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Depository libraries in the 21st Century

Recasting the ILO programme

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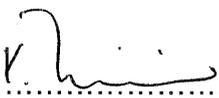
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1. Summary

Institutions established depository library programmes to ensure universal access to specified documentation. Access to depository materials has traditionally been physical, requiring publishing, dispatching, cataloguing and shelving of documents. With the global shift from print to online availability of material, institutions are questioning whether their depository library programmes have become redundant. Are depository schemes anachronistic when the public can access documents directly via the internet? Depository libraries must also look at whether, in the face of evolving priorities, they should continue to acquire material through such schemes. This paper seeks to understand changes affecting depository library programmes and explores an appropriate model for the International Labour Organization (ILO). The paper argues that, drawing from the experiences of others, the ILO should encourage the electronic dissemination of publications, and work with a more limited set of partners to promote the availability of ILO documentation and research.

The content of this paper is the opinion of the author and does not imply the expression of opinions on the part of the “Fribourg formation continue” programme or the ILO Library.

2. Introduction

Three years ago in October 2012, Guy Ryder, the newly-elected Director-General, took up duties to head the office of the International Labour Organization. The ILO made sweeping changes to re-align substantive sectors and streamline operations. Amongst the issues that the ILO tackled was the bringing together of sectors handling research and information. Questions regarding the sending of publications to ILO depository library partners arose as a result of departmental reconfigurations and budget reallocations. The office stopped servicing its depository library programme as previously envisioned. A survey had already flagged concerns in 2010 when less than half of ILO partners responded to a periodic questionnaire. Was a new model needed?

The ILO, through its depository library programme, distributed a core collection of publications to library partners around the world on a no-cost basis. The organization had agreements with member libraries as part of its strategy to disseminate knowledge on the world of work. Partners undertook to manage documents that they received, make them accessible to the public and carry out promotional activities.

With a reduction of publishing in print and the outsourcing of publications sales to a commercial firm, the office stopped sending key documents that it hitherto had provided to depositories on a regular basis. The distribution process was further complicated by decentralized publishing organized by individual departments, and the disbanding of a publications unit that determined funds for document production. Simultaneously, technological advances not only allowed the ILO to make most of its publications available online, but made it easier for the public, and depository libraries, to search electronically for ILO documentation. This ease, balanced against costs for the ILO to operate its programme - printing, allocating, packaging and sending material, and for depositories to handle what they received - organizing, storing and retrieving hard copies of ILO documents, made it necessary to examine the programme.

Was a new strategic direction needed? Some libraries had reformulated operational procedures to work within curtailed budgets as documents became increasingly born-digital. Other libraries were cautious, wary of change, knowing only that decisions taken would have repercussions on an uncertain future. Given its mandate as lead actor in the labour field, and re-vitalized positioning to engage at the highest levels in development of economic and social policy responses to crisis, the ILO grappled with communication and dissemination strategies for its research, analysis, and data gathering. Could the ILO library contribute to institutional efforts by working with depository partners that were already organized as effective channels for sharing knowledge and information with important users?

This paper proceeds in two parts. It looks at the evolution of two depository library programmes, the United States Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and the United Nations Depository Library (UNDL) Program, to analyse areas that could be of benefit to the office, as well as the ILO's own programme. It then examines a recasting of the ILO programme, and provides recommendations for a strengthened direction that communicates and facilitates the availability and discoverability of documents in electronic mode. A complete revision of the programme is not necessary; depositories would continue to receive hard copies of publications if desired. The ILO library would do more to learn how depository libraries use the ILO collection and how they view opportunities and constraints, and solicit colleague views to modernize a programme appropriate for the 21st century. A consultative process should strengthen the ILO's global reach through a community of practice.

3. Background

3.1 The US Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP)

The principle of depository libraries was formulated 200 years ago when the United States (US) Government ordered the distribution of selected documents to libraries in 1813. A congressional resolution specified the need to make information regarding the work of government available to all Americans, with an impetus “to provide the public with permanent no-fee public access to government information... (and) create an informed citizenry and an improved quality of life”.¹ Groundwork for the programme evolved over the years, developed initially under the leadership of the Library of Congress and later the Secretary of the Interior. In 1895, the Printing Act established the Federal Depository Library Program (FDLP) and the Government Printing Office (GPO), with the latter becoming responsible for distributing government information. Currently the US programme, consolidated in 1962 through the Depository Library Act,² and further modified in 1993 through the GPO Electronic Information Access Enhancement Act, makes federal government publications available to the public through some 1200 depository libraries. The US Government, including through partnerships with depository libraries, aims to ensure universal access to official documentation for all peoples in America.

