

Researching identity control issues East Asian resources

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The Pacific Rim Research Libraries Alliance, also known as PRRLA, focuses on cooperative ventures among academic libraries located around the Pacific Rim to improve access to scholarly research materials. The Karl Lo Award was established in 2007 by PRRLA to honour Karl Lo's leadership in forming the Pacific Rim Digital Library Alliance and his contributions to global libraries and librarianship. The Karl Lo Award provides support to PRRLA librarians for professional development and research focused on Pacific Rim library collaboration and digital library issues.

Having been a member of PRRLA since 2017, we applied for the PRRLA Karl Lo Award 2018 and have been awarded funding to work on the topic "To undertake research into practices and opportunities within the PRRLA member community in the area of creator/contributor identity control for East Asian resources".

This research project is in line with the PRRLA organisational aim of focusing on cooperative ventures among academic libraries to improve access to scholarly research materials and seeks to address some of the challenges in developing collections of East Asian publications.

The reason we are so interested in the topic is that, with the advance of technology in the 21st century, there has been an exponential global growth of online information and digital resources. Users/researchers are increasingly faced with large search result sets that are further complicated by many undifferentiated creators/contributors.

Establishing unique identities for CJK creators/contributors is a challenge as they can have very similar or even identical names. For example, approximately 87% of the Chinese population share 100 last names. Presenting their identities in the English environment with transliteration then adds another layer of complexity to effective description and discovery. This issue is even more pertinent to East Asian resources that contain script (880 fields).

The first stage of our research is to conduct an environment scan to explore if libraries with substantial East Asian collections have established any workflows, procedures and policies to manage the ambiguities of identities for creators/contributors from East Asian backgrounds, particularly, Chinese, Japanese and Korean.

At the beginning of July, we sent out an environment scan email to various mailing lists and individual institutions that have a strong interest in East Asian resources, to get a better understanding of the current state on the identity control issues within the library community.

We asked the following questions pertaining to identity control issues for East Asian resources:

- if their libraries undertake disambiguation of identities from the East Asian background for their East Asian resources;
- if their libraries use the same workflow for library owned print resources, digitised materials and digital collections; and
- what authoritative resources and/or reference tools, such as LCNAF, VIAF, ORCID and ISNI, their libraries use for identity disambiguation.

We have received interesting and revealing responses from libraries in Australia, the United States and the United Kingdom. Some libraries reported staff issues, such as lack of language skills and time for doing authority work. Also, workflows for print materials, online resources, digital collections and institutional repositories can be different, but there is no specific workflow tailored to East Asian resources.

Since the 2018 PRRLA conference is going to be held at the University of California, Berkeley in mid-September, site visits have been organised to the University of California, Berkeley, the University of California, Los Angeles and Stanford University to meet with their library staff, to discuss their current practice for identity control in East Asian Resources, and to share what we have found from the environment scan within non-PRRLA members in Australia and the United Kingdom.

After the site visits, our next step will be to survey PRRLA member libraries to gain a collective understanding of what they are currently doing in terms of identity control for East Asian resources, both for their print and digital collections.

We will present our findings at the 2019 PRRLA conference with the intention of providing an opportunity for all PRRLA member libraries to learn from each other's experience in order to improve their workflows, avoid duplication of effort, and improve metadata quality for CJK resources.

We also hope to identify opportunities for future collaborations on name authorities in a linked data service. This will significantly assist in creating precise, accurate metadata, thus improving the accessibility and discoverability of our CJK resources to better serve the learning, teaching and research needs of our institutions.