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# Law Library Consortium Data Base Components and Standards Study Group Report

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# Law Library Consortium Data Base Components and Standards Study Group Report\*

By GEORGE S. GROSSMAN\*\*, DAN F. HENKE\*\*\*, AND  
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## Summary

*The Data Base Components and Standards Committee of the Law Library Consortium recommends the establishment of a national law data base to meet the multi-faceted needs of the legal community for legal and law-related information. The scope of the Report includes bibliographic description and control, as well as subject and full-text access to Anglo-American, foreign, comparative, and international law materials in monographs, serials, non-book media including audio-visual and computerized information, computer-assisted instruction, confidential data control and resource persons. Standards for inputting information are suggested.*

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\* This report is one of the most significant documents emanating from the investigatory work done to date on the feasibility of creating a law consortium. Its contents describe in considerable detail the objectives and the requirements that a good, efficient and responsive law consortium must provide if it is to be successful.

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## I. POLICY STATEMENT

### *Data Base Components and Standards*

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should establish a national data base for those areas of resources unique to law which cannot reasonably be expected to develop within other systems, should provide leadership securing participation and/or membership in successful on-going programs that incorporate legal materials, should actively solicit cooperation from units that are developing independent, local data bases to participate with and contribute their data to a national data base and should become vocal*

*in establishing standards for uniformity and compatibility of data bases within the legal community.*

In contradistinction to organizations promoting the development of medical and agricultural data bases, no group in this country is exercising a strong leadership in the legal field to coordinate and amalgamate automated legal projects; consequently, data bases are springing up like Topsy without any regard for the consumer either in ability to use diverse systems or expense required for the different pieces of hardware. Today a law consumer who has the capability of searching statutory or case law and periodicals, retrieving bibliographic description of books and pursuing coursework would have to purchase five separate terminals, most of which would not be successfully interchangeable under the present technology.

The Data Base Committee urges the Consortium to expand its membership to the largest feasible number and develop an effective organization that will exert influence and offer guidance in this country so that data base organizers will have some authoritative source to consult in defining and securing acceptable standards for creating new data bases.

Furthermore, the Consortium should take immediate steps to discover existing data bases and encourage participation in a national data base or at the minimum, serve as a source of information concerning existing programs so law-oriented groups do not continually reinvent the wheel.

## II. MONOGRAPHS

### A. Bibliographic Control (Phase One)

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium either collectively or individually should participate in one of the on-going bibliographic data bases for monographs already on-line rather than duplicate extensive effort and investment incurred elsewhere.*

At least three national systems are now involved in preparing, storing and retrieving bibliographic descriptions of monographs published in this country and abroad, including law books. Other internal systems exist in institutions and commercial organizations. All have successful programs and are actively engaged in expanding their data base contents. There is no need on the part of the Law Library Consortium to duplicate this effort so well established by others; indeed, it is quite unlikely that funds could be secured for such duplication. While the attention of the Consortium focuses upon

the bibliographic control of law books, its direction should be toward established on-going systems either as one participating unit similar to regional library networks or as individual members of library networks.

All of these data bases are constructed on current demand either by MARC tapes or by contributing libraries' current acquisitions. The Law Library Consortium could make a major impact on the creation of a legal monograph data base by securing the funding to input monographs from standard bibliographic tools such as the A.A.L.S. *Law Books Recommended for Libraries*; Schwartz-Henke, *Combined Catalog of Anglo-American Law Collections University of California Law Libraries, Berkeley and Davis*; the L C Retrospective Law Shelflist; and Harvard *Current and Annual Legal Bibliography*.

### B. Tables of Contents (Phase Two)

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should take steps to secure the funding to input tables of contents and/or abstracts of monographs. This description beyond the bibliographic data would make subject searching of monographic information possible.*

Phase Two expands the concept of machine-readable data for monographs from solely bibliographic description to extended subject matter. At this point the Law Library Consortium should explore the replication of a data base for this purpose. The combined Consortium membership should have sufficient law titles in a system to permit replication of the majority of law book titles held by a majority of the libraries. Thus the great time, effort and developmental costs could be avoided when commencing Phase Two.

Precedence for this type of dual effort exists with the National Agricultural Library. N.A.L. is a member of the federal library network which in turn is a member of the O.C.L.C. N.A.L. updates and inputs its cataloging records into O.C.L.C. and every two weeks receives magnetic tapes of its cataloging records which it enters into the C.A.I.N. file for access by those with agricultural interests. In effect there are two data bases showing holdings for N.A.L. The Committee recommends that the Consortium follow this example.

