

SPANISH COMMUNICATION CHANNELS

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As can be seen from Fig. 1 which compares Spain's economic performance with that of other Western countries over the last thirty years showing the trend in income, taking the average income of "the twelve" as equal to 100 in each year, Spain occupies an intermediate position between the less developed and highly developed EC member states.

Fig. 1

Average income in European Community
(Every year, the average = 100)

	1960	1970	1980	1985	1990	1992
Belguim	95,4	98,9	104,1	101,6	102,6	103,4
Denmark	118,3	115,2	107,8	115,8	108,2	110,2
Germany	117,9	113,2	113,6	114,2	112,8	113,6
Greece	38,6	51,6	58,1	56,7	52,6	52,1
Spain	60,3	74,7	74,2	72,5	77,8	79,9
France	105,8	110,4	111,6	110,6	108,6	108,8
Ireland	60,8	59,5	64	65,2	69	68,9
Italy	86,5	95,4	102,5	103,1	103,1	103,2
Luxembourg	158,5	141,4	118,5	122,4	125,6	130
Netherlands	118,6	115,8	110,9	107	103,1	102,7
Portugal	38,7	48,9	55	52	55,7	56,3
UK	128,6	108,5	101,1	104,2	105,1	102,1
USA	189,6	164,5	151,4	156,1	150,3	146,8

The demand for information

I invite you to put yourself in the place of the user of a Spanish library: this sometimes helps to approach problems from a more practical standpoint. Let us suppose that our reader is a doctor; according to WHO statistics, there are more than 100,000 in Spain, four times more than in The Netherlands, with over 70,000 medical students (5,745 in The Netherlands) but for them there are just 3,108 professors (1,453 in The Netherlands). Everyone is aware of the heavy demand for information services in the biomedical sector; this is why the Adonis project started in this area.

Our doctor locates information in medical and biological journals using an index such as *Current Contents*: there are 700 subscriptions in Spain, 70% of them to the "Life sciences" series, or using foreign online databases such as *Dialog*. The 700 "top" titles of *Excerpta Medica* are available on *Meditex* (a videotex product) to 10,000 doctors thanks to a project funded by some medical companies. With respect to penetration of CD-ROM products in the Spanish

market, a recent study indicates that is still relatively low¹.

Let us suppose our doctor wants to consult the scientific literature produced in Spain, where some 400 medical journals are published; the articles from these journals are included in the *Indice Médico Español* (IME). The IME is a database developed by the *Instituto de Estudios Documentales*

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e *Historia de la Ciencia* (IEDHC) with headquarters in Valencia and forming part - as the *Cindoc* that will be discussed later - of the *Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas* (CSIC). This database, together with similar ones covering publications on science, technology, humanities and social sciences, are distributed online (through X.25, IXI and Internet), and on the CD-ROM *Bases de datos del CSIC* (two Spanish companies produce and distribute this product). *IME* is available too on the videotex service already mentioned and holds about 150,000 references.

How to locate the journals?

The weakest links in the documentary chain in Spain are the catalogues: we do not really know what serials we have in our libraries. First, let us talk about the great failure: the national serials catalogue of *Catálogo Colectivo Nacional de Publicaciones Periódicas*.

In 1983, the Ministries of Culture and Education began an ambitious and costly project to create a national union catalogue of serials. Unfortunately the project has so far produced no more output than a part devoted to medical journals², which contains some 9,000 titles. The data for the general catalogue was taken on ISDS format from about 1,700 libraries, bringing together information on some 200,000 titles. The records and holdings are now awaiting processing which will make them accessible on magnetic disk at the National Library (the current manager of the project) host computer and immediate publication in CD-ROM form was announced some time ago. Unfortunately, the information from most centres will be almost a decade out of date when published. The management of this catalogue is a good example of the caution required in undertaking such overambitious projects in countries with little experience of this type of collective venture.

There are however two praiseworthy examples of union catalogues based on pragmatic criteria and which have had over a decade of life without unforeseen problems: the *CAPS*, serials catalogue of Catalonian universities now the embryo of what will become the *Rebiun* union serials catalogue (*Rebiun*, *Red de Bibliotecas Universitarias*, is a network project grouping 10 university libraries).

CAPS contains 26,000 titles and is accessible on CD-ROM and microfiche. The *CSIC* union catalogue of serials (*CIRBIC-Revistas*) currently contains 34,471 titles and can be accessed online and on CD-ROM together with the *CSIC* databases mentioned above; the number of titles in this catalogue grew by 1,768 last year (5%).

A surprising fact about the automation of serials catalogues is that progress is slower than automation of books ones, according to a comparative study of the *LIB-2*³ and *LIB-2-update*⁴ reports; libraries are deciding not to automate their serials catalogues, despite the fact that all professionals know their primordial role as a source of information. This could be due to two factors: the first is the librarian's traditional attachment to books. The second reason could be that librarians are confused about whether to transfer information traditionally presented in paper catalogues to magnetic form (which is simple, even simpler and cheaper than doing the same with the catalogue card for the books), or fully automate the managing of journals. Full implementation of the latter is a complex task (and I stress the word for the second time). These difficulties are confirmed by the fact that it is usually one of the last modules to be dealt with by the library softwares and the problem is often shelved to await better times which are slow in coming.

Document supply services

CINDOC is the institute formed out of the recent merger of the *ICYT* and the *ISOC* (two *CSIC* institutes working on documentation). One of its most important services is the supply of documents: about 130,000 requests in 1991. There are some universities very active in this field, specially the ones that joined the consortium *Rebiun*, already mentioned, but overall *CINDOC* should be responsible for more than half of document requests in Spain⁵. One aspect to keep in mind: our country is one of the best foreign clients of Boston Spa BLDSC, which may indicate a mismatch between a demand for information growing at a faster rate than documentary resources and, particularly, than the means and services providing access to these resources.

Do libraries buy journals?

How many journals are available in Spain? According to the data we mentioned in relation to the national union catalogue of serials, there are some 200,000 journal titles in the 1,700 Spanish libraries that hold the most important collections. Official Spanish statistics⁶ record 398,251 journal collections currently received! The French union catalogue *Myriade* contains 207,000 titles. Estimates by international subscription agents established in Spain suggest that university and hospital libraries alone receive more than 70,000 and 25,000 journals respectively.

In 1992, the CSIC will spend more than 300 million pesetas (about 3.3 million US dollars) on subscriptions; the University of Barcelona more than 160 million and the Complutense University of Madrid as much as the CSIC.

Other data of interest on acquisitions: there are now several experiments on sharing resources in operation: *Documat*, a network formed by all university mathematics departments and *Rebiun*, the university consortium described above are good examples. Finally, I would like to mention that the Adonis project had a Spanish participant from the beginning: the *CINDOC*, that has a collection of more than 7,000 titles of which almost 3,000 are current journals.

Conclusion

How will this situation evolve in the future? It is possible that recent growth in library budgets will slow down over the next few years ("Maastricht" years). The number of automated and accessible union catalogues will increase. Many more universities and large libraries will create document supply services and use international subscription agents. There is no doubt that our doctor will have easier access to the information contained in the journals he, or she, will need.

References

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3. *State of the art of the application of new information technologies in libraries and their impact on library functions* (Luxembourg: 1988)
4. *Estado actual de la aplicación de las nuevas tecnologías de la información en las bibliotecas y su impacto sobre el funcionamiento bibliotecario; puesta al día (LIB-2/13-update)* (Madrid, 1992)
5. It has been impossible to get factual data about ILL from Rebiun sources
6. *Estadística de bibliotecas 1988* (Madrid: 1991)