ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR LATIN AMERICA AND THE CARIBBEAN

Subregional Headquarters for the Caribbean

QUESTIONNAIRE ANALYSIS
SPECIAL LIBRARY UNITS IN THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO
ESTABLISHMENT, LOCATION AND ORIENTATION OF UNITS

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SPECIAL LIBRARY UNITS IN

THE REPUBLIC OF TRINIDAD AND TOBAGO

ESTABLISHMENT, LOCATION AND ORIENTATION OF UNITS

The following is a report on special libraries in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago as reported on in a survey conducted. The questionnaire covered ten broad areas and information of varying quality was collected. The ten sectors collected data on the following:

- Unit identification

- Library personnel

- Collection

- Physical facilities

- Target user group/user demand

- Co-operative activities

- Financing

- Technical services

- Technical equipment

- Automation

IDENTIFICATION OF INFORMATION UNITS

The survey population encompassed both public and private sectors and was determined by consulting a known list of special libraries, by devising a list of subjects, and of users who might have information needs to be met by a special library.

In order to identify these agencies and organizations, gazetted lists of voluntary organizations, churches, societies and associations and registers of companies were consulted. A number of other tools were used to supplement and/or verify information obtained from other sources. These included the telephone directory, business and industrial directories, annual reports as well as personal enquiries.

The list of subjects included sciences, technology, engineering, agriculture, health, law, social sciences, education, culture, humanities, media and information systems and services.

The users were identified as those in government ministries and departments, state enterprises, statutory boards, academic and research institutions, professional associations, embassies, religions and cultural, regional, international and voluntary organizations, business and industry.

DISTRIBUTION AND RESPONSE LEVEL

Five hundred and twenty-eight (528) questionnaires were distributed based on this identification process. Of this total eighty-two (82) questionnaires (15.53%) were returned with useable data. Thirty-five (35) responses (by letter or blank returns) were also received indicating that no libraries or collections existed in those institutions.

The high level of non-responses is attributable to the very wide distribution lists drawn up (as described above) with the clear intention of identifying all possible information units which might be willing to participate in a future network structure. While a few such organizations without information units took the trouble to respond negatively, most did not. On the other hand, some very small units did respond and are included in the survey.

The report describes the findings of the survey, assesses the existing facilities in relation to national goals and priorities and desirable standards and then makes proposals for the future development of a network structure to improve the delivery of information services to the nation by maximizing the use of resources.

"FACETS" OR "PERIPHERAL FEATURES" OF THE SYSTEM

Establishment of Units

The responses, if assumed to be representative of the population of libraries, indicate that overall, about one-third of the libraries were established prior to 1961. Between 1961 and 1970 some 18% of the libraries now in existence were established. The rate of accretion in the period 1971 to 1980 stood at a reported 30%, indicating a possible high degree of correlation with economic activity in that period. In that period some 68% of the new additions were Government or Regional Institution-related. The ensuing period, 1981 to 1985 saw a general decline in the establishment of new information units. The responses indicate that about 67% of the information units were established after 1960 and that over 72% of all information units are Government or Regional Institution owned.

Table 1
TYPE OF ORGANIZATION BY DATE
OF LIBRARY ESTABLISHMENT

| | DATE | | | | |
Organization	Pre-1961	1961-1971	1971-1980	1981-1985	Total
Ministry-Department	14	8	8	5	35
Statutory Board	3	1	2	2	8
State Enterprise	1	0	4	3	8
Private Enterprise	1	2	6	4	13
Private Non-profit	6	0	2	1	9
Regional Institution	1	1	3	1	6
National Institution <1>	0	3	0	0	3
Total	26	15	25	16	82

<1> Includes Central Bank, Court of Appeal and Industrial Court.

The observed tendency suggests that over the years the Government has consistently taken the lead role in the provision of information services although it seems unlikely that this role has been perceived. Whereas the 51 government and quasi-government organizations above represent over 60% of the respondents, this percentage drops to 50 for the wider universe of potential respondents described in the introduction.

ORGANIZATION OF INFORMATION UNITS

The general information leadership role assumed by the Government can also be seen in the cross tabulation in Table 2 of information units responding by type of parent organization and nature of the library/information unit. Readily apparent is the large number of Ministry libraries and the relative paucity of units designated as reference, documentation and information centres. As noted in the introduction, reference, documentation and information centres are not always clearly distinguished in local terminology or practice and the types of units are in any event not well developed, as the following table

illustrates.