Monographs should be extended beyond the traditional concept to include essays and festschrift in legal, law-related and non-law materials; law and law-related reports from gov-

ernmental agencies as well as commercial sources, and international law documents.

On the assumption that unlike periodical articles, titles to chapters of monographs are descriptive of the textual matter and could be searched by way of a KWIC system, the creation of a data base of this type of material would pave the way for a subject search of monographic information to a much greater depth than would be possible through the subject headings assigned to the book in its bibliographic description. Via this data, retrieval of bibliographies, maps, tables and indices could be accomplished.

The information could be obtained from the book itself, publishers' blurbs, pre-publication advertisements or any other verified source.

### C. Book Reviews

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should take steps to secure the funding to input book reviews into the data base as an aid for acquisitions functions in addition to patron use.*

Book reviews frequently consist of scholarly publications commenting upon the law as well as the particular subject covered by the book. Reference to reviews would provide subject access to current writings in areas of the law as well as a source of book selection information. The record should include the bibliographic information, abstract of the review, and, at a later date, the full text of the review.

Search would be by author, title, book reviewer, subject, date, publisher, series notes, etc. A.L.A.'s *Booklist*, a magazine of book reviews, is using O.C.L.C.'s cataloging information for a more complete and up-to-date bibliographic record of current publications than is provided by CIP and other sources. Probably the editors are checking the holdings to determine if small and medium libraries are purchasing the titles as a reenforcement of their selection of inclusion in *Booklist*. The next step of insertion of the book review on-line by *Booklist* would be very easily accomplished and, in turn, would supply *Booklist* with a magnetic tape for photoreproductions in hard copy. Book reviewing services for law could follow this example.

### D. Acquisitions Sources and Information

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should include in its Phase Two of Monographs a designated space for vendors to insert unique information with regard to books that are currently*

*available for purchase; in other words, the data base should provide for an automated book buying system, including availability of order information to all libraries.*

Vendors, at their own cost, should have the capability of entering the data base to input their symbols, information about book availability, selling price, delivery date, payment received, etc. A library could then tell at a glance who offers the book for sale, at what price, deliverable time, etc. A programmable mechanism similar to the Interlibrary Loan request could instantly alert the vendor of an order from the library and initiate the order.

Libraries should have access to order information of other libraries to assist with resource sharing or cooperative acquisitions, so that libraries may avoid expensive duplication of acquisitions within geographical regions.

### E. Technical Processes Control

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should acquire access to or secure funding for: (1) an in-process system to design a library program similar to Ballots and the Library of Congress new technical processes system to track a book from the time of the initial search for ordering through in-house procedures to its final library location, (2) financial record-keeping similar to Ballots, the University of California system, or other existing, successful program, and (3) circulation control.*

In order to maximize the use of bibliographic records with little or no repetition of record-keeping in multiple library departments, an on-line technical processes program adopting some of the features from Ballots and Library of Congress is essential for the Consortium.

1. The acquisitions system (as for example, Ballots) should support the ordering, claiming, canceling, receiving and in-process control of monographs arriving on regular or standing orders, approval, blanket plans, exchange, or gifts and procurement of out-of-print materials. Automatic follow-up of orders is necessary on a regular schedule until the order is filled or canceled.

The new Library of Congress procedure applies a bar-coded label to each monograph when it arrives in the system. As the monograph progresses from station to station, the person receiving it uses a light pen to pass over the book's bar-coded label and also that person's name tag identifying its new location, thereby giving an instantaneous message to a central

computer the whereabouts of all monographs at all times.

The cataloging systems are generally familiar by this time, including card production and Se-lin spine labels for each item.

2. Other acquisitions functions which justify a support program include the fiscal aspects of purchase orders and accounting records along with the technical records of claiming and cancellation and other standard notices.

3. Automated circulation control systems are flooding the market and some dissemination of information and cooperative efforts and studies are needed soon for Consortium membership. The major networks project a capability for maintaining circulation records and other standard library manufacturers are offering new equipment for this purpose. Certainly any law library network should include programming for circulation functions.

