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<td>1991</td>
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Chulalinet: A Thai University Library Network

By

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Chulalinet
A Thai University Library Network

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ABSTRACT

Chulalinet is one of the two university networks set up in Thailand. Though both networks are still developing at the very early stage of introducing new information technology to library services, they represent significant efforts to move into the stage of automated library system.

The primary function of CHULALINET is to create a common database on books and other forms of publications located in 21 independent libraries at Chulalongkorn university. The actual work being planned and done for phase 1 (1989-1991) includes the completion of two databases on CUMARC format; one on books of 230,000 English records and the other on union list of serial titles with 14,000 records. Acquisition of an integrated library automation system is expected at the beginning of phase 2 (1992-1995) in order to accommodate both databases and other new ones.

In the past three years, library personnel and users were prepared to familiarize with this computerized information technology by the services of 20 purchased CD-ROM databases. It is anticipated that the CUNET (Chulalongkorn University Campus Network), a high speed "fiber optic backbone" communication campus network being installed at Chulalongkorn University will facilitate the development of the CHULALINET. It is expected that CHULALINET will be an effective automated library system to serve the needs at Chulalongkorn university and local community and open its linkage to other regional networks.

Thailand shares the pressing need of the world community to automate its library system to cope with the rapid expanded volume of literatures in the last two decades. Librarians have problems to keep pace with the growth of information in all disciplines which exhausted their existing facilities. The evolutionized development of computer technology in the last decade has in fact provided a realistic hope for the solution. Libraries, of the higher educational institutions, are among those very first organization that see the application of modern information technology essential for their function.

'PULINET' and 'CHULALINET' are the two university library networks initiated in response to such call. Both networks are still developing at the early stage.

PULINET (The Provincial University Library Network) is the project participated by 5 provincial university libraries. It started in 1982 with the financial and technical supports of the foreign aids. The center of this network is located at the library on the main campus of Chiangmai university. Personal computers are being used to serve its members in this network; exchanges of information are still in the form of passing PC-computer diskettes.
CHULALINET (Chulalongkorn University Library Network) is the project set up by Chulalongkorn university in 1989. Twenty one libraries from various faculties and institutes in the university are parts of this network. Humanities and social sciences, science and technology, and biological sciences are the 3 disciplinary areas that this network has been serving. The university has committed full support to this project both in term of policy and budget. The ultimate goal is aiming at having a modern and comprehensive electronic library system to serve the needs of university faculty members, researchers and students. A full exploitation of the advanced communication technologies is expected so that users can have access to all accessible information that is needed via the network without physically presence at the library.

Three sets of objective have been used to serve as guideline for project implementations are as follows:

1. to modernize the university library system
2. to improve the user access to library resources by providing a better facility for resource sharing and
3. to improve the library services as a whole.

The working plan for implementing this project has been divided into two phases.

Phase 1 (1989-1991) is to create a book database for English by retrospective conversion and to create a union list of serials database

Phase 2 (1992-1995) is to create other databases, e.g., databases for Thai books, periodical indexing (Thai and English), thesis and bibliographic account of the researches.

The successful implementation of phase 1 (the first 3 years) includes
1. CUMARC, the standardization method for bibliographic data, is utilized among the collaborating members by this adapted version of the USMARC and International Standard Organization. (ISO 2709) formats.
2. The database of English books has been completed for 230,000 records, partly obtained by original catalogings and downloading from CD-ROM and LaserQuest.
3. The union list of serial database has been created to cover 14,000 records.
4. CHULALINET subscribes some CD-ROM such as LaserQuest to facilitate its book database. There are now 20 titles of CD-ROM in Chulalongkorn university. They are DAO, ERIC, SCI, SSCI, ABI/INFORM, APS, CASSIS/CD-ROM, ESPACE, PATENTIMAGE, PSYCLIT, NTIS, POPLINE, LIFE SCIENCES, MEDLINE, ULRICH, COMPENDEX PLUS, CAB ABSTRACTS, AGRICOLA and AGRIS.
5. Study is on the way to select an integrated library automation systems on both hardware and software for the network to replace the Mini-micro CDS/ISI software which is currently in use. The decision among those contesters, DRA, DYNIX and INNOPAC is expected in September 1991.

In conclusion CHULALINET has achieved a satisfactory success in receiving enthusiastic cooperation and support from all parties concerned. University executives have committed both financial and continued moral support. Librarians have been dedicating their hard working attitude with team spirit and taking full responsibilities are playing an essential part in its development. From the achievement of CHULALINET phase 1, it is anticipated that CHULALINET phase 2 should be effectively progressed to benefit not only the local scholars but also those in the international arena.

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