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THE DESIGN OF THE LATIN AMERICAN DOCUMENTATION SYSTEM (DOCPAL)

A Report on the first four months

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A revised version of a translation of the article "El Sistema de Documentación sobre población en América Latina (DOCPAL)", by A.M. Conning, which appeared in Notas de Población, Año IV, Nº 10, April 1976. (CELADE-Santiago), pp. 95-100. The present text updates that paper and serves as a progress report.

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ABSTRACT

The United Nations Latin American Demographic Centre, CELADE has established the Latin American Population Documentation System to be known as DOCPAL (Sistema de Documentación sobre Población en América Latina). The system is primarily designed to enable the countries of the region to maximize the use of population related information that may be relevant to their economic and social development. The major objectives are to: 1) identify and obtain the published and unpublished documents on any aspect of population produced in or about Latin America since 1970; 2) make a major improvement in the flow of this information; and 3) participate in the development of any future world population information system. The International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada has provided a grant to initiate the permanent system and operate it for the first two years, March 1976 through February 1978.

It is estimated that around 8 400 published and unpublished reports, books, bulletins, articles, official statements and other documents will be obtained in various languages for the 1970-1975 period and that the number will increase at around 1 400 documents per year. A three hundred word detailed abstract will be written in Spanish for each document. In addition, key words (descriptors) will be assigned from a controlled vocabulary (thesaurus) in Spanish, to be developed by the DOCPAL staff in collaboration with an international group constructing a multilingual thesaurus. The title will be entered in Spanish and English.

User-oriented interactive searching on a video terminal will be available in CELADE, and by mail to other centers, via the computer information system ISIS. A journal of abstracts, periodically printed will be widely distributed. Copies of full texts will be available on request.

I. INTRODUCTION

The governmental representatives at the Second Latin American Meeting in Population held in Mexico in 1975, basing their discussion on the World Plan of Action agreed upon at the World Population Conference of Bucharest, 1974 1/, stressed the importance of defining and implementing policies in the field of population within their national development strategies. The abilities of the countries to develop effective policies will be enhanced if national policy makers, technicians and researchers can utilize pertinent information in their own countries and can review investigations and experiences from elsewhere. Yet the circulation of such information either within or among countries of the region is very limited, in part, because there is little or no bibliographic systemization of the literature, making it difficult for potential users to locate and obtain what is available. In a region where resources are scarce such "loss" of existing information must be reduced.

In an effort to improve the flow of population information to governments, international and regional organizations and others in Latin America, CELADE has established the Latin American Population Documentation System (DOCPAL), which is concerned with the acquisition, processing, storage and retrieval of documents 2/ treating population in the region 3/ . The initial phase of two years (April 1976 through February 1978) has been funded by the International Development Research Center (IDRC) of Canada. This paper outlines the bases of the system and describes the progress made on developing the system through July 1976.

II. NEEDS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE USERS AND PRODUCERS OF LATIN AMERICAN POPULATION INFORMATION

The DOCPAL system is being designed in terms of the needs and characteristics of the producers and users of population information in Latin America, the particular situation of CELADE, and the probable relationship with a world population information system.

1/ Conclusions and Recommendations of the Second Latin American Meeting on Population. Mexico 3-7 March 1975, ST/CEPAL/Conf.54/L9, Rev. 1.

2/ It should be understood that 'documents' include books, articles, reports, official statements, etc.

3/ DOCPAL is one component of the CELADE Latin American Population Information Storage, Retrieval and Processing Program. Other components include a computation unit, a Data Bank and a specialized population library.

User and Producer Institutions in Latin America

Administrators, policy makers, planners, technical assistance consultants, researchers, university professors and students, journalists and secondary school teachers and their pupils in Latin America should benefit from a properly designed and promoted system. To facilitate the design of DOCPAL, it is convenient to divide the institutions with which these users and/or producers of population documents are associated into two broad groups: well-endowed and poorly-endowed centers.

The well-endowed centers have access to relatively large libraries, to medium-size or large computers and have contact with other well-endowed centers inside and outside the region. Most important the personnel of these institutions tend to be highly trained, many with advanced degrees from abroad, and have experience in the use of the literature in their field. A small number of Latin American institutions producing or using demographic data fall in this category, for example, ECLA 1/, some university research institutions, some of the central statistical organizations of the larger countries and CELADE. For them, it is particularly important to have access to unpublished materials, since such materials often are not in their libraries, and to have the capacity to locate information rapidly on very specific topics.

