SOUTH PACIFIC COMMISSION

EIGHTEENTH REGIONAL TECHNICAL MEETING ON FISHERIES
(Noumea, New Caledonia, 4-8 August 1986)

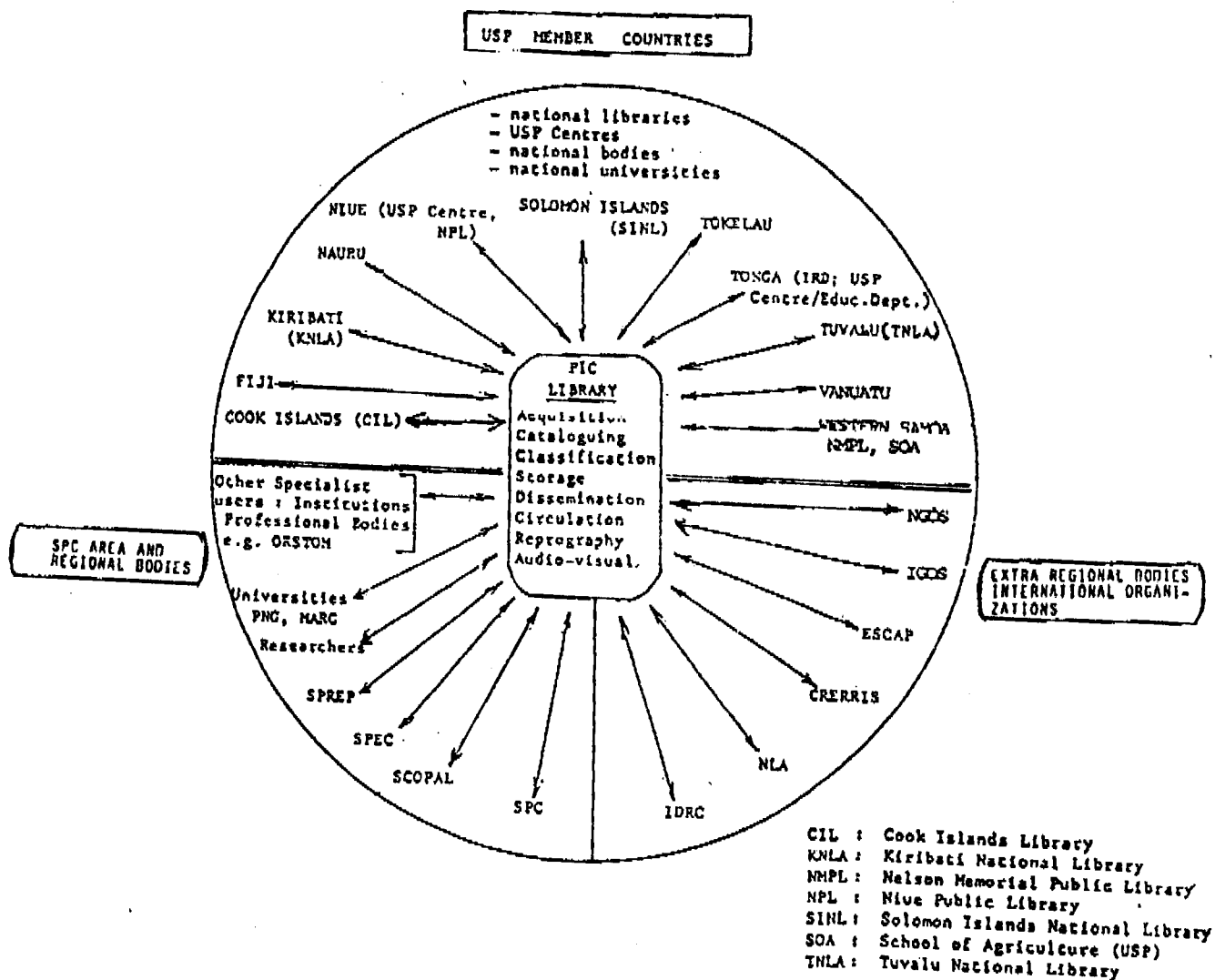THE PACIFIC INFORMATION CENTRE (PIC)

