**Council on East Asian Libraries**

**Association for Asian Studies**

**Electronic Resources: Librarians and Vendors Round Table Minutes**

Prepared by Ts-Ching Kao, Mieko Mazza (ERMB Task Force member),

and other ERMB members

9:30-11:00 pm

Thursday, March 27

Liberty Ballroom C

Philadelphia Marriott Downtown

**Opening Remarks**

Peter Zhou, Moderator and Outgoing President, CEAL

With the burgeoning electronic content coming to East Asian libraries and their users, much metadata is now being created and supplied by vendors. Therefore, it is critical to maintain a dialog between vendors/information providers and the libraries who will acquire such content. Vendors need to regard themselves as partners and collaborators with East Asian libraries in this process.

The issues of metadata standards and their requirements extend beyond the realm of technical processing. As a matter of fact, those issues touch all aspects of collection development, management and user service. Therefore, CEAL various committee chairs decided to hold this joint meeting to examine those issues collectively.

This round table is the beginning of such explorations and discussions. We hope they will lead to tangible outcomes and results. CEAL Executive Board has appointed a Task Force to initiate the discussions, investigate the issues, and propose solutions.

[**Issues and standards**](http://www.eastasianlib.org/ctp/Meetings/2014/RoundTable/CW%20Thursday%20ERMB%20RoundTable%20Standard%20and%20Issues%204-03-2014.pptx)

Shi Deng, Chair, CTP

Chengzhi Wang, Co-chair, CEAL Task Force on Metadata Standards and Best Practices for East Asian Electronic Resources

Bie-hwa Ma, Co-Chair, CEAL Task Force on Metadata Standards and Best Practices for East Asian Electronic Resources

**Needs and requirements**

[**Susan Xue**](http://www.eastasianlib.org/ctp/Meetings/2014/RoundTable/Susan%20ER%20Round%20Table%20Presentation_3.27.pptx)**, Chair, Committee on Chinese Materials**

**Setsuko Noguchi, Chair, Committee on Japanese Materials**

* + Japanese e-resources are still too immature to discuss in detail. Biggest issue is that we don’t have many resources and awareness of e-resources and metadata.
  + We have almost no big commercial e-resources on contents.
  + Most Japanese e-resources do not have metadata or, even if they do, only poor metadata, or metadata standards that differ from one another.
  + Lack of availability: We have index databases, but no full-text databases.
  + We have a very small number of e-books and e-journals available compared to China and Korea. Very few new academic titles are being published as e-books, because a majority of those have been published in paper format already and many libraries acquired them in print format already. Therefore libraries do not need to buy e-book versions.
  + Metadata functions: About 7,000 e-books on science are available. Availability of MARC records are not consistent, meaning many vendors don’t provide MARC records. There are some good MARC records with poor interface functions. Even if they have good MARC records available, sometimes they have really poor interface functions which negatively impact efficient search results.
  + There are few aggregated databases available. These databases contain no direct links to contents for individual titles. However, MARC records are provided for some of them. Some databases provide metadata in discovery tools but we haven’t really investigated it yet.
  + Lack of communication: even when we have contents updates, we don’t get English notes from the vendors/publishers. The update information comes to Japanese Studies Librarians so sometimes we have to communicate with the e-resources librarians. The question is, who is responsible for communicating with e-resources librarians about these updates?
  + Future accessibility: we hope to have more efficient, one-stop search functions. We hope to have big databases that link to everything and users can click on one and get e-resources journals and databases, link resolvers, discovery services, all available from one-stop search.

[**Yunah Sung**](http://www.eastasianlib.org/ctp/Meetings/2014/RoundTable/Electronic%20Resources%20-%20CKM%202014.pptx)**, Chair, Committee on Korean Materials**

**Jidong Yang, Chair, Committee on Public Services**

* + The discoverability of ever-increasing numbers of e-resources is crucial but currently poses serious problems in our library catalogs. Many American companies (such as Serials Solutions and EBSCO) are trying to incorporate East Asian e-resources materials into their indexes. However, there are a lot of hurdles of cooperation between the East Asian companies and companies located in the United States. Some problems are technical: for example, romanization is still very important for CJK e-resources. However, most metadata generated in East Asian countries are only in original CJK scripts. To romanize such a huge amount of metadata is very difficult for American companies. Also, metadata standards are very different from one country to another, even though some vendors from the East Asian countries are quite willing to work with the US companies.
  + It’s a very complicated issue and I believe the improvement of East Asian e-resources discovery is beyond control of East Asian Studies librarians. We try to push vendors to work together to find solutions for us. The US market is relatively small for the East Asian companies. Their biggest markets are in East Asian countries. In the meantime, the best thing to do is to keep our voices heard by the vendors and try to let them see the commercial benefits of providing better indexing.