¹ Ithaka S+R, 2011, p. 2

² Discussions about the federal programme often refer to Title 44 as the FDLP, consolidated through the Depository Library Act, was codified in Title 44 of Chapter 19 of the US Code.

The FDLP has changed since the days when the GPO sent publications as hard-copy documents to depositories, and information creation, distribution, retention and preservation have expanded to include digital processes managed through computerized information technologies. The transition to digital information has raised a number of issues, including the maintenance and availability of tangible collections, retention and preservation of digital information, access to resources, robustness of electronic collections, costs of depository library programmes and other information distribution initiatives.

Up to the early 1990s, federal depositories were the only guaranteed means for the public to obtain information published in official government documents. Developed from a need to keep the public informed, and concerned that official printing should not be biased,³ the federal government scheme provided open and equitable access to reliable government information products. Libraries provided an important service for the public to access government information. Today, however, the public can access government documents electronically on personal computers without going through intermediaries like depository libraries.

The FDLP may no longer be the best way to get information to the American people. Librarians critical of the programme point out that the programme was “designed for the nineteenth century, based on the geographic distribution of libraries.”⁴

Attrition is also a concern as libraries relinquish their depository library status. 47 public libraries, for example, left the programme between 2007 and 2015, representing a 20 percent loss in public library depository members.⁵ It is evident that libraries are weighing the cost and benefit of participation in the programme.⁶ While many librarians indicate that they remain committed to the ideals of the depository programme, and they can receive FDLP materials and access fee-based databases, membership has other costs. Depository libraries must pay staff to process FDLP documents and make them available. With fewer resources to invest in developing collections, and with more documents available in e-format, some libraries do not find it worthwhile to remain with the programme. FDLP requirements for libraries to invest in computer hardware, training and pay for printing documents demanded by clients are viewed as cost prohibitive. Depository libraries must also meet legal obligations of FDLP membership.

In August 2014 the GPO revised its requirements for depository libraries. Selective depositories, in contrast to regional depository libraries with wider responsibilities to receive all publications made available to federal depository libraries and retain them permanently, no longer have minimal requirements with respect to documents that they must collect.⁷ Whereas federal depositories were formerly obliged to organize a core collection that included, among others, the Budget of the US Government, the

³ Wilkinson writes about how Congress commissioned private companies to provide public printing and distribute information but that “the use of private publishers gave rise to corruption, patronage, profiteering, waste and inefficiency.” (Wilkinson, 1996, p. 411)

⁴ Wilkinson, 1996, p. 415

⁵ Depository Library Council, 2015, p. 1

⁶ Ragains points out that “Library directors cite, *inter alia*, the burden of processing publications that are not used and the diminishing importance of maintaining tangible collections of government publications when most current federal publications are available online.” (Ragains, 2010, p. 3)

⁷ FDLP, 2014, p. 1

Catalogue of US Government Publications, and the Code of Federal Regulations, the FDLP announced that new selective libraries could create depository collections comprised uniquely of electronic documents that they deemed most appropriate for their clients.⁸ The GPO is moving away from a focus on producing and disseminating documents, shifting its orientation towards enhancing other services.

3.2 The United Nations Depository Libraries (UNDL) Program

A number of international organisations operate depository library programmes, including the United Nations (UN) and its specialized agencies,⁹ the European Community, the World Bank, the Organization for Economic Co-Operation and Development (OECD), the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and regional organisations.¹⁰ Organizations use library partners to disseminate their work around the world, and also make their publications available electronically to expand public awareness of their products. The reorientation of the United Nations depository library (UNDL) program announced this year suggests that other organizations may also make drastic changes in the near future.

As a result of evolving priorities and precipitated by acts of god when storm conditions destroyed its printing facilities,¹¹ the UN reframed its depository library programme. Since the end of 2012, the UN had stopped sending documents to depositories. The UN library consulted its library partners in 2014 with a proposal that laid out three options for the programme: termination, continuation or re-engineering. The majority of depository librarians that responded agreed that re-engineering would be best. As a result, the UN library indicated that it would modify its programme and continue to work with its partners as it further developed online delivery of UN documents through a digital repository.

The UN had set up its depository library programme to communicate, disseminate and promote public information about its goals, programmes and activities. Until three years ago, the UN sent documents and publications to selected libraries on a regular basis to depository partners. The principal users of collections were government officials, businessmen, professors and students.