Table 2
TYPE OF ORGANIZATION BY NATURE OF LIBRARY

Organization	Library	Ref. Centre	Doc. Centre	Info. Centre	Other	Total
Ministry-Department	31	2	1	0	0	34
Statutory Board	7	0	0	0	0	7
State Enterprise	6	0	0	1	0	7
Private Enterprise	7	0	3	0	1	11
Private Non-profit	6	1	0	0	2	9
Regional Institution	4	0	1	0	1	6
National Institution	2	0	0	0	0	2
Total	63	3	5	1	4	76

STAFFING

A study of the staffing of the units responding to the questionnaire revealed that 27% had no full-time staff whatever while another 37% had one (1) or two (2) members of staff. On the other hand 32% had a staff of between three (3) and ten (10). The survey revealed that some libraries are run by part-time staff or staff on temporary contract. Table 3 shows a distribution of units classified by number of full-time staff. For convenience, the term libraries is used to cover all types of units responding.

Table 3
LIBRARIES CLASSIFIED BY SIZE OF FULL-TIME STAFF

Size of Staff	Number of Libraries	%
0	23	27.71
1	19	22.89
2	12	14.45
3 - 10	27	32.53
> 10	2	2.42
Total	83	100

EXISTING STAFF AND FUTURE NEEDS

Full-time technical library staff, existing and needed, by job function.

In order to reduce bias in the interpretation of the responses, the University of the West Indies Main Library response was separated in this analysis. The responses afforded the possibility of examination of existing professional and technical staff as well as an indication of future needs. These future needs are given here only as perceived by the respondents. A more definitive statement of future needs can only be made after an in-depth study of this question in relation to future proposals

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and programmes.

Some forty-six (46) Librarians/Documentalists were employed in the Libraries that responded to the questionnaire. Five (5) professionals in other fields were shown to be also employed in libraries. Only one systems analyst was at survey time reported to be employed in the library service (excluding UWI). These professionals were supported by some sixty-four (64) Library Assistants, two (2) Senior Administrative persons, Clerical, Secretarial and other grades of worker. Table 4 presents these existing staff numbers and future needs by training.

Table 4
FULL-TIME STAFF
EXISTING STAFF AND FUTURE NEEDS BY TRAINING

Category of Staff training	EXISTING		FUTURE			
	UWI	Non-UWI	UWI		Non-UWI	
			Short/	Medium/	Short/	Medium
Librarians/Document-alists/Information Specialists	19	46	2	1	10	7
Other Professionals (Economists, etc.)		5	–	–	2	–
Systems Analysts	1	1	–	–	1	–
Senior Administrative personnel	2	2	–	–	2	–
Library Assistants	30	64	2	–	19	14

Reflected in the responses is the need for a 20% increase in the number of Librarians/Documentalists in the short-term and a further 12% in the medium-term. A recognition of the need for other professionals is reflected in the expressed need for a 40% increase in this category in the short-term. The total number of systems analysts is at present two (2) according to the responses to the questionnaire and this figure is very low considering the present move towards automation. The questionnaire responses suggest that the number should be doubled in the short-term, but there is perhaps a need for much more of this type of skill immediately. A 33% increase in the number of Library Assistants in the short-term was indicated. The expression of needs indicates the emphasis on greater numbers of qualified persons to work in the area of information. If one interprets the terms "short-term" and "medium-term" to mean "less than one year" and "between one year and three years" respectively, the magnitude of the new staffing needs becomes clear.

Table 5
FULL-TIME STAFF
EXISTING STAFF AND FUTURE NEEDS BY TRAINING

Category of Training	EXISTING	FUTURE	
		Short-term	Medium-term
Librarians/Documentalists/ Information Specialists	65	12	8
Other Professionals (Economists, etc.)	5	2	—
Systems Analysts	2	2	—
Senior Administrative personnel	4	2	—
Library Assistants	94	31	14

The need for an indication of future staff needs is all the more urgent when an age distribution of Librarians/Documentalists/Information Specialists is considered. Nearly 20% of the most highly trained library personnel are over the age of 50 and have a finite period of service left.

THE COLLECTIONS

Four size groups of collections were identified, and libraries were grouped accordingly. The indicators of size used were the holdings of:

- Books and pamphlets

- Unpublished materials. (This includes mimeographed material)

- Periodicals

The frequency distribution of libraries according to size of collection appears at Table 6.

Table 6 <1>
SIZE DISTRIBUTION OF LIBRARIAN
ACCORDING TO COLLECTIONS

Collection size	Number of libraries	Percentage
<2500	57	68.7
2501 - 10000	14	16.9
10001 - 50000	11	13.3
>50000	1	1.2
Total	83	1.2

<1> Table 6 merely represents indicators of collections but it is quite possible that certain special libraries would have substantial collection of materials other than those selected as indicators of size.