### III. SERIALS

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should take immediate steps to secure funding to initiate a data base consisting of legal serials, including periodicals. This could be accomplished either by membership input or contracting for the replication of the law serials data base in O.C.L.C., known as CONSER.*

No known data base in this country, other than CONSER, which is now in the O.C.L.C. system, adequately covers legal serials nor is there any projection in any system to do more than provide for bibliographic and/or technical processes control. To maximize the effectiveness of legal serials for the law community, a subject access to their contents is essential. Therefore, a replication of the CONSER data base would be just the beginning of the task for preparation of serials information.

#### A. *Bibliographic Control of Serials—CONSER*

CONSER (Conversion of Serials) is a project created to establish a data base of machine-readable data files. A group of ten cooperating libraries has undertaken the inputting of serial titles into a data base system (successfully negotiated with O.C.L.C.) for access by all member libraries in the country. Nearly half of the project is now virtually accomplished with nearly 100,000 records entered of a contemplated 200,000-300,000 record file. The basis for the data was supplied by L.C. Marc Serials and the Minnesota Union List of Serials,

supplemented by other data bases prepared by the National Library of Canada and university libraries. The data base accepts serials in the romanized or transliteration form.

*Standards.* The standards follow those set by the American National Standard Format for Bibliographic Information Interchange on Magnetic Tape and MARC—Serials format.

To determine the significance of CONSER to law libraries, a check was made by the University of Florida Law Library staff in the O.C.L.C. data base in March 1976. Of the 364 titles listed in the *Index to Legal Periodicals*, (issue dated Sept. 1974 to Aug. 1975), only 29 did not appear in the data base or 8% not entered. These titles are now input. Several listings of foreign periodicals which have appeared in issues of the *Law Library Journal* were checked against the *Index to Foreign Legal Periodicals* and against O.C.L.C. data base. Of the 47 African titles checked, 24 were in the *Index* and 25 in O.C.L.C. Sixteen titles were neither in the *Index* nor in the data base.

As a second phase, the Consortium should expand the serials coverage to the more esoteric items that are not readily available in the standard reference tools to provide immediate access to libraries with limited resources. The Consortium should play a major role in the creation of a legal series data base since that is the main thrust of law library holdings.

A sampling of non-periodical serials in the O.C.L.C. data base indicates that a large majority of legal serials are encompassed by the CONSER project and are now on-line: i.e., the National Reporter System, digests, encyclopedias, Shepard's Citations and annotated statutes, among others. No systematic attempt was made to go through a list of the major publications but rather a random sampling of titles was undertaken. It, therefore, appears that the CONSER project would be a sound basis for a law data base.

#### B. *Serials Check-In*

In the experimental stage among selected Ohio libraries, a serials check-in system is being tested for accuracy and effectiveness. This program is projected for complete operation later in 1977. BALLOTS does not offer this service as yet according to a published description of the system but has received funding to expand its program. The Law Library Consortium should also acquire the programming for a se-

rials check-in system as the next logical step in technical processing.

As an aid to the check-in process, the Law Library Consortium should form a committee to investigate the bar-coding system now being applied to popular magazines of the type offered for sale in grocery chains which expect to record prices by light-pen or stationary scanners. The University of Chicago Library uses this system for all books primarily for the circulation function. Unfortunately, magazines now on the market possess a bar-code arbitrarily assigned by non-library organizations and the International Standard Serial Number is not the source of the number. The Law Library Consortium should insist upon the application of the ISSN number to legal serials for identification purposes in acquisitions, cataloging, technical processes, circulation, automated retrieval and other related library functions. This number is assigned by the National Serials Data Program under the auspices of the International Serials Data System. ISSN numbers are contained in *Ulrich's Periodical Directory*.

This same system could be expanded to cover claims records, binding information, circulation systems and fiscal record-keeping.

#### C. Law Review Browsing

After acquisition of the serials data base, the Law Library Consortium should commence the building of a data base consisting of tables of contents of legal periodicals indexed in the *Index to Legal Periodicals* to permit the browsing of current issues of law reviews on a regular basis. ISI is already performing this service in the science and technical periodical fields and would be an excellent example to follow.

#### D. Law Review Abstracts

The Law Library Consortium should endeavor to solicit the cooperation of the law schools and publishers in requiring that each item submitted for publication in a legal periodical be accompanied by an abstract containing the descriptive words and identifiers necessary to retrieve the subject matter of the article. Abstracts could easily be added to the data base upon receipt at the same time the tables of contents are inserted.