Far more frequently found in the region are poorly-endowed centers which have inadequate or no library facilities dealing with population, little or no access to computers and minimum contact with internationally known well-endowed centers and which often are isolated from other centers within their own countries. Their staff, who very often read only in their national language, have little advanced training and are unaccustomed to have available or to utilize varied information sources. In many cases, the staffs of the poorly-endowed institutions will have to be trained to realize benefits from the DOCPAL system. The majority of governmental agencies, and certainly almost all provincial level centers in the region fall, in varying degrees, in this category, particularly in the poorer and smaller countries.

1/ ECLA = Economic Commission for Latin America (CEPAL in Spanish).

Neither type of institution presently has major access to information produced in the region, or even in their own countries, and both types produce most of their documentation in mimeographed, unpublished form. However, if systematic access can be provided to the well-endowed centers using modern information retrieval technolcgy, they should be able to take advantage of it for research and planning. On the other hand, the far more numerous poorly-endowed centers with many other immediate problems to solve, are initially likely to be able to obtain only limited benefit from an information system, although taking advantage of such facilities would assist them in reducing their isolation. Consequently, the system is being designed with the particular problems of the poorly-endowed centers in mind.

The Latin American Demographic Center (CELADE)

While the basic characteristics of CELADE fit the well-endowed center described above, its size, its regional United Nations population responsibilities and the fact that the Documentation Service will be located in it, lead to additional DOCPAL design requirements.

Around 180 persons (58 are professionals in the field of demography), work in the headquarters of CELADE in Santiago, and another 50 persons (around 17 professionals) work in CELADE in San Jose, Costa Rica. CELADE's staff is involved in research, technical assistance to the countries and training courses which include CELADE's Basic and Advanced level courses and a Master's Degree Program. Students in these programs (the number varies from 25 to 50) are normally expected to conduct and write up research as part of their training.

Most of the work done at CELADE will benefit enormously from a user-oriented interactive documentation system with detailed informative abstracts and readily available full-texts; the ability to search documentation data bases from other regions would be extremely valuable since there is little transference between regions and some duplication of effort, particularly with respect to demographic techniques and their uses.

A World Population Information System

Although DOCPAL has been planned primarily to meet Latin American needs, it will be available to users elsewhere and it will collaborate and coordinate with a world effort known as POPINS 1/. It is likely that DOCPAL will be operational in Latin America before equivalent systems are created in Asia or Africa and much of the work on DOCPAL will take place before or parallel with the efforts made at the world level. CELADE through its participation in these efforts and with the help of expert consultants, will endeavor to make DOCPAL as flexible as possible so that it will be compatible with any world system that later may be developed, while serving the particular needs of the Latin American Region. Wherever possible, recommendations of UNISIST 2/ are being followed.

III. OBJECTIVES

The general objectives of the Latin American Population Documentation Service are to:

(1) Bring under bibliographic control, in a single permanent system, all published and unpublished documents, written in 1970 or after, concerning all topics on population produced in or about Latin America (see subject scope in Section IV).

(2) Make a major improvement in the flow of the information concerning population within Latin America, taking into account the differing characteristics and needs of users of both well-endowed and poorly-endowed centers, as well as the special needs of ECLA and CELADE.

(3) Participate in the development of world-wide cooperation on population information, and serve as the link between Latin America and any world system that may be developed.

1/ CELADE participated in an international meeting in Mexico (September 1975) to consider the creation of POPINS (Population Information System). The coordinator of the CELADE Latin American Population Information Storage, Retrieval and Processing Program, of which DOCPAL is a component, is a member of the Interim Steering Committee of POPINS.

2/ UNISIST is a United Nations project concerned with the possibility of establishing a world scientific information system. DOCPAL is following the specifications of the "Reference Manual for Machine-Readable Bibliographic Descriptions" (UNESCO, Paris, 1974, S.C. 74/WS/20).

IV. DOCPAL SYSTEM DESIGN

To design the system, it is assumed that about 5,600 documents per year must be processed in the first and second years. This is based on an estimated 8,400 documents from the six year 1970-1975 period, and 1,400 new items per year for the first two years of the DOCPAL, 1976 and 1977.

Coverage and Subject Scope

All documents concerning population, published or unpublished, from 1970 onwards, written in the ECLA region or written elsewhere concerning the ECLA region, will be included. The ECLA region will be taken to include all countries which are members of ECLA excluding the developed countries (see Table 1).

To be within the subject scope of DOCPAL, a document produced in or about Latin America must fit the specifications shown in Table 2. The scope is seen in terms of social and economic development as outlined in the World Population Plan of Action 1/ . Documents may treat population variables descriptively or as determinants or consequences of other factors, or both.

