

The International Coalition On Newspapers

American and British libraries began facing problems of crisis proportions concerning domestic newspapers in the 1950s, which resulted in the formation of the United States Newspaper Project (USNP) in the U.S. and NEWSPLAN in Great Britain. The library community now confronts an even larger-scale crisis with foreign newspapers held in major research libraries in the U.S. and abroad. Problems range from difficult access and dismal bibliographic control to challenges of storage and preservation of these materials.

The International Coalition on Newspapers (ICON) was conceived to address this foreign newspaper crisis in libraries around the world. ICON is a multi-institutional cooperative effort to increase the availability of foreign newspaper collections by improving both bibliographic and physical access to these resources, and to preserve global cultural heritage through preservation of foreign newspaper collections held in the United States and abroad. ICON's goals are international, collaborative, long-term, and multiphased.

The Center for Research Libraries (CRL), acting as the managing institution for ICON, has begun implementing a strategic plan for this cooperative effort. One of the first priorities for ICON is the development of a Union List of International Newspapers, to be designed and maintained by OCLC. The initial Union List will contain over 25,000 records of foreign newspapers held by charter members of ICON, and will continue to expand over time.

Simultaneously, ICON is employing a flexible cooperative model to prepare several pilot preservation projects of foreign newspaper titles. Using the Union List as a tool for prioritization and selection, ICON will identify titles in need of preservation and pursue funding opportunities towards this aim.

CRL will be inviting a core group of institutions with notable collections of foreign newspapers to become charter ICON members and take part in project activities, and would welcome inquiries about participation from interested institutions. ICON will also seek the involvement of key sectors of the information community: academic institutions, research and national libraries, scholarly and professional societies, commercial publishers and micropublishers, and funding agencies.

For more information on ICON and its activities, please visit <http://www.crl.edu/info/icon/icon.htm>, or contact:

Milton T. Wolf
Senior Vice President for Collection Programs
The Center for Research Libraries
6050 South Kenwood Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637-2804
Phone: (773) 955-4545 x334
Fax: (773) 955-4339
Email: wolf@crlmail.uchicago.edu



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