The Organization of National Documentation and Information Services in Latin America, with Special Reference to Brazil*

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Latin America comprises the vast area that extends from the Rio Grande River between Mexico and the United States to Punta Arenas, Chile, the southern-most city in the Western hemisphere. Due to its vast territorial expanse, Latin America includes areas of high contrast geographically, socially, and politically. It includes countries with archaic structures in evolution and others in varying degrees of stability and achievement. According to Josefa E. Sabor, Latin America admits large differences in reference to its resources and its racial and cultural characteristics, and in addition to “that lack of uniformity is its extraordinary demographic growth, which, in general, is considered to be alarming: the population has doubled during the past thirty years; it will triple in the next forty years; and by the end of the century the population is expected to be in the neighborhood of 600 million.” The population also contrasts greatly; to a large extent it is indigenous and mestizo; however, in some areas it is largely European.

Scientific and technical progress, and, therefore, industrialization is adding to the necessity of systematizing and organizing documentation in Latin America. The history of documentation and the installation of centers of information is not uniform on the continent, and differs from country to country in accordance with economic, demographic, structural and social conditions.

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The history of centers of documentation and information in Latin America can be divided in the following manner: pre-1950 and post-1950. Thanks largely to the stimulus of UNESCO, the years 1950, 1952, and 1954 marked the organization of the Uruguayan and Mexican Centers of Scientific and Technical Documentation and the Instituto Brasileiro de Bibliografia e Documentação (IBBD—Brazilian Institute of Bibliography and Documentation).

At the 26th General Conference of FID held in Rio de Janeiro in 1960 the Comissão Latino-Americana da Federação Internacional de Documentação (Latin American Commission of the International Federation for Documentation) (FID/CLA) was created.

The following four works should be consulted in order to more fully understand the problems of documentation in Latin America: La bibliotecología Latinoamericana and Planeamiento de servicios bibliotecarios y de documentacion, both by Carlos Victor Penna; Aspects of Librarianship in Latin America by William Vernon Jackson; and Revisión del concepto de las funciones bibliotecarias a la luz de la planificación del desarrollo económico, social y cultural by Josefa E. Sabor.

The development of the centers of information, documentation, and specialized libraries in Latin America owes a great deal to the actions of international organizations on the continent, specifically, FID/CLA, UNESCO, and the Organization of American States (OEA). A summary of the activities of the international organizations follows:

**FID/CLA (Latin-American Commission of the International Federation for Documentation)**

*Creation:* The 26th General Conference of the International Federation for Documentation (FID) in Rio de Janeiro, July 22-31, 1960, in addition to other resolutions, decided to create the Latin-American Commission.

IBBD, national member of FID for Brazil, was to be the seat of the Secretary General of the Commission for the period from July 1960-December 1962. In 1963 the Secretariat was transferred to the National Research Council of Argentina, where it remained until October 1965.

*Objectives:* The by-laws of the Commission established the following objectives:
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1) To cooperate in spreading information about the purpose and the activities of FID to the other countries of the region;
2) To aid in the creation and development of documentation in the countries of Latin America; and
3) To coordinate the work of documentation in these countries.

Program: Based on the objectives of the Commission the following work program was planned and carried out by the Secretary of FID/CLA:

1) Stimulate the largest possible number of libraries and centers of documentation in Latin America through mutual cooperation in order to facilitate the exchange of necessary information and documentation to scientists, researchers and other interested people;
2) Organize a list of the principal libraries in Latin America in cooperation with existing national bibliographical centers. If possible, with the aid of UNESCO and the OEA;
3) Compile a collective catalog of technical and scientific journals existing in the principal libraries of Latin America with the cooperation of the national bibliographical centers;
4) Contribute to the development of relations among Latin American centers of information and documentation by means of scholarship grants and exchange of professors; and
5) Promote an annual meeting of representatives from the national centers of documentation and national bibliographical centers of Latin America and those interested in the works of the Commission.

Members: The national members of FID in the countries of Latin America are the members of the Commission. There are at present nine member countries and two associate member countries.

Meetings: 1) Mexico, November 28, 1960. Delegates attended from Mexico and Brazil. Observers attended from UNESCO, OEA, Argentina, Bolivia, Chile, Costa Rica, Cuba, Guatemala, Peru, Panama, and El Salvador.
2) Rio de Janeiro, November 20-22, 1961. Delegates attended from Mexico, Argentina, and Brazil. Observers attended from FID, UNESCO, Bolivia, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Ecuador, Guatemala, Mexico, Panama, Paraguay, Uruguay, and Venezuela.
3) Buenos Aires, October 9-12, 1962. Delegates attended from Brazil and Argentina. Observers attended from FID, UNESCO, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Panama, and Uruguay.