Excluded will be material referring to clinical studies related to fertility or mortality since these are included in other systems. Documents not referring to population topics but indirectly relevant to population policy or theory will also be excluded; most of these are likely to be part of DEVSIS (Development Science Information System) which should be available eventually through CLADES 2/ of ECLA.

Characteristics of the System

All the major design characteristics of the DOCPAL system are shown in Table 3 which gives a subjective estimate of the importance of each of the characteristics according to the type of institution in which the users and/or producers are located.

1/ Report of the World Population Conference of the United Nations, 1974. Bucharest, 19-30 August 1974. United Nations, N.Y., 1975, E/Conf. 60/19. Sales N° 5.75.XIII.3.

2/ CLADES = Centro Latinoamericano de Documentación Económica y Social.

Table 1

Geographic Scope of DOCPAL

Member Countries of the Economic Commission for Latin America (ECLA) a/

Members	
Argentina	Guyana
Bahamas	Haiti
Barbados	Honduras
Bolivia	Jamaica
Brazil	Mexico
Chile	Nicaragua
Colombia	Panama
Costa Rica	Paraguay
Cuba	Peru
Dominican Republic	Surinam
Ecuador	Trinidad and Tobago
El Salvador	Uruguay
Granada	Venezuela
Guatemala	
Associate Members	
British Honduras (Belize)	Associated States of the West Indies

a/ Excluding the developed countries: Canada, France, Netherlands, United Kingdom and the United States.

- Table 2

Subject Scope of DOCPAL
(Preliminary design)

To be included in DOCPAL a document must have been written in or about Latin America and:

A. Treat one or more of the following population topics:

- Population (general)
- Mortality and/or morbidity (non-clinical)
- Fertility (including bio-social aspects and fertility control)
- Migration (international or internal)
- Population size or growth
- Population age or sex structure
- Population composition
- Spatial distribution (including urbanization)
- Population economically active
- Nuptiality
- Family and Household
- Estimation of needs (housing, schools, etc.)

and, B. Treat the population topics from one or more of the following perspectives:

a). Formal demographic operations
- Demographic theory
- Statistical description
- Mathematical models or projections
- Measurement or analysis
- Sources and collection of data
- Data processing

b). Programs or Policies

c). Related descriptions
- Social and economic policy and planning
- Economics, industry, commerce, consumption or finance
- Sociology, psychology or anthropology
- International relations or legislative policy
- Human resources, education and training
- Agriculture
- Administration or Technology
- National resources, environment or housing
- Geography or transport
- Health, food or biology
- Methodology, mathematics or statistics
- Information or documentation

TABLE 3

IMPORTANCE OF DOCPAL DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS TO VARIOUS TYPES OF USERS AND PRODUCERS

DOCPAL DESIGN CHARACTERISTICS	LATIN AMERICAN USERS AND PRODUCERS			WORLD SYSTEM
	WELL-ENDOWED CENTERS		POORLY ENDOWED CENTERS	
	CELADE	OTHERS		
1. SUBJECT SCOPE INCLUDES ALL TOPICS IN POPULATION	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH	HIGH	HIGH A/
2. ALL FUGITIVE AS WELL AS PUBLISHED MATERIALS INCLUDED	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH	HIGH	HIGH
3. FULL TEXTS AVAILABLE TO USERS (COSTS TO USERS MINIMIZED)	INTERMED B/	INTERMED B/	VERY HIGH	HIGH
4. ANALYTIC LEVEL OF PROCESSING (CHAPTERS WITHIN BOOKS OR REPORTS)	HIGH	HIGH	V VERY HIGH	?
5. INFORMATIVE ABSTRACTS WRITTEN IN FREE TEXT	HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH	HIGH (?)
6. ABSTRACTS IN SPANISH; TITLES IN ORIGINAL LANGUAGE AND SPANISH AND ENGLISH	HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH C/	LOW
7. ABSTRACT AND INDEX JOURNAL	LOW D/	HIGH	VERY HIGH	?
8. READABILITY MAXIMIZED (UPPER/ LOWER CASE; SPANISH ORTHOGRAPHY) E/	INTERMED	INTERMED	VERY HIGH	
9. THESAURUS INDEXING AND SEARCHING	HIGH	HIGH	VERY HIGH	HIGH
10. SEARCHES OF THE FREE TEXT ABSTRACTS	VERY HIGH	HIGH F/	INTERMED-LOW	HIGH (?)
11. INTERACTIVE ENTRY AND SEARCHING	VERY HIGH	INTERMED G/	INTERMED	HIGH
12. DATA BASES FROM OTHER REGIONS/ SUBJECTS AVAILABLE FOR SEARCHING	VERY HIGH	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
13. COMPUTER PROGRAM SYSTEM TRANSFERRABLE TO MEDIUM SIZE COMPUTERS	VERY HIGH	HIGH	LOW	HIGH
14. CONFORMITY TO UNISIST INTERNATIONAL STANDARDS	VERY HIGH	VERY HIGH	LOW	VERY HIGH

