



## **The National Library Service (SBN) and the management of special collections in the multimedia Index**

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### **Abstract:**

*SBN Index is a multimedia union catalogue describing the collections of more than 4,700 Italian libraries coming from different administrations. At present, the catalogue consists of over 11 M bibliographic descriptions of titles and over 3M of authors, for 55 M holding locations.*

*Many types of materials are recorded in the Index: Modern and Antique publications, other materials as, Music, Graphic, Cartographic, documents but also all the Non Book Materials owned by Italian libraries, as videos, electronic books, microforms, three dimensional artefacts and realia etc. SBN Index is a step towards a larger service network for libraries and users in the view of a "cloud-based" catalogue.*

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The Central Institute for the Union Catalogue of Italian Libraries and Bibliographic Information (ICCU) was created in 1951 with the main task of cataloguing the national bibliographic heritage. This objective is pursued due to a considerable collaboration strategy among Italian libraries even coming from different administrations: state, regional, government, university and private.

In order to improve the knowledge of bibliographic collections as well as simplify user access, ICCU acts as coordinator of bibliographic data bases and national services: The National Library Service (SBN), the Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery, the Databases concerning the 16th Century Italian editions, the National Census of manuscripts and the Directory of Italian libraries.

To support cataloguing activities conducted by Italian libraries, the Institute is responsible for guiding, producing, adapting and diffusing the standard rules and for defining regulations and guidelines for cataloguing all types of materials ranging from manuscripts to multimedia documents.

In the last few years the main actions of the Institute have been directed towards the field of digitization of cultural content, and of definition of standards for integrating the access to cultural heritage resources. On behalf of the Ministry for Cultural Heritage and Activities, ICCU coordinates major digital cultural heritage projects at national level, for example, the portal *Internet Culturale* (launched in 2001), which developed an integrated access to digital resources of Italian libraries, archives and other cultural institutes.

The portal is a virtual location for searching bibliographic information and digital collections made available by the participating digital libraries.

Through *Internet Culturale* users can navigate and search the digital collections, the catalogues and specialized data bases such as the National Library Service, the Census of Manuscripts in Italian Libraries and the National Census of 16th Century Italian Books .

ICCU is also in charge of *CulturaItalia*: the national portal that feeds Europeana with Italian contents.

At European and international level, it is in charge to coordinate many projects in the field of digital cultural content such as MINERVA, MICHAEL, ATHENA, DC-NET, Europeana, INDICATE, Linked Heritage, WDL.

The National Library Service (SBN) is the national network of the Italian Libraries aiming at constituting the Italian union catalogue and the bibliographic control according to international provisions of Universal Bibliographic Control and Universal Availability of Publications.

Online since 1992, at present, the network consists of 4,700 libraries connected, through 78 local nodes, to the central server, called Index, hosting a data base of over 11 M bibliographic descriptions of titles and over 3M of authors for 55 M holding locations.

One of the main objectives of the development of the SBN Index was to carry out a single multimedia database which integrates the pre-existing separated data bases related to the Modern Book, Antique Book and Music.

The SBN Index includes in one database Modern and Antique publications, records of any type of material: books, videos, serial publications, articles, recorded books and music, electronic books, sheet music, photos, posters, drawing, paintings, maps etc. and, if available, a link to the digital image. Authority files of authors, as well as, semantic headings (subjects, classification), standardized places of publication, printers' devices are integrated in the Index.

The central system supplies services to the libraries for shared cataloguing. Before cataloguing, libraries search the bibliographic description of the publication in the union catalogue. If the record is found, the library downloads the record and adds the information about holding. Each record (titles, authors, subjects, etc.) can be searched and downloaded to be reused for a new cataloguing. Moreover, if someone modifies a record, the central system is able to send the updated version to libraries who own the record on their database, when required.

The SBN cataloguing functions consist of a “core” of data and functions, common to all types of materials and different *cataloguing lines* that enrich the “core” cataloguing with specific data concerning the different types.