Paper prepared by
Esther Wininamaori Williams
University Librarian, USP

The PACIFIC INFORMATION CENTER (PIC) was established in 1983 at the University of the South Pacific with funding from the International Development Research Centre (IDRC) Canada. Phase I of the project ended in April 1986. PIC is now into Phase II, 1986-1989, with funding from the same source and USP absorbing part of the costs.

Since its establishment the University has been able to improve its information services to the region, initiate a number of significant information related activities, concentrate and continue to improve training of regional people in library and information techniques, and increase considerably the intake of Pacific material to the collection. Furthermore, it has influenced and added to the development of the collections of the focal points and at the same time encouraged more effective communication between the regional librarians. No doubt the PIC project has been an instrument of c-ooperation and resource sharing highlighting the persistent problems that exist in the region for library development and the modest achievements in user awareness of the importance of information to national development planning and research.

PIC's EMERGING ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

A Summary of the Structure

USP MEMBER COUNTRIES

- national libraries
- USP Centres
- national bodies
- national universities

NIUE (USP Centre, NPL)
NAURU
KIRIBATI (KNLA)
FIJI
COOK ISLANDS (CIL)
Other Specialist users : Institutions Professional Bodies e.g. ORSTOM
Universities PNG, MARC
Researchers
SPREP
SPEC
SCOPAL
SPC

SOLOMON ISLANDS (SIHL)
TOKELAU
TONGA (IRD; USP Centre/Educ.Dept.)
TUVALU(TNLA)
VANUATU
WESTERN SAMOA NMPL, SOA

PIC LIBRARY
Acquisition
Cataloguing
Classification
Storage
Dissemination
Circulation
Reprography
Audio-visual.

NGOs
IGOS
ESCAP
CRERRIS
NLA
IDRC

SPC AREA AND REGIONAL BODIES

EXTRA REGIONAL BODIES INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

CIL : Cook Islands Library
KNLA : Kiribati National Library
NMPL : Nelson Memorial Public Library
NPL : Niue Public Library
SIHL : Solomon Islands National Library
SOA : School of Agriculture (USP)
TNLA : Tuvalu National Library

Of the USP countries, national focal points are in the Cook Islands, Fiji, Tonga, Western Samoa, Solomon Islands, Kiribati, Tuvalu. Vanuatu and American Samoa have been approached to participate in PIC.

PIC AND OTHER REGIONAL BODIES

PIC co-operates extensively with the South Pacific Commission (SPC) and the South Pacific Bureau for Economic Cooperation (SPEC). SPC continues to send to PIC all its entries for inclusion in PIC publications, Pacific publications and SPC publications. PIC, SPC and SPEC have in the past assisted with the preparation of a number of papers on information for presentation at regional meetings. These included:

1. Information networks in the South Pacific for the Rural Technology Workshop, held in Tonga, 11-15 June, 1984.

2. Seventh Regional Conference of Permanent heads of Agricultural and Livestock Production Services held in New Caledonia 12-16 November, 1984.

3. Promotion of Information Services for the region for the FID/CAO 8th General Assembly and Congress held in Melbourne 23-29 November, 1984.

4. Paper on information for marine resources, Commonwealth Group of Experts on Ocean Management. October, 1984.

PIC also co-operates with:

. The South Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), Noumea, New Caledonia.
PIC is compiling a number of bibliographies relating to environment studies and population.

. International Coconut Community, Sri Lanka.
PIC co-operates in publications and information exchange on coconuts.

. CRRERIS. In 1984 PIC was requested to hold CRRERIS material on fiche.

. FAO for CARIS and AGRIS activities.