Holdings are kept in different forms. The survey sought an indication of the number of libraries holding material in a number of forms. The forms identified for probing were the following:

- Maps

- Audio-visual material

- Machine-readable material

- Microforms

- Other forms

It is important to assess the extent to which the holdings reflect the use of a wide range of information sources including modern technology which can contribute in some measure to space-efficiency. Table 7 presents data on the forms studied in the survey.

Table 7
HOLDINGS BY SELECTED FORM OF MATERIAL

Form	Number	Percentage of response
Maps	28	31.5
Audio-visual	35	39.3
Machine readable	5	5.6
Microforms	16	18.0
Other	5	5.6
Total	89	100.0

Several libraries reported on the reasons for discarding reading material. The reasons ranged from obsolescence, to poor condition, to low use or non-use to the holding of duplicates and to space problems. Whereas most of the cases of discard were among books and periodicals, the least occurred among microforms. No microforms were discarded because of space problems.

Several libraries hold materials in the following categories:

- Trade Catalogues

- Patents

- Engineering drawings

- Standards/Specifications

- Theses

- Music

- Newspaper clippings

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Information on trade catalogues, patents and engineering drawings is extremely important to third world nations that are dependent on overseas trade and the adaptation of technology. Information systems are required to service requests for this type of data.

PHYSICAL FACILITIES

The survey examined the floor area devoted to libraries and presented a size distribution as the following table illustrates.

Table 8
SIZE DISTRIBUTION OF LIBRARIES BY FLOOR SPACE

Size Group	Number of Libraries	Average number of Seats
Large (>500 sq.m)<1>	3	27<1>
Medium-large (101 - 500 sq.m)	17	24
Medium-small (20 - 100 sq.m)	33	10
Small (<20 sq.m)	20	2
Unspecified	9	2
Total	82	

<1> Exlcudes UWI Main Library; with the UWI Main Library the average would be 196.

The majority of the libraries are in the small to medium-small category and can accommomdate between two and ten persons on average. The indication is that there is not sufficient accommodation for researchers to use the libraries effectively. Most of the libraries reported having space that was used for a multiplicity of functions. This means that there was in many cases no space separately dedicated to the administrative and technical processing functions or to the collections and reading space. Thus, the physical infrastructure can hardly be described as being conducive to maximum efficiency in serving users.

Many libraries reported having air conditioning. Several had fire alarm systems, fire extinguishers and fire exists, but few had smoke detection units or humidity controls. Most libraries use shelves of either steel or wood. Several had plans to move into new premises in the short-term. Many libraries reported that their collections were not insured. This is a most undesirable situation as collections lost would not be readily replaced.

The questionnaire sought information on the major user of the special libraries and on the services offered. the Government Ministry/Department libraries were the most numerous and used. Users range widely over government staff, businessmen and the staff and students of academic institutions. Table 9 presents an analysis of number of libraries (classified by type of organization) serving specified user groups in relation to basic loan and reference services.

Table 9
NUMBER OF LIBRARIES (BY TYPE OF ORGANIZATION)
SERVING SPECIFIED USER GROUPS
(Type of User and Service)

Nature of Organizations	Organization's Own Staff		Government Staff/Civil Servants		Commercial and Business Users		Staff of Academic Instit's		Students	
	Reading/ ref. only	Loans	Reading/ ref. only	Loans	Reading/ ref. only	Loans	Reading/ ref. only	Loans	Reading/ ref. only	Loans
Ministry/ Govt.Dept.	5	26	9	11	11	1	12	4	10	10
Statutory Board	0	6	5	1	2	1	5	1	3	2
State Enterprise	1	3	1	0	2	0	1	0	3	0
Private Enterpries	2	9	2	0	2	0	1	0	4	3
Private Non-profit	2	4	2	1	0	0	4	1	5	3
Regional Institution	0	4	2	3	4	0	1	4	3	1
National Institution	0	3	2	1	1	0	2	0	3	0

The most commonly used means of promoting awareness is the accessions list. At best, this tends to be utilized only by in-house staff. The electronic media, audio-visual presentations and the printed media tend to be the least utilized. Table 10 illustrates.