The Law Library Consortium should encourage the development of subject indexing of periodical articles on-line, as for example the proposed arrangement for the inputting of the

Harvard *Annual* and *Current Legal Bibliography*. While this does not meet the abstracting requirements set forth under this heading, the subject indexing would make available many heretofore buried monographic and serial items.

#### E. Law Review Contents—Full Text

In Phase Two the Law Library Consortium should acquire the funding for inputting the complete text of legal periodicals on-line for the necessary subject-case-statute-author searching that normally occur for legal periodicals. Periodicals could be selected in accordance with significance as outlined by Olavi Maru in *Measuring the Impact of Legal Periodicals*, 1 AMERICAN BAR FOUNDATION RESEARCH JOURNAL 227 (1976). The Consortium should encourage law schools and publishers to prepare copy on machine-readable tape for conversion into a national data base.

#### F. Law Review Shepard's Citation System

Law Review Shepard's Citation System could be developed easily after the full text has been entered. In the meantime, coordination of efforts with Shepard's, bringing their system up on-line in a national network could enhance the access to information in these materials. Apparently, this system is already available internally as the company is advertising a telephone service for this information either orally or in hard copy.

### IV. AUDIO-VISUAL RESOURCES

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should secure the funding to enter the complete bibliographic information, tables of contents, abstracts, and review sources of legal audio-visual materials as this is one resource that is inadequately indexed in the legal field and inaccessible except to the most persistent librarians.*

As soon as possible, the Law Library Consortium should undertake the inputting of information relating to audio-visual materials to make this type of resource readily available to the membership upon demand. No known source is maintained for consultation on the legal titles produced, contents, abstracts of contents, reviews or evaluations, vendors or prices. This could be a real service to the law library group as well as the legal and nonlegal community at large.



first the data base would be relatively small, but could be useful in assisting students, lawyers, and judges wishing to participate in continuing education programs locate these exercises. The Law Library Consortium should not enter the instruction field as such, except where it may have expertise, i.e., legal research.

Two known computer-assisted instruction programs are presently available for use: *Plato* (University of Illinois) and the University of Minnesota Computer Based Programs in Law.

A. The *Plato* program has 11 exercises in its data base:

1. Resolving Issues
2. Practice in Counseling Clients
3. Preparing Briefs
4. Legal Abbreviations
5. Future Interests
6. Utility Regulation
7. Offer and Acceptance Problems
8. Application of Federal Rule #12
9. Statute of Frauds
10. Courtroom Simulation
11. Case Simulation

A specially designed CRT terminal is required for this system which is a highly interactive program. The terminal is priced in the vicinity of \$7,000 with line and other related costs additional. The investment alone may be sufficient to discourage users, however, the Consortium may be a factor in financial support of this program should the group decide it is of value beyond the bibliographic concept.

B. The University of Minnesota Computer Based Programs in Law has ten exercises on line and three in progress:

1. Evidence
2. Code of Professional Responsibility
3. Complaint
4. Case Analysis
5. Jurisdiction and Venue
6. Defense Function
7. Intent in the Law of Tort
8. Procedural Posture
9. Trial Practice
10. Objection
11. Procedural Game (in progress)
12. Responses to the Complaint (in progress)
13. Federal Rules of Evidence (in progress)

Any dial up terminal of 10 or 30 cps can access the system. A grant proposal with

EDUCOM is presently in the drafting stages to provide line free access to about 40 law schools who have made a commitment to furnish the equipment, require the exercises of students in classroom use, and agree to evaluate the programs upon completion of the course.

Other law school faculty may be in the process of designing computer-assisted instruction exercises, and a proposed data base consisting of course descriptions could be a valuable source of information about programs in existing or development stages.

#### VII. PRIMARY LAW: STATUTES, CASES, ATTORNEYS GENERAL OPINIONS, AGENCY DECISIONS AND REGULATIONS

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should not duplicate efforts but should serve as the coordinating body to gather information about the various data bases, serve as a consultant to prospective purchasers, advise the commercial data base producers about market potential and data bases that need expansion or improvement or development. Perhaps, the Consortium should take the role of the central agency to sponsor membership for law library members of the Consortium. The Consortium should take immediate steps to assume the lead in establishing standards and guidelines for producing information data bases.*

#### VIII. SHEPARD'S CITATIONS

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium makes no recommendation as to Shepard's Citations at the present time. The Consortium could encourage the company to place its system on-line so that the telephone inquirers could receive a print-out of requests. The Consortium could serve as an adviser in the development of new programs and also attempt to standardize the citation systems now developing.*

The 1975 edition of *How to Use Shepard's Citations* describes the mail or telephone service for the new *Federal Law Daily Citation Update Service*, update citations for any Shepard unit to a subscriber and printed cited reference to any Shepard units to non-subscribers.