4) Montevideo, November 28-30, 1963. Delegates attended from Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Cuba, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Observers attended from FID, FIAB/SLA, OEA, and UNESCO.

5) Rio de Janeiro, November 28-30, 1964. Delegates attended from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, and Uruguay.

6) Santiago, Chile, June 10-12, 1965. Delegates attended from Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay.

7) Mexico City, August 28-31, 1967. Delegates attended from Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Uruguay, and Venezuela. Observers attended from FID, OEA, CINTERFOR, IICA, UNESCO, and the Latin American Union of Universities. At the Mexico meeting there was also the Congresso Regional da Documentação (Regional Congress of Documentation) which included the following topics: Present State of Documentation in Latin America; Training of Documentalists; Control, Organization and Exchange of Information in Latin America; Scientific and Technical Publications in Latin America; and the Latin American Committee of the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC).

Courses: From 1960 to 1964 there were five meetings for the training of librarians and documentalists, culminating in the Curso Regional Latino-Americano, under the auspices of UNESCO, Consejo Nacional de Investigaciones Científicas y Técnicas de Argentina, and FID/CLA.

Publications:


Norms Concerning Scientific Publications and Analytic Summaries. A commission of FID/ICSU/IFLA/ISO/UNESCO elaborated the “norms” to be applied in scientific publications in
addition to the “guide” for the preparation and publication of analytic summaries, whose adoption will contribute to bettering the presentation of Latin American scientific publications and will aid in disseminating production on the continent.

Future Publications: Among the projected publications of FID/CLA are:

- **Bibliography of Latin America** (BAL). The bibliography is being coordinated by the Biblioteca Nacional of Mexico. At its annual meetings FID/CLA has appealed to librarians of Latin American countries to collaborate in the undertaking.

- **Latin American Bibliography of Documentation.** This bibliography will be published separately in each country. The Bibliografia Brasileira de Documentação is published by IBBD.

- **Guide to Centers of Documentation in Latin America.** The fourth meeting of FID/CLA decided to publish a guide to the documentation centers in Latin America; the Centro de Documentación Científica de Argentina (CDA) was designated to organize it.

- **Collective Catalog of Latin American Periodicals** (CAPAL). Among the goals of FID/CLA expressed in its program of action is the regular publication of a Collective Catalog of Latin American Periodicals in order to facilitate the exchange among Latin American Libraries and aid in the greater use of the existing collections. The execution of the ambitious project depended on the collaboration of sixty-one libraries in seven countries of the region; the general coordination of the necessary duties of the undertaking fell to Brazil, which took charge of all the corresponding editorial work, and produced a two-volume publication. The first presentation of the Catalog was given at the third meeting of the Commission in Buenos Aires in 1963.

- **List of Information Services Concerning Scientific Translation in Spanish.** At the seventh meeting FID/CLA approved a resolution that SITCE (Avda. Rivadavia 1917, Buenos Aires, Argentina) prepare this list.

**UNESCO (United Nations Organization for Education Science and Culture)**

The following are the information centers founded in Latin America under the auspices of UNESCO:
1) Instituto Brasileiro de Bibliografia e Documentação (IBBD)

2) Instituto de Documentación e Información Científica y Técnica. Academia de Ciencias de la República de Cuba, Capitolio Nacional, Havana, Cuba. The Institute was created by decree in April of 1963, and counts on the assistance of UNESCO for its development. Like the research universities of the country, it operates in strict collaboration with other institutes of the Cuban Academy of Sciences. Director: Hector Touza Pulido.

3) Centro de Investigación y de Estudios del Instituto Politécnico Nacional, Departamento de Bibliotecas y Servicios Bibliográficos, Calle Enrico Martinez 24, Mexico City 1, D.F., Mexico. The Center initially was called the Centro de Documentación Científica y Técnica de México. It was created on November 9, 1950, by agreement between the Mexican government and UNESCO as part of the UNESCO programs of technical assistance. It maintained this character until February 1954, when the last representative of UNESCO finished his duties, and the Center was then definitively created by decree by the President of the Republic. The above name was then adopted after a reorganization in 1962.

4) Centro de Documentación Científica, Técnica y Económica, Biblioteca Nacional de Uruguay, Av. 18 de Julio 1790, Montevideo, Uruguay. The Center was created in 1953 in the Biblioteca Nacional under the auspices of UNESCO. At present it operates as part of the Departamento de Servicio Publico of the above-mentioned library. Director: Maria Luisa di Vita.