. The International Standard Book Number (ISBN) Centre in Berlin for the allocation of ISBNs.

Close links are maintained with the International Development Research Centre for professional and expert advice when needed. IDRC also conducts free of charge SDI searches. The Australian National Library also offers free computer searches for the region.

SERVICES

PIC services include:

- information service
- computer searches
- current awareness service in agriculture
- reference service
- advisory service and training

Users have access to all other USP Library services.

Information Service:

Requests for information, general and specialized, are received by PIC by letter or telephone. The range of people (local, regional and overseas) making requests is broad including government officers, students, researchers, lecturers, business people, students of other tertiary institutions in the region. The range of questions has been wide also from very general and easy to attend to questions to very detailed and specialized requiring the input of academic staff of USP and expertise from outside the University. Information questions have covered the areas:

(i)   marine and fisheries
(ii)   agriculture
(iii) environment studies
(iv)   small industries
(v)   communications
(vi)   rural technology
(vii) politics and government

Advisory Service

This is an important service. PIC draws on USP Library staff for this work. PIC has conducted work in

Cook Islands	Tonga
Fiji	Tuvalu
Kiribati	Vanuatu
Niue	Western Samoa
Solomon Islands	

The needs are mainly for professional and technical advice, assisting in the setting up of the catalogue, organisation of the library, advice on legal deposit and staff training.

TRAINING

The Library is heavily committed to training - in-service, on-going, workshops. PIC, therefore, inevitably becomes involved in this work.

In 1984 PIC conduct training for:

.	Agricultural librarians and information officers in the region. This was held in Suva, 16-28 July, 1984, and was funded by the Commonwealth Secretariat.

.	Libraries on ISBN/ISSN
	This was held from 28 November to 7 December 1984 and was funded by USP, IDRC and Unesco.

.	USP Certificate in Librarianship Regional Workshop held in April 1984.
	2 weeks.

In 1985 Workshops were conducted on

.	AGRIS methodology
.	CARIS methodology

Instructor came in from FAO.

In 1986 two workshops are planned for November - December

.	Information services in a multilingual environment
.	Information systems, networks, and communication.

Library Assistants from the region are attached to USP/PIC for training for periods varying from 4 to 6 weeks.

OBJECTIVES

The Pacific Information Centre is primarily concerned with identifying, collecting and recording published and unpublished materials originating in the region as well as materials about the region published outside the region and dissemination information about them. The project will enable the countries to make an inventvory of their national literature with the added advantage of having their bibliographies

published collectively and economically at a centralized facility. The project will allow for sharing of information and access by the individual countries to the collective resource of publications arising from research activities in the region.

Phase I - Components of Project

i) To establish, at the USP Library, a regional bibliographic centre to be called the Pacific Information Centre (PIC).

ii) To establish, within PIC, an ISBN/ISSN centre for the region.

iii) To assist, through consultations, advisory missions, feasibility studies, training, etc. with the establishment in each participating country, a national focal point which can act as a national coordinating centre with PIC.

iv) To develop, at PIC, a regional and central resource base of information originating in the region and about the region, with particular emphasis on literature that is of importance to the economic and social sciences, etc. This regional database will provide the basis for a regional South Pacific bibliography. This database will be "peeled off" to produce upon request, smaller bibliographies, whether country or subject specific.

v) To provide access to the information in the database, by ensuring an effective document delivery service.

vi) To participate in FAO's International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology (AGRIS).

Phase II - Components and Objectives of Project

The overall objective of Phase II Project is to enable the University's Pacific Information Centre to consolidate the network established under Phase I, to expand services in the region to include non-USP countries, and to coordinate participation in selected cooperative international systems as the need arises and circumstances permit.