#### IX. DATA CONTROL

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should provide a program within the law data bank that would permit the storage and retrieval of information pertinent to a local or specialized individual need with assistance in the use of the system.*

Vast quantities of information are acquired by those involved in the legal profession in the various capacities of practitioners, judges, librarians, educators, students and observers. The Consortium should provide a system whereby those using the network could enter data of either a local or specialized nature for retrieval upon demand with controls for confidential materials. Other types of information such as unpublished speeches or papers, trial briefs, research products, committee reports and the like could be inserted for network users.

Programming law office record-keeping and accounting could be a part of this data base, attracting a large segment of the law community who might otherwise not participate in the network.

#### X. CURRENT RESEARCH

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should establish a data base for the input of current research in progress to serve as the law community's research project system.*

The data base would be created by those who are currently undertaking research projects in law to improve communications among researchers and to provide for up-to-date coordinated planning information on legal problems. Current research could include teaching materials in progress, audio-visual projects developing for the curriculum or continuing education programs and such works as are listed in the Bobbs-Merrill catalog of *Unpublished Law Teaching Materials* as well as experimental programs in clinical teaching, criminal identification, continuing education of lawyers, judges, police, etc. LEAA sponsored projects in the criminal law field could be identified and information disseminated about the nature of the program and the extent and duration of support. A description or abstract of the project would be required for further insight into the on-going research.

Projects could be classified by jurisdiction, type of research: basic, applied, empirical, etc., general purpose, discipline and nature of special interest as for example medical jurisprudence, mental health, etc.

This, too, would require little monitoring as inputting of the information would be beneficial to researchers who would prefer to be listed in first priority and these persons would be best qualified to define the nature of the research and assign descriptors for information retrieval.

Such a data base would clue others as to the different granting agencies that are presently supporting on-going legal research and perhaps coordinate some of the efforts being generated in separate grants around the country.

#### XI. RESOURCE SPECIALISTS

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium should create a data base listing persons with special expertise in law for consultation, scholarly writing or speech-making.*

Numerous law-trained persons have developed specialties which they would willingly share with the legal community as consultants, authors, speakers, etc. A data base listing specialists and their fields of specialization would be beneficial to bar associations, editors of law reviews, law schools, practitioners, etc. Controls and standards would be essential in the creation of this data base to insure accuracy and acquiescence in the publication of this information.

#### XII. STANDARDS

*Recommendation: The Law Library Consortium must take the leadership role in encouraging and guiding the development and adoption of common standards and common practices, adherence to which is implicit in the system's design and implementation of a nationwide legal information network. These standards include those required to assure interconnection between intrastate networks, multi-state networks and specialized networks in the public and private sector.*

Quality control concerns librarians more, perhaps, than any other phase of data base creation. Establishment of bibliographic standards and of a system for their enforcement are, indeed, the two factors which will, in the long run, be most determinative of the success or failure of the network. Since many of the subsequent programmable features of the proposed data base hinge upon the identification of monographs, serials and other informational input, the standards for their bibliographic description must be set forth with certainty and their adherence required and rigorously upheld. Monitoring the data base is an absolute necessity to guarantee accuracy, completeness of data and minimal duplication of records.

Equally important, the standards applied to the law data base must be compatible with those applied to other national data bases in existence at the inception of the network. At the outset

the data base probably will be acquired from an already existing source, but then the data needed by the membership that is lacking in the law data base will be searched in other data bases for replication for the law data base. Alternatively, other data base computers may be searching our files for law records. Thus, the necessity for intercomputer communication becomes obvious and standardization is the key.

Law, unlike any other field, has a number of acceptable cataloging and classification schemes in use which will create real havoc for those non-conforming libraries. Yet this factor cannot become a deterrent to the development of a national, and eventually, an international law data base. A standard, once established, can and should be followed but programmed options can provide local data fields for those libraries too massive to change classification systems but yet so large that their input would be invaluable to the success of the national-international data base.