OEA (Organization of American States—Pan American Union)
The OEA was created in 1948 as a result of the inter-American system and as a direct consequence of the 9th International Conference of American States. OEA has contributed greatly to the development of library science and information services in Latin America. Among its important contributions are:

1. Assembléia dos Bibliotecários das Américas (Assembly of Librarians of the Americas). The Assembléia dos Bibliotecários das
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Américas took place in Washington in 1947. As part of the preparations for the assembly a list of inter-American conferences held prior to that date which dealt with the betterment of library services was compiled. It was published by the Library of Congress of the United States under the title Antecedentes bibliotecológicos interamericanos e internacionales: recopilados para la Asamblea de Bibliotecarios de América, 12 de mayo a 6 de junio de 1947.

2. Congresses, Conferences and Seminars.
   A. International Conferences: The OEA has released the resolutions, recommendations and conclusions of inter-American conferences relating to Library Science.
   B. Meetings of the Interamerican Cultural Council. The council has received resolutions relating to libraries which have been passed at various meetings of the OAS.
   D. Seminars concerning Acquisition of Latin American Bibliographic Materials. Thirteen seminars to study the problems of acquisition of bibliographic materials produced in Latin America took place under the auspices of the Pan American Union. The Latin American Cooperative Acquisitions Project (LACAP) is one result.
   E. Specialized Meetings. Technical Meeting of Agricultural Librarians of Latin America, Turrialba, Costa Rica, 1953; and a seminar concerning the organization of scientific investigations in Latin America, Caracas, Venezuela, 1960.
   F. Schools of Library Science and Documentation. The Pan American Union published the second edition of Guide to Schools and Courses of Library Science in Latin America (Bibliographic Series No. 36) in 1959, compiled by Emma Linares. The first edition was compiled in 1951 by Carlos Victor Penna and Marietta Daniels. The second edition shows that 125 courses were offered in Latin America, eighty of a temporary character and forty-five of a permanent character. The first edition lists fifty courses, of which eight were permanent and twenty-two temporary. The third edition of this guide compiled by Carmen Rovira was issued in 1964.
   G. Publications. The program of publication by the Pan Amer-
ican Union under the direction of Marietta Daniels Shepard in the area of library science is significant. In addition to the series, *Cuadernos Bibliotecológicos* and *Estudios Bibliotecarios*, there have been numerous monographs. The most representative works on American library science have been translated into Portuguese and Spanish. This program of publications has contributed to the preparation of librarians and documentalists in all the countries of Latin America, by augmenting the inadequate technical literature produced in each country.

**Present Situation in Brazil**

The history of modern library science and documentation in Brazil dates from the 1930's. Prior to that time Brazilian library science was characterized by a marked European influence. Edson Nery da Fonseca paraphrasing Gilberto Freyre affirms that the substitution of the European system by the quasi-European system of the United States of America began in São Paulo, where the second course of library science was instituted under the auspices of a North American secondary school, the Instituto Mackenzie (now a university).

The first course of library science in Brazil was created by the Biblioteca Nacional in 1911. This course is still being given, having gone through various reforms and modernizations.

**Professional Training.** At present there exist thirteen courses of library science and documentation in Brazil; these courses are offered through universities, the most recently established is at the University of Brasília which established its Faculdade de Biblioteconomia e Informação Científica in 1964.

These schools of library science have trained the new generation of librarians who were immediately employed by specialized libraries as a consequence of the country's technical-scientific information requirements.

**Instituto Brasileiro de Bibliografia e Documentação (Brazilian Bibliographic and Documentation Institute).** IBBD has the following goals within the Conselho Nacional de Pesquisas (National Research Council):

a) to promote the creation and development of specialized bibliographic and documentation services;

b) to stimulate exchange between libraries and documentation centers on the national and international level; and
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c) to initiate and coordinate the better uses of the resources existing in libraries and documentation centers of the country concentrating especially on the information needs of scientific and technological researchers.

In the absence of a widespread climate for intellectual research in Brazil, the Instituto Brasileiro de Bibliografia e Documentacão is bringing together the operations of specialized centers and those peculiar to general bibliographic centers, in addition to being the largest specialized documentation library in Brazil. Its goal is to facilitate not only the work of scientific, technical and industrial institutions, but also to perfect library science in general, which is fundamental in developing scientific research and higher education in Brazil.

Through the Seção de Informações e Intercâmbio do Serviço de Informações Técnico-Científicas (Information and Exchange Section of the Technical-Scientific Information Service), IBBD continues to develop the exchange of information and publications between scientific and technical institutions and national and international documentation centers.

