assembly will open with a reception on the evening of April 15, with sessions continuing during the following two days, and will include the traditional farewell dinner on the evening of April 17. An excursion is planned for April 18.

Transportation will be available from Bath to Bristol for those members wishing to attend the Annual Meeting of the Booksellers Association of Great Britain and Ireland from April 18 through April 21 in Bristol. The latter meeting will include trade exhibits by British publishers that will remain open on Saturday, April 19.

The Annual Dinner of the British Booksellers Association will be held on Monday evening, April 21, with Roy Jenkins, current President of the European Economic Community, as guest of honor.

The 24th International Congress of Young Booksellers will be held from April 27 through May 4 in the Kolpinghaus in Cologne, West Germany. “The Book Trade Prepares for the 1980s” will be the theme of that Congress which will be organized by the Borsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels.

CHILDREN’S BOOK PROMOTION

☐ The Children’s Book Council and the American Booksellers Association are co-sponsoring a contest for booksellers concerned with promoting the sale of children’s books. Booksellers may enter the contest by submitting information about promotional events, displays or activities, in-store or out-of-store, that have proved effective in promoting children’s books.

The purpose of the contest is to single out bookstores that have been inventive in encouraging this type of promotion, and to

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