Logically the standards to be applied should be those already tested and in successful operation. Acceptance of the Library of Congress MARC standards is assumed unless some compelling reason exists at the time for deviating from this program. These standards relate both to the technical format of the data input and also to the data content. Formatting of information should conform to the specifications of the MARC II format for books and serials as developed and in current use by the Library of Congress MARC Development Office. Other informational input should conform as nearly as possible to these described standards. Library of Congress practice for creating machine-readable cataloging records should be followed without exception where it can be determined by the entering libraries through their own processes of verification. In absence of Library of Congress policy, the Anglo-American Cataloging Rules should apply.

Library of Congress classification will form the basis of the standard input with optional fields for non-accessible records to accommodate the various classification systems in local use.

The on-line Library of Congress Authority File will be incorporated into the data base to establish the accepted authority entries for the input. This one step alone should eliminate much of the duplication that occurs in other data bases that lack this type of control.

Library of Congress subject headings, hope-

fully revised before the network's birth, will be controlling. Optional fields will provide for the local changes in the subjects. Since users will have alternative subject heading authorities, an internal program providing subject equivalencies would expedite the use of the data base for all incoming queries.

To assist in the searches of the data base, screen visible references should be available within the system for cross-references, "see," "see also" and history cards.

The system should be designed so that searches in the data base by any entry element will elicit both main entries and added entries of that element. This would be a valuable feature that could reduce the duplication in the data base and accelerate the search capabilities.

The question of whose cataloging record is paramount in the permanent file—Library of Congress or another library—is one that plagues most data bases at the present time. Considerable discussion is under way at the Library of Congress concerning the acceptance of other libraries' cataloging to be certified by the Library of Congress, therefore, this question could be moot when the law data base emerges. In the meantime the Law Library Consortium should guarantee that when Library of Congress cataloging is available, that data will be in the data base excluding original cataloging input by any other library.

Every member of the Consortium should be allowed access to the total input and also its own input. Reproduction of its own records in whatever format desired will be provided upon request and at a cost to be determined.

Many other standards are yet to be identified, discussed and resolved. This report, for example, does not purport to cover evaluations of books, serials, audio-visuals, programmed learning, informal data, i.e., programs, workshops, meetings, conventions, etc.; and personal data. Somewhere down the line the Committee will have to address itself to these problems.

### XIII. CONCLUSION

*Recommendation: The potential for an extensive law data base exists, and the time is ripe for the creation of a law information data base. Selected legal information in several different forms is already being stored and retrieved on-line through governmental, non profit and commercial sources. Consensus of Committee opinion is that the Consortium should im-*

mediately exert a concerted effort to unite the legal information developing in the different data bases and also to assume the leadership role in the further expansion of programs capturing legal data to direct the flow through a law network sponsored by the Law Library Consortium.

The Committee concludes that its focus at the outset should be directed toward the development of a bibliographic data base of law and law-related materials. The first priority, as the Committee defines it, is the compilation of a file consisting of the applicable MARC records and the bibliographic description of legal monographs published world wide in the English language, in the Roman alphabet or in transliterated languages. The model set by the National Agricultural Library could serve as one for the Law Library Consortium, i.e., as the first step, the law titles entered into any data base by the Law Library Consortium members should be replicated for inputting into a law data base for use of the entire network. The Committee recognizes that search capabilities should include a subject access similar to that provided by BALLOTS or by BIBNET. This initial data base should include the contents of the COMARC program which is under construction at the present time, consisting among others of the retrospective law cataloging of the Library of Congress.

Parallel to building a bibliographic data base for monographs should be the creation of a serials bibliographic data base using as the initial input those titles entered into CONSER. Extensive coverage of law serials exists in the CONSER program and supplementing the titles listed would be the major effort of the Consortium to provide its members with a complete bibliographic service for monographs and serials, laying the foundation for future programming of information.

Once the basic bibliographic descriptions are available, other programs can be developed for incorporating titles from legal bibliographies that may be entered on line, i.e., *Harvard Annual Legal Bibliography* and the *Monthly Catalog*, to mention only two. These bibliographic descriptions would include the Library of Congress subject headings, analytics, classification numbers, etc. to provide subject access.

As the data base is created for monographs and serials, library members should quickly update the records with any other known information as well as for holder symbols and holdings codes. Vendors should be encouraged to par-

ticipate by entering availability of materials, price and other pertinent information.

As a natural outgrowth of the bibliographic data base, other library processes programs could provide for on order records (screen visible to any other member for acquisitions decisions), serials check in, interlibrary loans, circulation records, internal fiscal control, etc.