**Open discussion: vendors and CEAL members**

**Question #1**: The library’s typical model is to provide users the access to resources via loading metadata, such as MARC records, into OPAC. Sometimes libraries also provide another layer of discovery tools to facilitate resource discovery. However, considering the large amount of metadata for the electronic resources, is the current model and infrastructure still adequate?

**Answer #1**: From aggregators’ point of view, it is not financially viable to provide metadata to discovery tool vendors. The reason is the risk of revenue loss because it would allow users to bypass aggregators’ products and access the electronic resources directly. It might affect the cooperation with publishers. In addition to working on metadata creation, this particular aggregator has been working on other solutions to facilitate resource discovery for both Chinese and foreign language electronic resources.

**Question#2**: Are English language electronic resources aggregators concerned with the same issue?

**Answer#2**: Most of them, such as EBSCO, do not share the same problem because they are electronic resources publishers. In his opinion, giving out metadata is detrimental to his company’s livelihood.

**Question#3**: Does it mean that creating metadata is considered as one type of value added-services therefore aggregators should be compensated?

**Answer#3**: Creating metadata is very expensive. So, if such investment is made, it is reasonable for aggregators to expect to be compensated.

**Comment#1**: It seems making metadata available does not necessarily mean that users will bypass aggregators’ own interface/product.

**Comment#2**: Discovery tool vendors, such as SUMMON, expect metadata at the article level, which aggregator have invested a lot to produce. So, some aggregators, such as CNKI, offer other mechanism in place of metadata to facilitate resource discovery.

**Question#4**: There seems to be various practices when it comes to facilitating resource discovery among aggregators. How come some aggregators, such as WANFANG, can provide metadata while others can’t?

**Comment#3**: I suspect some aggregators have fear over risk of revenue loss as a result of metadata provision. I think the fear is rather psychological than evidence-based. It is commonly agreed that better metadata facilitates better resource discovery and, consequently, higher use of resources. I hope aggregators will reconsider their reservation regarding providing metadata.

**Answer#4**: In this aggregator’s opinion, providing metadata is harmful to aggregators’ business. Besides, this aggregator has offered other solutions to make up for lack of MARC records. They responded to some customers’ complaints by providing alternatives. In addition, they are willing to work with customers to figure out more solutions.

**Question#5**: Could it be something in the contracts that this particular aggregator signed with content providers, such as publishers, that makes them hesitate to provide metadata to customers?

**Answer#6**: Contracts give them the copyrights but not the content.

**Comment#4**: There are other discovery tools outside Summon that don't have to store cache.

**Comment#5**: In fact, aggregators in U.S. are facing similar challenges as their counterparts in foreign countries.

**Comment#6**: Aggregators, such as CNKI, are in the driver seat when it comes to metadata provision. They have the power to determine how much/little metadata they want to offer to discovery tool vendors.

**Comment#7**: At this moment, there is still no revenue from providing metadata to discovery tools providers. But, the whole point is to provide easier access for users. This particular aggregator is still trying to figure out a way to recover the cost and welcomes ideas from the audience.

**Comment#8**: The concern for metadata creation cost recovery is also an issue for U.S. aggregators. For now, aggregators are bearing the costs. But, sooner or later, they need to find a way to solve this issue.

**Comment#9**: This aggregator agrees with other aggregators.

**Comment#10**: (After a demo of accessing Korean electronic resources via one library’s Summon, it shows that this particular Korean aggregator does allow the SUMMON to use their metadata. In addition, it is brought to the attention of the audience that it is hard to expect users to go through multiple websites/interfaces to get to resources.)

**Comment#11**: When my company tried to work with an aggregator on providing metadata, we encountered difficulty due to the aggregator’s lack of knowledge of metadata creation. In addition, the complexity of standards also makes it difficult to follow. So, one key issue is to find a way to get all stakeholders, including publishers and aggregators, to work together to figure out the solution.

**Summary and next steps**

**Ellen Hammond (CEAL president):** She stated to the effect that in the changed economy and information age, there are increasing pressures for libraries to be more accountable. We heard about some vendors’ bottom line mentality during the session. But, we, the libraries, also have the bottom line mentality of which vendors should be aware.

**Peter Zhou (outgoing president)**: We need to continue the conversation among stakeholders to find out a solution that will not only benefit all parties but also, mostly importantly, enhance access for users.