Table 10
METHODS OF PROMOTING AWARENESS
OF SERVICES AND COLLECTIONS

Method of promotion	Number of responses
Accessions lists	37
A/V presentations	3
Bibliographies	20
Brochures	13
Current awareness services '	30
Displays	27
Electronic media	2
Guides to catalogues	16
Guides to collections	21
Instruction re-use of indexes and reference works	26
Point of use instruction	11
Posters	7
Printed media	5
Seminars	6
Other	6

CO-OPERATIVE ACTIVITIES

Participation in co-operative activities is limited in scope to the most traditional practices and relatively few of the libraries reported extensive co-operation; this suggests that many units are working in relative isolation. Some libraries contribute to a union catalogue within a small sector locally. The most frequently used form of co-operation was inter-library lending within the country followed by Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) services which can only be interpreted as relating to sharing accessions lists.

While some respondents indicated programmes of co-operative acquisitions in the country the extent of duplication in the acquisition of material among libraries is not known and a resources survey is needed to throw light on this.

Around 20% of those responding in each case also participated in regional or international information systems and/or had links with regional and international organizations related to their area of specialization.

FINANCING

The survey attempted to gather information on whether or not the libraries received separate budgetary financing for the acquisition of books and other material. About 50% of the responding units stated that they had no separate budget for this purpose.

For 1984, most budgets for each form of material were for sums between $500 and $5,000. The total budget sum was not separately probed. Very few libraries received budget allocations of over $10,000 for any form of material. Most of the libraries indicated that they did not have access to extra budgetary financing. Table 11 illustrates.

Table 11
BUDGET ALLOCATIONS BY SIZE OF ALLOCATION
AND TYPE OF MATERIAL - 1984

Size of allocation ($TT)	Books	Periodicals	Other Materials
< - $ 500	4	9	8
$ 500 - $ 5000	21	12	10
$ 5000 - $ 10000	6	8	2
$10000 - $ 20000	9	13	4
$20000 - $ 50000	7	7	2
$50000 - $100000	4	4	2
> - $100000	4	2	1

TECHNICAL SERVICES

On the question of acquisitions, most of the material acquired was through purchase. There was some interest, though not unanimous, in centralized and/or co-operative acquisitions. Twenty-three (23) responses favoured centralized acquisitions while three (3) were not in favour. Thirty-three (33) responses favoured co-operative acquisitions while fourteen (14) were against. The returns indicated that material is selected by both the Librarian and the technical staff. The libraries mostly maintain catalogues of their contents. The fewest indications of any particular type of holding were in machine readable material. The Anglo-American cataloguing rules tend to be the most commonly used, outstripping in use any other rules by almost four (4) to one (1). Most of the catalogues used were in card form. Among the classification schemes used, UDC predominated thirteen (13) followed by Dewey with eight (8) and Library of Congress two (2). Several libraries reported using other special schemes.

Some interest in centralized cataloguing and processing was expressed, there being 61% of the responses in favour of centralization in this area. This is an area to be explored in the future.

TECHNICAL EQUIPMENT

Audio-visual, duplicating and photocopying equipment were most commonly held items of equipment. In order to meet greater and more time-critical demands for information, more of other types of equipment, for example, wordprocessing would seem to be needed. Libraries can make effective use of state-of-the-art technology, although at present very few local libraries are doing so (only 2 word processors reported) and future units of the library and information system being planned should be oriented more in this discretion.

Table 12 presents the responses on the types of equipment held.

Table 12
TYPES OF EQUIPMENT HELD

Type of Equipment	Responses
Audio-visual	64
Binding	28
Catalogue card duplicators	12
Duplicating machines	28
Micrographic equipment	11
Photocopiers	56
Photographic equipment	26
Printing equipment	17
Other	20

Although the responses indicate that a relatively large number of libraries possess binding equipment, the exact nature of that equipment was not specified. The resultant possibility of variability within that response urges caution in the use of that figure. Very few libraries have full-fledged binderies.

AUTOMATION

Because very few libraries are at present using automated processes, there were very few responses to the questions on the use of computer facilities. Only one responding library used computer facilities for external data base searching. While it is not necessary that external data bases be accessed by every information unit, the use of this facility and indeed of automated processes as a whole is a future need. It is therefore encouraging to note that nearly one third of those responding indicated plans for automation in the near future. Several of these plans are being realized since the survey with eight (8) microcomputer installations in special libraries in the country.

FURTHER STUDY

The survey, while not based on a scientifically sampled investigation, yielded results that are by and large in keeping with the feel for the information reality in the Republic of Trinidad and Tobago in the area of special libraries. Its findings should assist in the charting of a development path for information systems in the country.

Areas for in-depth and further study revealed in the process are as follows:

a. Additional manpower needs in relation to future plans.

b. Skills data for existing and future needs and related training programmes.

c. Resources surveys identifying gaps and overlaps.

d. Identification of user needs and their satisfaction.