The specific objectives of the Project are as follows:

b)   to provide access to information contained in the Pacific Collection through the current awareness services, regular bibliographies and indexes, document delivery, and introductory seminars on available services for educators, students and selected target groups;

c)   to participate in the design of a six-week course on library, information and communication services in a multilingual environment, in cooperation with the appropriate University departments (this course will be offered in the Library Certificate programme, but will be open to other groups as well);

d)   to participate in the Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations' International Information System for the Agricultural Sciences and Technology (AGRIS) and the Current Agricultural Research Information System (CARIS);

e)   to establish an International Standard Book Numbers (ISBN) centre and voluntary participation by publishers in the region; and

f)   to organize, with interested regional and national institutions and organizations, a meeting to lay the groundwork for co-operation in the area of fisheries information.

Long-term

In the long run, it is envisaged that the Project will:

i) Assist in contributing to the region, a nucleus of trained documentalists and information personnel at USP/PIC and in the eleven countries of the USP/PIC network, as training in methodology and formal general education are important components of the project.

ii) Assist in putting in place the skills and the means for the region to participate in the other international co-operative information systems in the various development-oriented subjects - POPIN for population; INFOTERRA for the environmental sciences; and DEVSIS for the development sciences; and others when the need arises.

PROGRESS MADE

PIC managed to achieve a number of objectives it set out to do and started on a number of special projects of importance to libraries, information and research. The number of Pacific material added to the collection continued to increase. In 1985 6496 items were accessioned compared to 4600 items in 1984. The number of reference queries received and attended to had an annual increase of 25%. Computer searches increased by over 100% with an emphasis on agriculture. Other services also recorded heavy usage: inter-library loans, photocopying, written information requests, and requests for advisory services. In addition entries in PIC bibliographies continued to increase affecting to a great extent the currency of the issues. For instance the 1983 South Pacific Bibliography was ready and available in December 1985. The number of contributing libraries remained high with a number of interested organizations and institutions noting their interest in participating in the PIC project - for instance, American Samoa and Guam. PIC focal points play a significant role in PIC activities. They collect locally available publications for PIC as well as other items including audio visual material, manuscripts, records, tapes. PIC also assists the focal points by providing them with mini-grants to meet the cost of selected books for their collection, equipment vital to their operations, training attachments at USP Library and advisory services.

Significant developments include:

.   ### INTERNATIONAL STANDARD BOOK NUMBER (ISBN)

In November, 1985 the library completed a survey of publishing in the region. This was done as a requirement for participation in ISBN. As a result of this survey PIC is now designated an ISBN centre. It has commenced operations with volunteer participation by publishers.

.   ### CURRENT AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH INFORMATION SYSTEM (CARIS)

Work in getting PIC to be a regional CARIS centre commenced in September with a visit to the region by FAO consultant, A. Woodward, in early September. In January 1986, the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Development, based in The Hague, agreed to fund this operation. By March 1986 PIC was designated regional CARIS centre for the South Pacific. Organization of the operations has been established with the Branch Library in Alafua undertaking processing work. National

CARIS Centres are now established in Cook Islands, Fiji, Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and Western Samoa, Papua New Guinea.

INTERNATIONAL INFORMATION SYSTEM FOR THE AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY (AGRIS)

PIC completed trial AGRIS work in December 1985. A trial diskette was sent to AGRIS in Gevena. PIC is now a regional AGRIS input centre.

Training of PIC and PIC. focal points, USP Library staff remains an important PIC objective. Apart from attachments of regional staff members, training of USP library staff who provide backup services for PIC continued. This is indeed important because to be able to carry out the tasks of PIC, PIC will have to continue to rely heavily on the staff of the library. It is only through this that the unit is able to operate. It is also only through this arrangement that the funds available for the project are efficiently used.

MICROGRAPHICS

In January 1986 a micrographics unit was established at PIC/USPL. This gift of the Japanese Government is indeed a welcome. Our microgrphics officer, Sosefo Farpapau, will be undertaking training abroad as planned at the Singapore Archives and Oral History Department in October 1986.

