UNION CATALOGUE OF PERIODICAL PUBLICATIONS

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[ Indicates the scope, structure and special features of the Union list, the World list and the Union catalogue ]

1 Introduction

The Indian Library Association has recently published with the assistance of Unesco the Union catalogue of learned periodical publications in South Asia. V 1. Physical and biological sciences* (=UC). This publication adopts a new technique. It is a classified catalogue with an alphabetical index. In this respect it differs from the following alphabetical catalogues:

1 Gregory (Winifred). Union list of serials in the libraries of the United States and Canada. Ed 2. 1943. (=UL); and


In the technique adopted, these publications form three distinctive types. They offer a basis for comparative study.

2 History

A short account of the development of the three catalogues will be useful for a comparative study.

21 UNION LIST

The Union list of serials was the result of a unique experiment in co-operative effort on a national scale by American libraries and an
enterprising publishing firm. The project was approved in 1917. After considerable experimentation the final compilation was started in 1924. The first edition of UL was published in 1927. It lists about 75,000 periodicals. The holdings of about 225 libraries are given. The holdings were brought upto 31 December 1924. Supplements were issued in 1931 and 1933.

The large acquisition programmes of the participating libraries and the urge to include the holdings of more libraries created a demand for a new edition. Work on the second edition was soon started. The Rockefeller Foundation gave a generous grant towards the editorial expenses of the new edition. This was published in 1943. It lists about 120,000 periodicals. The holdings of about 600 libraries are given. The holdings were brought upto 31 December 1940. A supplement was brought out in 1945.

Work on a new edition is now in progress.

22 WORLD LIST

In the twenties, the work of compiling a union catalogue of periodicals was also started in England. At the suggestion of Sir Sydney Harmer, a scheme for the preparation of a list of scientific periodicals was worked out by the Conjoint Board of Scientific Societies. The list was planned to cover only the current periodicals. The work of compilation was taken up by the British Museum. The first edition was issued in 1925. It lists about 25,000 periodicals. They are serially numbered. The list includes periodicals current during 1900 to 1921. A second volume giving the abbreviated titles of the periodicals and their location, was issued in 1927.

A single volumed second edition was issued in 1934. It lists more than 36,000 periodicals. The holdings of about 187 libraries are given. The list includes periodicals current during 1900 to 1933.

Work on the third edition was started in 1947. This was published in 1952. It lists more than 50,000 periodicals. The holdings of about 247 libraries are given. This edition includes
periodicals current during 1900 to 1950. Though WL was intended to be a list of current periodicals, in its present form it includes all periodicals current after 1900. It is now more a union catalogue than a current list. Its additional function as a list of abbreviated titles of periodicals has increased its usefulness beyond the scope of a union catalogue.

23 UNION CATALOGUE

The Library Service Section of the First All Asia Education Conference held in India in 1930 recommended to the Inter-University Board of India to compile a union catalogue of all publications held in University libraries. The Inter-University Board took the initiative and collected some returns. In 1933, the newly formed Indian Library Association decided to take up the compilation of Union catalogue of scientific periodicals held by Indian libraries. The Inter-University Board passed on to the Association the materials it had collected. The compilation work was started in 1936. The progress was slow during the War period. And unfortunately in 1947 all the returns received from the participating libraries were lost in Lahore.

In 1949 the Unesco Science Co-operation Office at Delhi wanted to prepare a union catalogue of learned periodicals held by libraries in South Asia. Naturally, it sought the help of the Indian Library Association. The work was started under the guidance of Dr. S.R. Ranganathan. Returns were received from about 200 libraries. It was proposed to issue a classified catalogue with an alphabetical index. In the beginning of 1950, a pilot fascicule covering mathematics and physics was circulated to elicit opinion. The suggestions received are examined by Dr. Ranganathan in his article on *Union catalogue of periodical publications* (see *Abgita* 1950, 1, 177-188).

The first volume of the *Union catalogue* was published in 1953. It covers physical and biological sciences. It lists about 5,000 periodicals. The holdings of about 200 libraries are given.

**Library Science**
3 TABULAR STATEMENT

The following table brings out the salient features of the three catalogues:

<table>
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<th>Coverage: Libraries</th>
<th>Periodicals</th>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Type of Catalogue</th>
<th>Entry Element</th>
<th>Entry of Sponsoring Body</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Alphabetisation</th>
<th>Information, about Volume, Year Index etc</th>
<th>Previous History</th>
<th>Library Number</th>
<th>Holdings</th>
<th>Special Features</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Union List</td>
<td>U.S.A. and Canada</td>
<td>Learned &amp; magazines</td>
<td>All subjects</td>
<td>Current &amp; Retrospective</td>
<td>Alphabetical</td>
<td>Sponsoring Body; or Title, wherever distinct or when there is no Sponsoring Body</td>
<td>Used as Entry Element only when distinct or when there is no Sponsoring Body</td>
<td>Strict adherence to all words, including articles, prepositions etc.</td>
<td>Gives Volumes, or Series and Volumes; Years; and Cumulative Index, if any</td>
<td>Change of name etc given only under the latest name; Occasionally gives entry under earlier names</td>
<td>Alphabetically by Geographical Area and Initials</td>
<td>Volume Number; Indicates Gaps</td>
<td>Minor Variations also indicated; Indicates also Photocopying facilities in libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>World List</td>
<td>Learned &amp; reports</td>
<td>Scientific subjects</td>
<td>Current after 1900</td>
<td>Alphabetical</td>
<td>Generally no entry for Sponsoring Body</td>
<td>Used as Entry Element</td>
<td>By significant words</td>
<td>Gives Years only</td>
<td>Entries given for all names after 1900 and linked up with cross references</td>
<td>Alphabetically by Geographical Area and Initials</td>
<td>Years only; Gaps not indicated</td>
<td>Abbreviations of titles of periodicals; National and International Congresses</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Union Catalogue</td>
<td>South Asia (Thailand, Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, Ceylon and India)</td>
<td>Learned &amp; reports</td>
<td>V.I. Physical and biological sciences</td>
<td>Current &amp; Retrospective</td>
<td>Classified with alphabetical index</td>
<td>Title</td>
<td>Class Number for the Classified Part; Subject, Title and Sponsoring Body for the Alphabetical Part</td>
<td>No distinction between Society &amp; Institution—Entry under name of the body; Govt. Dept. under Geographical area</td>
<td>By significant words; Foreign cognates consolidated under English equivalent</td>
<td>Gives Volumes, or Series and Volumes; Years; and Cumulative Index, if any</td>
<td>Complete history in the Class Number Entry in the Classified Part; Alphabetical Part has entries for all names</td>
<td>Systematically by Geographical Contiguity and Subject Volume Number or Year; Indicates Gaps as well as Incomplete Volumes</td>
<td>Classified featuring; Abbreviations according to context</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Coverage

The purpose of a union catalogue determines the nature of its coverage. The selection of a periodical publication for inclusion in a union catalogue is determined by some of the following factors:

1. Subjects to be covered
2. Standard: learned, popular magazine, children’s magazine, newspaper, etc
3. Geographical area to be covered
4. Participating libraries
5. Other factors like Language, Periodicity, or Time of Publication of a periodical.

41 Union List

UL covers all subjects. Besides learned periodicals, it includes also popular magazines, children’s magazines, some out of the way periodicals and even some series. It excludes government publications annual reports, almanacs, yearbooks, national and international congresses, house-organs, etc. It gives the holdings of all the participating libraries in USA and Canada. It includes both current and retrospective periodicals.

Regarding the standard of periodicals, UL includes all types. The inclusion of series along with periodicals is of doubtful value. Series consist of books. They do not come within the scope of periodical publications. Books in a series are generally cited by their author and title and not by the name of the series. UL has attempted to include only those series that are usually cited by the name of the series. This criterion is so elastic as to bring in even publisher’s series. The more appropriate place for giving series is in a union catalogue of books.

42 World List

WL covers scientific subjects. Besides learned periodicals, it includes also administrative reports, almanacs, international congresses, etc. It excludes popular magazines, children’s magazines, etc. It gives the holdings of all the participating libraries in the United...
Kingdom. It includes only periodicals current after 1900. But once a periodical is included on this basis, particulars about its previous history prior to 1900 are also given. It includes also titles of current periodicals even though not held by any of its participating libraries.

WL excludes all scientific periodicals not current after 1900. This is because it was primarily intended to be a list of current periodicals. However, when the first edition was published, the term ‘current’ was made to cover the period 1900 to 1921. When the second edition was published this period was further extended. The term ‘current’ covered 1900-1931. At the time of preparing the third edition, it was felt that the meaning of the term ‘current’ was being unduly strained. It was proposed to include only periodicals current during 1920-1950. But it was found that the cost of excluding the 1900-1919 periodicals from the catalogue would be much more than the cost of including them. So they were allowed to stay.

Though the WL was first intended to be a list of current periodicals, it has come to stay as a union catalogue. In order to increase its usefulness, it should be made retrospective. The number of scientific periodicals that have ceased publication prior to 1900 is not likely to be considerable. Since they will be held only by a few libraries, it is an important function of a union catalogue to include them for the benefit of a wider audience.

43 Union Catalogue

Volume 1 of UC covers only physical and biological sciences. Besides learned periodicals, it includes also administrative reports, yearbooks, international congresses, etc. It excludes popular magazines, children’s magazines, etc. It gives the holdings of all the participating libraries in the South Asian region, particularly Thailand, Indonesia, Malaya, Burma, Ceylon and India. It includes both current and retrospective periodicals.

In subject coverage, the scope of UC is similar to that of WL. Regarding the standard of periodicals also UC, follows more closely WL. However, UC includes like UL both current and retrospective periodicals.
Functions

The primary function of a union catalogue is to indicate the availability of a periodical if
1. the title of the periodical is known, or
2. the name of the sponsoring body is known, or
3. the subject covered by the periodical is known.

Changes in the career of a periodical may occur in the case of its title, or sponsoring body, or subject covered, or a combination of any of these. So an additional function of a union catalogue is to indicate all the vagaries and vicissitudes in the history of a periodical. It would be helpful if this information could be given at one place.