A/ DEPENDS ON THE SCOPE OF THE WORLD SYSTEM.

B/ IF THERE IS ACCESS TO A GOOD POPULATION LIBRARY.

C/ FEW READ LANGUAGES OTHER THAN SPANISH. SAME PROBLEMS MAY OCCUR IN BRAZILIAN CENTERS AND THE ENGLISH SPEAKING CENTERS WILL ONLY HAVE THE TITLES IN ENGLISH.

D/ BECAUSE INTERACTIVE SEARCHING BY TERMINAL WILL BE AVAILABLE IN CELADE.

E/ PUBLICATION WILL BE MADE BY PHOTOCOPYING THE COMPUTER OUTPUT.

F/ IF THE CENTERS HAVE ACCESS TO THE COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEM.

G/ IT WILL BE OF "HIGH" IMPORTANCE IF THEY HAVE ACCESS TO THE COMPUTER INFORMATION SYSTEM.

A key characteristic of any documentation system for a developing region, particularly when the vast majority of the centers are poorly-endowed, should be the provision of copies of the documents on request through a clearinghouse. User centers can not be expected to write to producers for copies. Furthermore, since a large percentage of the literature is unpublished, even the well-endowed centers would have difficulty in obtaining copies.

A number of other design characteristics follow from the decision to provide copies. Most important is the provision of a detailed informative abstract since it often may replace the original document, thereby reducing the dependence on the mail between DOCPAL and the users, and minimize the number of requests, thereby reducing the costs of providing copies. So that the abstracts will be utilized widely by poorly trained users requires that the abstracts (photocopied from the computer output to reduce time delays and costs) be visually clear, in natural language, and in Spanish. Since ECLA includes some English speaking countries titles must be in English and Spanish.

V. SYSTEM DEVELOPMENT AND OPERATION

The DOCPAL system is being designed and will be operated by a staff consisting of an information specialist who will be the Head of DOCPAL, three documentalists for acquisitions, technical processing and the construction of the thesaurus, respectively, a computer analyst/programmer and supporting clerical personnel. The work will be done in direct collaboration with the specialized CELADE library.

Inputs and Technical Processing

Acquisition

The acquisition of documents, with very high priority given to unpublished materials, is perhaps the most difficult aspect of the entire system since it is least susceptible to solutions via technology. As the facility with which a producer institution can make its documents available is likely to be directly related to its level of endowment as defined earlier, there is no easy "solution" to the problem of acquisition. There will be promotion through brochures, early provision of output from the system, etc., but in many cases it will be desirable to make personal visits to the countries by DOCPAL and other CELADE staff to collect documents and to locate key persons who will maintain

the flow of materials. Advantage will be taken of informal information networks being developed by the CELADE population unit and PISPAL 1/ and various agencies working in Latin America. DOCPAL also will collaborate with regional associations such as CLACSO 2/ and cooperative acquisition arrangements will be established with international organizations and institutions in developed countries. CELADE is compiling a list of all possible producers (and users); both institutions and individuals in the region and elsewhere are being included. It is hoped that a large number of centers will wish to send their materials to DOCPAL since they will gain publicity through the appearance of an abstract, etc. for each document in a DOCPAL abstract journal (see the section on Outputs of DOCPAL).

Acquisition in the Central American countries will be carried out largely through CELADE's San Jose center. This will reduce costs and take advantage of existing institutional relationships between CELADE-San Jose and the Central American nations. Documents will be sent to Santiago for processing, although as suggested in Section VI, the computer retrieval system eventually will be mounted in CELADE-San Jose to provide more rapid service to that subregion.

The computer information storage and retrieval system is being set up to manage the list of producers and users and to maintain control over the proeesses of locating and acquiring documents. The ability to produce by computer, updated lists of documents organized by center and country will enable DOCPAL and other CELADE staff to travel with lists of documents to be located.

