
27 THE STATE OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY INFORMATION SYSTEMS IN JAMAICA

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There should be no doubt in anyone's mind that there is an information explosion in Science and Technology. It is becoming increasingly difficult for developing countries to purchase all the information they need - A system of resource sharing seems to be the answer.

In this report Science and Technology Information (STI) is taken to mean, information on the status, progress and results of research development and other activity, and on the application of such results, together with any other information of potential use in any scientific or technological activity. By system we mean any place where there is a collection of science and technology information whether this is organized or not.

Based on the above definition we have been able to identify 84 STI collections distributed as follows: Government 24; Private 31; University of the West Indies 19.

Private Sector

In the private sector many of the 31 collections are small, often not organized, but highly specialized. These collections are not open to the public and so there is a wealth of information which is not accessible to the rest of the science and technology community.

University

The Main Library at the University of the West Indies has two branches, the Science Library and the Medical Library. There are also 17 departmental collections, which are not organized, dealing with science and technology information. These departmental collections are only accessible to the staff of the departments.

The following services are offered by the Science Library and Medical Library:-

- (a) Inter-library lending
- (b) Photocopying
- (c) Distribution of Accessions lists
- (d) Extension of reading and reference facilities
- (e) Telephone enquiries

Government (including Statutory Bodies)

There are a total of 24 collections in this section. Six of these, namely Ministry of Agriculture, Bureau of Standards, Jamaica Industrial Development Corporation, Jamaica Bauxite Institute, Ministry of Mining and Natural Resources and Scientific Research Council are large organized libraries. The Ministry of Agriculture and the Scientific Research Council are open to the public as reference libraries.

The Technical Information Section (TIS) is a section of the Scientific Research Council (SRC), Jamaica. Scientific Research Council is a Government Research Organization which investigates the feasibility of producing new products from local raw materials which will boost the economy of the Island.

The objectives of the Technical Information Service are:

1. Developing and maintaining a technical library which primarily meets the information needs of the research staff;
2. To be a reference centre for Scientists, Industrialists, Businessmen and Teachers of Science;
3. The dissemination of scientific and technical information by preparing and publishing:
 - (a) An abstracting journal;
 - (b) The Journal of the Scientific Research Council, a primary journal reporting local research;
 - (c) The Council's Annual Report
 - (d) Technical Paper
 - (e) Occasional paper
 - (f) Also acts as publisher for any local science and technology information.

The functions of the TIS are:

1. Acquisition
2. Cataloguing and Classification
3. Reference
4. Referral
5. Dissemination
6. Archival

There is a wealth of STI in Jamaica but it is inaccessible to the Science and Technology Community because either its access is restricted or it is not organized. Either of these problems is without a solution.

Collections can be exposed to a wider number of users by either a switching system:

procuring material located in another Unit of the network for the user;

or a referral system:-

informing the user where the information can be located.

The Scientific Research Council proposes that a network of Science and Technology information systems be established, each unit maintaining autonomous administration of its collection, but cooperating its individual resource to the total wealth of the island.

A network has been proposed rather than a monolithic structure - because

1. Institutions already exist;
2. New ones can develop as the need arises;
3. Information will now be accessible to the total user community rather than a select few.

By forming such a network it is hoped that the following benefits will be realized:

1. Union Catalogue;
2. Wider Coverage for all;
3. Reciprocal borrowing;
4. Avoidance of excessive duplication.

Related Services to Science and Technology Automation

There are a few automation systems.

The Institute of Jamaica West Indies Reference Library has a KWIC indexing programme which is being used to index the Daily Gleaner, oldest and our major Newspaper.

Alcan Information Centre has a periodical routing system in operation.

Several libraries in the S and T discipline also have access to computer services. Plans are being made for other computer services such as Agris, Devsis and UNIDA.

Recently in Jamaica there was a demonstration of On-line service via Telex-TWX to the Lockheed Dialog System.

In Jamaica there is a National Council on Libraries, Archives and Documentation Services which has the following terms of reference:

1. To study in detail and make recommendations direct to Government for one integrated National Plan for the systematic development of all types of Libraries, Archives and Documentation Services;

2. To study in detail and make recommendations to stimulate and expand the development of the Libraries of private organizations and develop official channels for using their resources (unclassified material) in the National pool, following the NATIS (National Information System, concept as recommended by UNESCO;
3. To study and advise Government on legislation required to establish national library with provision for legal deposit;
4. To review continuously the Nation's library needs and advise Government on national priorities in the budgetary provisions;
5. To examine recommended standards for these services and advise Government on any necessary modification and legislation for the implementation of NATIONAL STANDARDS as guidelines for upgrading these services in Jamaica.

The Government considers it a matter of urgency to establish a national information system which would coordinate and/or integrate all the relevant services thus obtaining greater effectiveness and the economical use of limited resources without detriment to the traditions and specialised functions of individual services.

It is with this in mind that Dr. Dorothy Collings was asked by the National Council to advise them on library development.

Dr. Collings approached this assignment by setting up ten (10) working parties namely: -

1. National Priorities, Legislation and Financial Support;
2. Libraries of the University of the West Indies;
3. National Library of Jamaica;
4. Public and School Libraries;
5. Archives and Records Management;
6. Information Services in Science and Technology;
7. Government and Special Libraries (exclusive of Science and Technology);
8. Manpower Resources;
9. Data Banks and Automation in Libraries;
10. Publishing and Production: Books and Audio Visual.

Reports of these Working parties have been sent to Dr.

Collings for incorporation in her report to the National Council. It is on this report that Government will act.

The following is a list of the organized STI collections:

LIST OF ORGANISED STI COLLECTION

<u>Library</u>	<u>Discipline</u>	<u>Address</u>
Banana	Banana	10 South Avenue, Kingston 4, Jamaica, W.I.
Jamaica Bauxite Institute	Bauxite and related fields	P.O. Box 359, Kingston 5, Jamaica, W.I.
Scientific Research Council	Agro-Industry Nutrition Mineralogy and other related fields.	P.O. Box 350 Kingston 6, Jamaica, W.I.
Jamaica Industrial Development Corporation	Industrial Development including Agro-Industrial and Building	4 Winchester Road, Kingston 10, Jamaica, W.I.
Ministry of Agriculture	Agriculture	P.O. Box 480, Kingston 6, Jamaica W.I.
Ministry of Mining and Natural Resources	Geology, Water Resources the environment	P.O. Box 495, Kingston 5, Jamaica W.I.
Science Library	Natural Science	P.O. Box 104, U.W.I., Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica
Medical Library	Medicine	U.W.I., Mona, Kingston 7, Jamaica, W.I.
Alcan Information Center	Bauxite production	Kirkvine Works Kirkvine P.O. Jamaica W.I.
Seprod	Soap Technology	6 Producer's Road, P.O. Box 271, Kingston, Jamaica W.I.