Similarly featuring of periodicals in a classified sequence would increase the usefulness of a union catalogue. This would highlight the strong and weak spots in the subject coverage of periodicals in the selected geographical area. This would also facilitate co-operation among participating libraries for subject specialisation.

51 Union List

UL arranges its entries in an alphabetical order. It meets title-approach and sponsoring-body-approach. It has no provision for subject-approach.

In a dictionary arrangement it is not possible to show all the variations in the history of a periodical in one place, except in an arbitrary way. For example, if the title of a periodical changes four times, where to indicate all the changes? To give complete information under all the four titles may be ideal but uneconomical. But if this has to be given in only one place, then an arbitrary choice has to be made. UL gives complete information only under the lastest name of the periodical. Occasionally cross reference entries are given under earlier names.

52 World List

WL also arranges its entries in an alphabetical order and meets only title-approach and sponsoring-body-approach. It has no provision for subject-approach. It does not provide complete in-
formation about the history of a periodical in one place. It gives separate entries for each change of name. Under each entry only relevant information is given. These entries are linked up by cross references. In WL to get a complete picture of the history of a periodical all its cross reference entries have to be looked up. It is rather tedious to go from one entry to another.

53 Union Catalogue

UC arranges its entries in a classified order according to Colon Classification. It has also got an alphabetical index for title, sponsoring body and subject. It thus provides for all the approaches. However, classified arrangement introduces an additional step in the location of a periodical. First one has to go to the alphabetical part and from there to the classified part for getting the information. But when one gets familiar with the arrangement, this additional step can be avoided.

The complete history of a periodical is brought together in the classified part under the class number of the periodical. But when there is change in the subject covered by a periodical, either due to splitting or amalgamation, then the information is scattered under the different subjects. Comparatively changes with regard to subject are not very common. For example, UC lists about 278 periodicals in General Science. Out of these only in 15 cases there has been change in subject due to splitting. The 15 periodicals split into 26 periodicals. But out of the 278 periodicals, in the case of 103 periodicals there has been change in title. The total change in name for the 103 periodicals is about 268. This shows that the change in the subject covered by a periodical is not common.

6 Alphabetisation

The three catalogues follow different procedures for purposes of alphabetisation.

61 Union List

UL takes into consideration all words, including articles, prepositions, etc., in alphabetisation. However, words like
Konigliche, Reale, Imperiale, etc., are abbreviated respectively to K, R, I, etc., and are ignored in alphabetisation. But in the case of the word Royal, it is given in full, particularly when it applies to British institutions, and is not ignored in alphabetisation. Titles with initials only are given at the beginning of the alphabet of their first letter.

Giving full weight in alphabetisation to all words, including articles and prepositions, in the title of a periodical makes location of a periodical rather difficult, particularly when it is in a foreign language. This difficulty is very real in UL, which lists more than 120,000 periodicals and which includes all the important foreign periodicals also. Slight variation in prepositions like de, d’, der, des, du etc. considerably alter the position of a periodical. Since one cannot be expected to know correctly the spelling of a title of a periodical in a foreign language, there is a chance of missing to locate a periodical though listed in the catalogue.

62 World List

WL takes into consideration only significant words for alphabetisation, ignoring articles, prepositions, etc., though given in the title. This facilitates considerably in location. In some cases, WL enters foreign cognate words under their corresponding English form. Titles with initials only are given at the beginning of the alphabet of their first letter.

In the case of Russian periodicals, titles are given in Cyrillic characters but alphabetised according to their English transliteration. It is difficult to see any advantage in such a procedure. This overlooks an important factor, namely that an alphabetical catalogue ought to use only one species of alphabets. Otherwise it would be ignoring the user to a certain extent. At the same time, WL gives the abbreviations of the titles of some Russian periodicals in the Roman alphabet according to their earlier English or French forms. This is also difficult to reconcile.

63 Union Catalogue

In the alphabetical part, UC gives only significant words and
in an abbreviated form. This facilitates easy location. Titles in initials are arranged in their appropriate places. Entries of foreign cognate words are consolidated under their corresponding English form.

7 Library Number

In the case of Library Number also the three catalogues follow different techniques.

UL groups libraries first by States, then by Cities and then by their names. It is alphabetical at each of these three stages.

WL groups libraries first by place or geographical area and then by their names. It is alphabetical at each of these two stages.

UC groups libraries by Country, then Region, then by Place and lastly by their subject of specialisation. The Principle of Geographical Contiguity is followed in the first two stages. In the third stage, cities are arranged alphabetically. In the last stage, the subjects are arranged systematically.

8 Special Features

UL gives details about minor variations and discrepancies in the history of a periodical. It also indicates in the list of libraries whether facilities are available for microfilming, photostating, etc.

WL gives abbreviations of titles of periodicals for purpose of citation. It has a separate section for international and national congresses together with an index for easy reference. Cross references are made compact by serially numbering the entries.

Classified arrangement of entries is the main feature of UC. In the alphabetical part abbreviation is resorted to according to context only. The Principle of Geographical Contiguity is used in the construction of Library Numbers.