A master file of all documents, none of which will be circulated, will be kept for providing clearinghouse copies of the documents (see below). Documents produced by CELADE or in the CELADE library (estimated at around 2,000 documents) are being entered first.

Thesaurus Development and Use

All documents will be indexed with descriptors from a controlled vocabulary (thesaurus) in Spanish. The descriptors employed for a given document will describe the topics treated as well as the variables analyzed empirically, the types of data used, and the types of questionnaires shown if any. It will be possible to retrieve descriptors for each of these aspects of content separately to avoid false coordinations.

1/ PISPAL = Programa de Investigaciones Sociales sobre Problemas Relevantes para Políticas de Población. PISPAL is a consortium of various Latin American institutions with its central unit located in CELADE-Santiago.

2/ CLACSO = Consejo Latinoamericano de Ciencias Sociales.

Since no thesaurus now exists with the amplitude of the DOCPAL subject scope, at the present time a list of descriptors likely to be used in the DOCPAL thesaurus is being employed.

The Spanish language thesaurus under development by DOCPAL will be compatible with the multilingual POPINS population thesaurus being constructed in Spanish, English and French by a working group of which CELADE is a member.

Abstracts

For each document (or chapter of a document) an informative abstract, around 300 words in length is being written by a specially trained 1/ abstractor with university education in the appropriate discipline. The abstracts are edited by DOCPAL documentalists and evaluations of the work are made by CELADE demographers and other social scientists. To the extent possible, the abstracts are meant to be substitutes for the full texts since they attempt to give the content of the documents, in contrast to an "indicative abstract" which mentions only the topics covered, each DOCPAL abstract begins with a sentence defining the objective of the document.

The bibliographic record, including the abstract, for each document, will be prepared at the analytic level, that is, journal articles, conference papers, and normally, chapters of books or reports, will be separately entered in the system.

Other Data Elements in the Bibliographic Record

All data fields of the bibliographic description recommended by UNISIST 2/ as essential, and many of those considered optional, have been included and the UNISIST and ISO 3/ standards are followed unless counter-indicated by special regional needs. Other data fields will provide information on the type of printing, availability of the full-text to users, etc. In addition, special aspects of the document content are included such as the dates of the data, if any, the types of users to which the document is directed, and others.

A preliminary version of a Manual has been written explaining how each of the approximately 90 fields on the various worksheets should be completed by the DOCPAL documentalists.

1/ A training manual has been written:
Guía para la confección de Resúmenes de DOCPAL (versión preliminar).
Manual for the writing of DOCPAL Abstracts (preliminary version).
T. Iglesias, CELADE-Santiago, (June, 1976).

2/ UNISIST = Reference Manual for machine-readable bibliographic descriptions, UNESCO, Paris 1974 (SC.74/WS/20).

3/ ISO = International Standarization Organization.

Computer Processing via ISIS

The ISIS system, which permits both controlled vocabulary (e.g., using a thesaurus) and free-text searching, is being used for processing and will be adapted where necessary for the specific purposes of the DOCPAL system. Editing via consistency programs will be done as the data are entered via a video display terminal using a program being developed by CELADE. The data are stored and printed for final checking of the printouts before being accepted as complete.

The time sharing version of ISIS functions with less than 80K of computer memory. From CELADE's point of view ISIS is convenient since it can be utilized to manage the CELADE library and is the system that will be used by the Centro Latinoamericano de Documentación Económica y Social (CLADES), located in CEPAL-Santiago. This will permit close coordination with CLADES.

VI. OUTPUTS OF DOCPAL

Demand Searches

From the point of view of the needs of CELADE (and various other institutions located in Santiago) interactive demand searches are by far the most useful output. Because such users often have very specialized needs, they will be able to make searches of the free-text abstracts as well as of the thesaurus descriptors. Searches are done on the video display used for entry, with a printer available. Batch printing will be used for long lists. An effort is being made to insure that researchers and other users can "browse" trhough the information easily with little or no outside assistance.

Demand searches will be offered as a service to institutions and individuals elsewhere; during the first two years of DOCPAL this service will be free.

Abstract Journal

For most of the poorly-endowed centers and many well-endowed ones as well, the major contact with the DOCPAL Service in the first years will be via an abstract journal 1/ . This is being designed in a form that maximizes readibility and facilitates use since the majority of persons receiving the journal will have had little or no previous

1/ A description of the probable form of the journal is given in "Ideas para el Diseño de la Revista de Resúmenes del Sistema de Documentación sobre Población en América Latina (DOCPAL)"/" Ideas for the design of an Abstract Journal of the Latin American Population Documentation System (DOCPAL)", S. Acuña and A. Conning, CELADE-Santiago, ND/9 (May, 1976).

experience with such a research tool. They will have to be convinced by the Journal, itself and, where possible, through personal visits of DOCPAL and other CELADE staff.