The programme for the Micrographics unit is being worked out. It has been suggested that PIC pursues the possibilities of putting on fiche fisheries information.

COMPUTERISATION

The University Library has just completed a feasibility study of the various options available and the systems most appropriate for its operations taking into consideration future networking possibilities in the region.

The selected library systems looked at in detail included:

ADLIB (UK) (Adaptive Library Management and Information
    Retrieval System)
ADLIB (U.S.)
GEAC (Canada)
MINISIS
Techno-Crat
URICA (Universal Realtime Information Cataloguing and
    Acquisition System)
VTLS (Virginia Tech. Library System)
WLN (Western Library Network formerly Washington Library
    Network used by ABN and NZBN)

After careful consideration the system likely to be selected is URICA which runs on Sequel minicomputer and uses the PIC operating system designed for text and information processing with a built-in database management system. URICA was selected because of its ability to handle the unusual requirements of USP Library's network, which include:

- the wide range of subject areas
- the wide range of operations and responsibilities as national, regional, general and specialized library
- its size and spread - working with regional, national and special libraries and centre libraries spread over a great area
- the small professional library staff
- the complexity of the collections, most of which are unpublished as well as material acquired through gifts and exchange agreements
- the importance of keeping track of serials especially difficult serial literature, government reports, monograph series, consultancy reports
- the unique structure of the network with a mixture of government, non-government and regional and non-regional units

The URICA system is strong in basic areas. The first is that it is an integrated and complete system which provides for the automation of all of the major functions of a university library. URICA's strength is in cataloguing and authority control. Another strong advantage it has over many other systems, is its database structure which stores information in variable length records in all of its database applications. Correspondingly, the amount of disk space used is much less than in other automated library systems. So there is less disk accesses and thus, less processing power needed. This all keeps the cost and complexity of the hardware down. Quite large operations are being run on smaller size machines, because of this database organisation and structure.

The basic advantages for the Library are:

1.   Subsystem integration
2.   Modules needed are available
3.   Can accept records with MARC format - LC, BNB, ANL, NZNL.Bibliography production capabilities are good.
4.   Used by 49 libraries in this part of the world - Australia and New Zealand - and therefore the advantages of exchanging records are great.

Some libraries that use the system -

>   ANU - good PAC Collection. Can exchange records
>   University of Tasmania
>   Hamilton Public Library
>   La Trobe University
>   Australian Defence Force Academy
>   Blacktown City Library
>   Philips Institute of Technology
>   Footscray Institute of Technology

5.   Easy system to use (for staff and students) and database structure facilities allows for easy processing.
6.   Suitable and accessible not only by Coronas but also IBN and IBM compatibles; Apples.
7.   Capable of producing COM microfiche of catalogues which is a very useful feature.
8.   Handle multilanguages.
9.   URICA development is continuing on terms of enhancements to the Serial control module, increasing authority control over publishers, and microcomputer links.
10.   Complete system.
11.   Telecommunications facilities in URICA
12.   Servicing available locally and also specialised servicing from New Zealand.

DATABASE CREATION

There are several different ways of creating the database. The order of priority of creating the database would be -

1. The Pacific Collection in total (40,000)
2. South Pacific Periodicals Index (4,000 - Annually)
3. Non-USP Library material from the South Pacific Bibliography (2,000 - Annually)
4. South Pacific Union List of Periodicals (4,000 - Annually)
5. Agricultural information from Fiji and USP Library branch at the School of Agriculture in Western Samoa. (8,000 - Annually)
6. Other PIC Bibliographies (16,000 - Annually)
7. General collection (287,000 - 1985. 15,000 Annually)
8. AGRIS (500 - Annually)
9. CARIS (1,000 - Annually)
10. ISBN (500 - Annually)

Telecommunications link

The University is currently looking at the options suitable and available for its needs.