Simultaneously, attention must be directed toward the storage and retrieval of legal information with primary emphasis at the outset on the legal periodical literature. The Committee concludes that it is essential to initiate a program for inputting bibliographic descriptions of legal periodicals into the data base and then expanding this data base beyond the serials check-in to a description of contents along with abstracts. The national trend in serial literature publishing at the present time indicates that in the near future most will be printing an abstract with the publication. Whenever possible, abstracts of contents of legal periodical literature should be input along with tables of contents for browsing purposes. Eventually, a cooperative program might be negotiated with the legal publishers to furnish video-discs of the total contents of the literature with on line indexing and subject access to the contents through the abstracts and tables of contents; thereby obviating the necessity for vast amounts of data to be stored in the computer.

The Committee recognizes that legal research is accomplished principally through the primary source materials, i.e., statutes, case decisions, rules and regulations. Systems development for storing and retrieving these types of materials are presently under the control of the large commercial and governmental interests: West Publishing Company, Lawyers' Cooperative Publishing Company, Shepard's Citations, Inc., Mead Data Central, Inc., the U.S. Air Force, the U.S. Department of Justice, and the U.S. Internal Revenue Service, in addition to individual state projects. Ultimately, the Consortium should exercise some influence in coordinating the efforts of these developing data bases to combine with the national law network and to continue expansion under the guidance and suggestions from the Consortium. Under this umbrella the Consortium would be in a position to negotiate for beneficial accessing and pricing similar to that which has been accomplished by EDUCOM for its educational institution members for the LEXIS system.

The Committee recognizes that its recommendations are not creative or unique in the sense that they have never before been envisioned. In reality, the Committee is recommending the creation of a data base replicating the contributions to other data bases which have successfully demonstrated the validity of these endeavors. The Committee does recommend some far-reaching goals predicated upon the establishment of a sound data base of accurate records that are, for the most part, already in existence. To answer the question of why create a new network for law, the Committee is aware that while these other bibliographic and service centers are proof of successful ventures, concern arises with the over-loading of the computers by membership demands. None of the existing centers can accommodate the type of descriptive data contemplated by this Report. Therefore, the Committee recommends that a law data base should be created as the foundation for extensive, expanded components that are defined throughout the Report to serve as the definitive Anglo-American and foreign, law and law-related data base for the entire legal community.

*Editor's Note:*

On October 20, 1975, following the Chicago Conference on Library Networks, Morris L. Cohen, Law Librarian, Harvard Law School, sent a letter to about 40 law librarians inviting them to meet on December 29, 1975 in Washington, D.C. to explore the feasibility of establishing a law library consortium. The participants came from 20 states and Canada; 77% were university law librarians, 13% were from public law libraries, 5% from government law libraries and 5% from private law libraries. The consensus of those attending was that further investigation concerning a law consortium should be conducted. The following six study groups were organized for that purpose:

1. National and regional services and needs
2. Data base components and standards

3. Membership and form of organization
4. Source of data and systems support
5. Financing
6. Administration

The group met again on April 12, 1976 in New Orleans, Louisiana to receive and review reports of the study groups and to access overall progress. Another meeting was scheduled in June.

At the conclusion of the annual meeting of the American Association of Law Libraries in Boston, the original group invited all interested AALL members to attend an open meeting on June 24, 1976 to hear of the work that had been done and to get wider support for the endeavor. Although still operating under an ad hoc organizational structure, the group resolved that the persons heading the six study groups and Professor Cohen be constituted the executive body to act on behalf of all other interested parties and continue the effort toward creation of a law library consortium. The study group on Membership and Form of Organization was also charged to investigate the possibility of developing a law network within the framework of the national association.

The newly formed executive body met in Washington, D.C. on September 27 and 28 to discuss law library consortium plans with representatives from the Library of Congress, NCLIS and IDC-3M. It also reviewed the Membership and Form of Organization Study Group's proposal for creating a consortium within the structure of AALL. At the time of this printing further developments would occur at a meeting scheduled for December 28, 1976 in Houston, Texas.

One of the most significant documents emanating from the investigatory work done to date is the report submitted by the Study Group on Data Base Components and Standards chaired by Betty W. Taylor, University of Florida Law Library. It was originally presented at the New Orleans meeting and was later revised to incorporate additional information. Its contents describe in considerable detail the objectives and the requirements that a good, efficient and responsive law consortium must provide if it is to be successful. The full text of this key report is reproduced here.