The contribution of IBBD in the program of developing information and documentation services is evident in the following activities:

a) the organization of the Catálogo Coletivo Nacional de Livros e Periódicos (Collective National Catalog of Books and Periodicals);

b) the publication of a current bibliography in the fields of the social sciences, mathematics, physics, chemistry, medicine, botany, zoology, nuclear energy, and documentation in Brazil.

c) the publication of Periódicos Brasileiros de Cultura (Brazilian Cultural Periodicals), a work listing a large majority of the current Brazilian periodical publications and valuable for use in periodical exchange; and

d) the publication of Bibliotecas Especializadas Brasileiras: guia para intercâmbio Bibliográfico (Specialized Libraries in Brazil: Guide to Bibliographic Exchange), 1962. The preface states: “In order to aid in widening the scope of cooperation which ought to exist between libraries, through such methods as, exchange of bibliographic information, lending between libraries, exchange of microfilms or other types of reproductions, centralized purchasing, cooperative acquisition, union catalogs, etc.” This Guide will be
published annually in new editions which have been corrected and brought up-to-date so that there may be effective collaboration on the part of the libraries wishing to take part in the information services available. It will also serve as a positive source for the exchange of publications.

Specialized Libraries in Brazil

With the publication of Bibliotecas Especializadas Brasileiras in 1962, IBBD made a survey of the specialized libraries and information services in Brazil. It based its survey on the Anuários Estatísticos do Brazil (Annual Statistics of Brazil) and on the Guia das Bibliotecas do Instituto Nacional do Livro (Library Guide of the National Book Institute).

This Guide includes 5,805 libraries with the following holdings in volumes:

a) less than 500 volumes: 3,849
b) between 500 and 1,000 volumes: 864
c) between 1,000 and 5,000 volumes: 876
d) between 5,000 and 10,000 volumes: 106
e) between 10,000 and 20,000 volumes: 58
f) between 20,000 and 50,000 volumes: 41
g) between 50,000 and 100,000 volumes: 9
h) between 100,000 and 500,000 volumes: 1
i) more than 1,500,000 volumes: 1

The Institute investigated the work carried on by specialized libraries having more than 1,000 volumes and studied the possibilities of their increased service through cooperation. Considered as a basic condition for inclusion in the Guide was that they cooperate in the national program of bibliographic exchange by participating in interlibrary lending, facilitate in photocopying their collections, collaborate with the Serviço de Intercâmbio de Catalogação (Service of Exchange), contribute to the composition of the Catálogo Coletivo Nacional (Collective National Catalog), and so on. After evaluating this list, IBBD included 408 of the libraries appearing in the Guide in a classified arrangement in accordance with the Dewey Decimal System.

Courses and Seminars on Bibliographic Research

Having recognized the lack of trained personnel to direct the documentation centers and specialized libraries in Brazil, the IBBD
initiated a series of courses and seminars to train personnel in bibliographic research. The following are among the courses which the Institute has promoted since 1955: a course of bibliographic research in physical, mathematical and medical sciences (1955-57); a course on modern methods of documentation (1958); a course on bibliographic research in technology (1959-61); a course on bibliographic research in medical sciences (1962); and a course on bibliographic research in agricultural sciences (1963).

Beginning in 1964 the courses of the IBBD were given under the general heading “Course of Scientific Documentation” (with many specialized areas) in conjunction with the University of Brazil as a postgraduate study. These have been given on an annual basis for Brazilians as well as students from other Latin American countries. The course in 1964 was concerned with technology and in 1965 with mathematics and physics.

IBBD as the coordinating body for the specialized libraries of Brazil also promoted a series of seminars in Rio de Janeiro from 1962 to 1964, bringing together the libraries according to their subject interests to pursue courses of bibliographic research and scientific documentation.

Regional Bibliographical Information Centers in Brazil

In order to provide information in all parts of the nation a series of twelve regional centers have been established. Many of these are associated with the Brazilian universities in such states as Bahia, Ceará, Minas Gerais, Paraná, Pará and São Paulo. Each one is active in coordinating documentation work in the region.

Critical Analysis and Fundamental Problems

The development of documentation centers and information services in Latin America is directly dependent upon:

1) training and specialization of personnel of high caliber in areas of scientific information;
2) national and international coordination of existing centers;
3) regional and local planning in order to create centers in areas of specialization;
4) establishment of research programs in documentation in order to perfect existing services and provide for more efficient use of information;

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5) cooperation of the bodies of documentation in Latin America through the Latin-American Commission (FID/CLA) and the Commission for the Study of Documentation in Underdeveloped Countries of the FID;

6) systematic listing and description of available bibliographic and information resources. The organization of scientific information in Latin America demands the control of the existing documentation. It is of great importance to organize that which has been written, especially with respect to the natural sciences and technology so that those who work in these fields can inform themselves quickly and precisely of that which has been done.

It is evident that the development of scientific and technological information depends on the organization of the existing bibliographical resources in each country; perfecting the activities of the specialized libraries and documentation centers, especially on the local, national and international levels; and exchange between research organizations and information and documentation centers.

In the near future FID/CLA, by means of coordinating national centers, expects to have a network of perfected and efficient scientific and technical information covering all of Latin America.

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