PIC AND FISHERIES INFORMATION

The number of publications on fisheries added to the collection has increased during the year. Also the number of requests received on the subject has increased. In the past few months PIC has been trying to meet the requests of users which have so far been very specialised and long in nature. PIC and the library's ability to meet this need has been greatly assisted by the return of Helen Chow after four months training on fisheries information. Helen's tour was funded by IDRC. The study specifically covered:

.   the investigation of information needs of users of fisheries information

.   the filling of a gap of fisheries information service

.   the strengthening of PIC's position as a centralised database on development-oriented literature relating to the South Pacific

.   the improvement of fisheries services

.   the establishment of links with various fisheries information centres, liaise with them in terms of resource sharing, inter-library loans, and gifts and exchanges

.   the ability of PIC to contribute to international databases

PIC Phase II budget allows for:

1.   Part of the costs of a regional meeting of interested regional and national institutions and organisations to lay the groundwork for co-operation in the area of fisheries information.

2.   The hiring of a part-time fisheries officer for six months to handle specifically fisheries information requests. The need to hire a full-time fisheries information officer will depend on the results and report of this trial period.

POINTS TO BE AWARE OF

While PIC managed to continue to achieve positive results in the field of information awareness and accessibility a number of difficulties prevailed which must be noted here:

. the difficulties of being current without automation. The 1983 South Pacific Bibliography was ready in December 1985. The 1982-84 issue of the South Pacific Periodicals Index is still being edited. Both these bibliographies have showed marked increases in the number of entries; SPB with 3500 as compared to 2000 in the 1982 issue and SPPI with 8000 entries as compared to the 4000 entries of the 1979-1981 issue. The editing and retyping operations are time consuming and tedious tasks.

. the increased printing charges ihe region have significantly affected the costs of production

. the increase in the demand for information services has automatically affected the staff time spent on this activity

. the one full time senior staff and one part time handling PIC work was not sufficient considering the work that must be done

. the proliferation of information systems in the region based on no infrastructures at all but financed by some aid agency raised concern as often the people who were giving the funds were talking to the wrong people. The limited funds were spent on projects often shortlived. Eventually we would need more funds to bring some order and standards into this development. A regional plan for information is perhaps something that should be considered.

However, from these difficulties are derived some advantages. The need to work on a more cooperative basis should become more important than ever before and those anticipating or planning the development of other information systems will have to realize that funds to fund such activities will not be available long term. The

important thing to realize is that the pooling of resources to promote and develop the same need - that of information services to the region - is indeed an important consideration. Also from the proliferation of information systems the region may now find it necessary to look at an information plan for the region. The increase in the number of publications collected on the region only supports the argument that publishing in the region has grown considerably and the need to establish an ISBN centre is timely. The increased services also exemplifies the fact that the need for information in the region is growing and that the services must be improved to meet the needs. Further instruction in information use and additional human resources will be necessary to provide better services.

No doubt the PACIFIC INFORMATION CENTRE is an important development for the University and the region. Any support received, financial and moral, will go towards assisting the continuation of a service that is so badly needed.

PUBLICATIONS

Publications for the period 1985-1986.

PIC continued to publish -

PIC newsletter (quarterly)
South Pacific Research Register 1985 (annual)
Recent Additions to the Library, general and Pacific (fortnightly)
Current Awareness Bulletin for Agriculture (monthly)
USP publications (annual)
South Pacific Bibliography, 1983 (annual)

Other publications -

Teaching English as a second language : a bibliography
Pacific writers : a bibliography (with the South Pacific Festival of Arts Committee)
Kava : a bibliography

For further enquries write to or call:

Esther W. Williams
University Librarian
University of the South Pacific
P O Box 1168
Suva, FIJI

Phone: 313900, Ext 282
Telex : 2276

or

Judith M. Titoko
Assistant Librarian
PIC, Library
University of the South Pacific
P O Box 1168
Suva, FIJI

Phone: 313900, ext 287
Telex : 2276

E. W. Williams

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