Subject, author and geographical indices, organized to simplify searching and browsing, will be included, although the abstract of an item will appear only once. The use of cumulative indices in the future will have to be decided with great care, because of the high costs involved and the importance of the journal to the poorly-endowed centers. To minimize costs, and reduce time lag, the computer output, organized and typeset via ISIS, will be directly photocopied. To reduce costs further the journal will begin with documents from 1974, the year of the World Population Conference. It is hoped that the first experimental version will be ready before the end of 1976.

Initially, all producers and most potential users (approximately 1,500 persons and institutions) will receive a copy of the journal. Libraries and individual users in developed countries will be required to pay the costs, including postage, for the journal as soon as it is established on a regular basis.

Clearinghouse

The clearinghouse will be one of the key DOCPAL services offered since most users will not have any other means of obtaining copies of the documents identified via demand searches or the abstract journal. Beginning the second year of operation, users will be able to request documents and receive Xerox copies made from the master document file by return mail and without cost to them if the number of requests is reasonable. Naturally, DOCPAL will provide a copy of a document only if the producer permits such distribution.

Mounting ISIS for DOCPAL Retrieval in other Institutions

It probably will be desirable to arrange for qualified institutions elsewhere to carry out demand searches with ISIS using DOCPAL data base tapes sent to them periodically.

CELADE in collaboration with CLADES, will package the ISIS system for this purpose, simplifying to a maximum its use, and providing the necessary documentation in Spanish. Transference of the system to other centers working in the field of population will be incorporated into CELADE's normal program of technical assistance to the countries in other aspects of computer processing and system design. Naturally, the transference of ISIS would be done in accordance with the international rules established for ISIS.

The ISIS system will be implemented for use by CELADE-Costa Rica as soon as possible since it has good communication with the Central American countries. Input to DOCPAL and the technical processing of documents will remain centralized in CELADE-Santiago during the first two years of DOCPAL.

Other Possible Outputs

Selective Dissemination

When DOCPAL is fully functioning it may be desirable to institute the selective dissemination of abstracts, perhaps initially sending computer printouts based on carefully constructed profiles to the relatively small number of professionals at CELADE and those at CEPAL working on population related subjects. Whether this should be extended to other centers will depend on the costs and demand.

Reviews of the Literature

The CELADE unit operating the DOCPAL service will not become involved in substantive analyses. However, reviews of the literature in different substantive fields based on DOCPAL will be an important indirect output.

Non-technical summary reviews could be a major contribution of CELADE to improving information flow from researchers to decision makers (see the Objectives, Section III). Such summaries would also be of immense value to teachers, students and other non-technical public.

VII. INSTITUTIONALIZATION AND EVALUATION OF DOCPAL

Promotion

To be successful in meeting its objectives the DOCPAL system must be institutionalized in Latin America so that a wide variety of persons and centers recognize its importance to their work, contribute to it and utilize it when they should. Institutionalization of DOCPAL will require active promotion in addition to good system design and execution. Among other promotional efforts so far undertaken have been news items in international journals and a number of personal visits to users and producers by DOCPAL and other CELADE staff on missions. A DOCPAL symbol has been designed and will be utilized on all future DOCPAL publications. A poster incorporating the symbol is being sent to around 1,500 institutions and individuals.

Exceedingly important is the early production of the first issue of the abstract journal, the regularity of its publication and the rapidity of reply to demand searches and requests for full texts.

Evaluation

It cannot be assumed that carrying out the above promotional efforts and providing the outputs as designed means that DOCPAL is meeting its objectives. Too low a percentage of the estimated unpublished material may be acquired, or the journal may be not be used by recipients, or used inadequately. An explicit evaluation component, therefore, is built into DOCPAL and the findings will be used to make appropriate changes.

The best procedures for carrying out systematic evaluations, perhaps at the end of the first and second years, must be determined, but presumably will involve some form of mail survey to all users and producers plus on-site visits to properly selected sets of those who do and those who do not respond to the questionnaire.

VIII. ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For further information on specific aspects, or to inquire about receiving DOCPAL services, or to send documents for inclusion in the DOCPAL system and in the abstract journal, please write to DOCPAL, CELADE, Casilla 91, Santiago, Chile.

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