A field label named *Type of material* selects the *cataloguing line* for:

**M Modern Materials:** monographs and periodicals which have publication dates subsequent to 1830

**E Antique Materials:** monographs which have publications dates from the birth of printing until 1830.

**U Musical Materials:** musical manuscript, documents in print including music librettos and scores dating from the 16th Century to the present which are located in over 500 public and private institutions.

**G Graphic Materials:** drawings, paintings, posters, pictures, photographs, etc., dating from the 16th Century to the present.

**C Cartographic Materials:** Manuscript and printing cartographic documents materials, dating from the 16th Century to the present.

In addition to the *type of material* which gives information about the set of specific data provided, a further field: *Type of record (UNIMARC)*, identifies the content form of the resource.

Materials like sound recording, non musical, projected and video material, electronic resource, multimedia, three-dimensional artefacts and realia, currently don't have the fields of a specific cataloguing line and are described as type of material *Modern*, but with the right *type of record*: i.e. printed music, graphic, etc

Libraries can choose to describe different types of documents only with the “core” data, even if it is recommended to catalogue them with all the specificities in order to create a high-quality bibliographic record.

The choice can depend on different situations: the library owns a few items of that material and maybe librarian cannot provide all the specific data required; the library management system used does not allow the full cataloguing of that type of material.

SBN Index is open to any library management system using the application protocol SBNMARC. It is not a new MARC format but a protocol employed for shared cataloguing function in the interaction between local library management systems and Index using XML messages and a schema based on MARC concepts and attributes.

Local systems interact with Index to request services concerning shared cataloguing.

Online services provided are:

- Search (documents and authority entries)
- Localization with two different meanings: the library owns the document and/or the bibliographic record which is present in the local database: the second type of localization is useful to libraries who want to receive records modified by other libraries
- Cataloguing (documents, authority entries)

- Correction (documents, authority entries, proposals of correction)
- Requirement of data alignment (to receive records modified by other libraries)

Once, from 1992 to 2004 the central system could exchange messages only with applications using protocol SBN. Afterwards, in order to increase the number of libraries participating in SBN, the central system adopted the new protocol SBNMARC for facilitating the development of shared cataloguing module by software houses.

Today the central system is much more flexible:

- it allows different levels of cooperation:
  - bibliographic capture and localization, without cataloguing new records;
  - bibliographic capture, localization and cataloguing new records;
  - full adhesion for libraries who are able to catalogue and update records, as they accept records modified by other libraries.
  
- it allows the libraries to choice the descriptive level, specifying:
  - which type of material they will catalogue providing all the specific data;
  - which authority files (authors, subjects, places of publication, printers' devices) they can manage (create new records, correct, etc.) or just receive and download.

The flexibility in the cooperation of the libraries also allows the software houses the development of different products more or less complete.

Shared cataloguing modules developed for LMSs, in order to exchange messages between libraries and Index, have to be submitted to the certification of the Institute. Such certification is requested both for the level of cooperation and the specific profile chosen.

A problem to be highlighted is the network management for the quality of data, due to the increasing number of libraries and Institutions in the cooperation. This problem will be dealt with monitoring of cataloguing instruments and profiling libraries differently, according to the actual contribute they can provide to the union catalogue.

Finally a look at future developments of the collections management in SBN. The strong participation of library world in the process of Linked data and semantic web gets towards a new approach to the structure of collective catalogues.

ICCU is directing own efforts towards some actions: the implementation of the new ISBD area 0 in the SBN system to express both the content of a document and the type/s of carrier/s used to convey that content. It is an important issue in order to provide full information in the increasing variety and complexity of resources, and in addition to facilitate the access to information of any level of users.

Other activity is in light of development towards Library Linked Data. A National Working group is investigating the development of library data standards that are compatible with Linked Data for defining and mapping the SBN "elements" in the Metadata Registry based on SKOS/RDF.

We have to consider the big impact of the *Library Linked Data Incubator Group. Final Report* in the library world which gets towards a new approach over current practices for creating and delivering library data and is a first step toward a "cloud-based" catalogue.