

Joint statement by the Committee of Chinese Materials of the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL CCM), the European Association of Sinological Librarians (EASL), the UK China Library Group, and the Society for Chinese Studies Librarians (SCSL) regarding the recent suspension of access to certain CNKI digital resources from the People's Republic of China.

Addressed to: China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), Beijing, its parent company TKN (Tongfang Knowledge Network), Beijing and its North American and UK distributor East View Information Services, Minneapolis.

May 2023

Background:

In March 2023, the Cybersecurity Administration of China (CAC) imposed new oversight requirements on specific content types appearing in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI), China's largest provider of digitized academic content across all fields of research.

From April 1st, 2023, full text downloads of four content types - dissertations/theses, conference proceedings, patents, and statistics - have been temporarily suspended [see Appendix A]. This follows access limitations to subsets of another CNKI product, the China Academic Journals (CAJ) database, due to copyright issues resulting from China's State Administration for Market Regulation's antitrust investigation into CNKI launched in May 2022.

CNKI resources are of central importance for the study of China and East Asia in the Humanities and Social Sciences, as well as research in STEM subjects published in the PRC.

We, the signing professional organisations, would like to express our unstinting commitment to the importance of reliable long-term access to scholarly information, and our deep concern over the detrimental effects of the current suspension on research and teaching globally, especially in multi-disciplinary Chinese studies. We also deplore the unprecedented step of suspending access to material subscribed to by libraries within an active subscription period or that is fully licensed and owned in perpetuity by libraries.

We call on all parties involved to:

- Provide transparent and prompt communication, including a clear timeline for the current suspension.
- Reinstate full access to all subscribed or legally owned content as soon as possible.
- Provide libraries with full details of any materials to which access will no longer be available as a result of these on-going changes.
- Cease the deletion of information about materials that have been removed from the actual database indexes, thus allowing researchers to still be able to find out that material exists even if it can no longer be accessed and/or downloaded.
- Avoid any similar suspension of services in the future by adhering to copyright laws.
- Fulfill the obligations stipulated in the contracts signed with the libraries, bear the corresponding liability for breach of contract, and compensate the libraries for any losses in access.

We also urge all stakeholders in the research, commercial, and diplomatic sectors to work together to mitigate the potentially dire and long-term consequences of this situation on the entire spectrum of teaching and research in our respective countries.

The Committee of Chinese Materials of the Council on East Asian Libraries (CEAL CCM)
 The European Association of Sinological Librarians (EASL)
 The Society for Chinese Studies Librarians (SCSL)
 The UK China Library Group

Appendix A:

Notice: Chinese Regulatory Actions to Impact Access

In March 2023, the Cybersecurity Administration of China (CAC) imposed new oversight requirements on specific content types appearing in the China National Knowledge Infrastructure (CNKI). Due to these requirements, full text downloads of four content types will be temporarily suspended: dissertations, conference proceedings, patents, and statistics. Academic journals, newspapers, and numerous other content types are not being impacted. Please note, the suspension will take effect on March 31, 2023 12:00 pm Eastern Time, corresponding to the action occurring April 1 in the People's Republic of China. Questions? Please contact us at info@eastview.com.

Legend Comprehensive Database Subject Database

Unimpacted Databases	Full-text Downloads Temporarily Suspended Note: Discovery via browse and search, citations and abstracts data, and ongoing updates will continue during suspension.	Platform-wide Suspension Note: No access to citations and abstracts or any other features available during suspension.
China Academic Journals (CAJ)	China Doctoral Dissertations (CDMD-CDFD)	China Statistical Yearbooks (CSYD)**
Century Journals Project (CJP)	China Master's Theses (CDMD-CMFD)	National Population Census of China Database (NPCC)
China Government Gazettes (CGGD)	China Conference Proceedings (CPCD-CPFD)	China Legal Knowledge (CLKD)
China Monographic Serials (CMSD)	International Conference Proceedings (CPCD-IFPD)	Traditional Chinese Medicine (TCMD)
China Core Newspapers (CCND)	China Patents (SCPD)	Applied Medicine (LCZL)
China Yearbooks (CYFD)		Chinese Hospitals Knowledgebase (CHKD)
China Reference Works (CRWO)		Scholarly Citations Database (GCD)
China Art Digital Library (CADT)		
Chinese Primary Education Journals (CFJD)		
CNKI E-Books		
Academic Reference (AR)*		

*The majority of content in Academic Reference (AR) will remain accessible. In the case of dissertations and conference proceedings within AR, only abstracts and indexing will be accessible for the time being.

**Subscribers of China Statistical Yearbooks (CSYD) are entitled to free access to the China Yearbooks (CYFD) database, which contains the statistics appearing in CSYD. CYFD presents statistical yearbooks as downloadable PDF (no XLS or CSV formats).



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