The UN programme, with roots dating back to a precedent established by the League of Nations,¹² was based on proposals in 1945 by a United Nations Preparatory Commission that set up a Department of Public Information to “actively assist and encourage... governmental and non-governmental organizations... interested in spreading information about the United Nations (by making) available its publications... for use by these agencies and organizations” in information centres and libraries all over the world.¹³

⁸ Only new libraries have the choice to collect documentation uniquely in digital mode. Libraries already enrolled in the FDLP programme can remove specific documents from their depository collections only five years after notification of intent to do so.

⁹ e.g., the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)

¹⁰ e.g., the Organization of American States (OAS) and the Asian Development Bank (ADB)

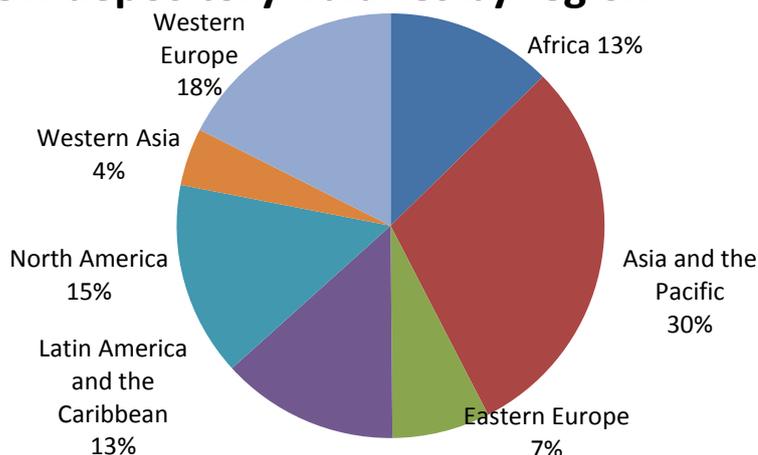
¹¹ In October 2012 Hurricane Sandy destroyed United Nations NY printing facilities, curtailing, *inter alia*, the agency’s ability to continue to publish documents and furnish them to depository libraries.

¹² A UN Library News article indicates that depositories were receiving League of Nations sales publications on a complimentary basis in 1937. (United Nations Library (Geneva), 1993, p. 1)

¹³ *ibid*.

As of September 2014, 365 libraries were UN depository libraries. Asia and the Pacific had the largest number (109), followed by Western Europe (64), North America (64), Latin America and the Caribbean (49), Africa (46), Eastern Europe (27), and Western Asia (16).

1. UN depository libraries by region



Figures from UN, 2015 : Executive summary on the analysis of responses to the consultation

The programme, coordinated by the Dag Hammarskjöld Library at UN headquarters in New York, provided materials as selected by individual depositories, and included training and official inspection visits by UN librarians and information officers. All member States were entitled to one free depository, with additional depositories possible on payment of subscriptions. Annual contributions were channelled towards the cost of maintaining the system.

Depositories had two main responsibilities. Partners were to be managed by experienced librarians who could maintain collections in good working order and make them freely available to the public in their locality and region during reasonable hours, free of charge. Librarians were in addition expected to provide reference assistance and photocopy facilities, as well as inter-library loan services. It was customary for partners to furnish the UN libraries in New York and Geneva with copies of publications that they distributed on a complimentary basis or on exchange.

In terms of inspection visits, the UN programme specified that its information officers were to make periodic visits to depository libraries to provide assistance. The UN Library organized training for depositories to deal with the technical complexities of managing UN documentation, highlighting themes including classification, collections maintenance and document organization, and organized working groups to facilitate professional research in UN documentation, including in traditional reference sources. Biannual questionnaires provided the UN library with comparative data on worldwide depositories and flagged issues to be addressed by the programme.

Some depositories compiled directories to promote UN documentary collections. Libraries also organized exhibits on themes including the environment, human rights, and women's issues, and publicized UN commemorative events such as the 75th Anniversary of the League of Nations and the 50th Anniversary of the United Nations. The UN provided exhibit materials, including information kits and posters to support its depositories.

The 2014 UN Library review, in which 52 percent or 190 of the programme's 365 depository libraries provided input, examined the value of depository libraries. The consultation asked whether the programme was useful when "anyone with an

internet connection (could) access the same content".¹⁴ According to the summary of the review, librarians agreed that the depository library programme remained valuable in providing information services and ensuring that depository library members had the required expertise to assist users in identifying and accessing UN documentation.¹⁵

Respondents reported that the programme was an effective and efficient conduit for specialist research communities to access UN knowledge, and claimed that contacts fostered by their depository library status were as valuable to researchers as actual materials.¹⁶ Librarians confirmed that the programme should be continued to build specialist knowledge of the UN system, and train depository librarians to help clients navigate a complex set of information and information tools.

The UN library undertook to phase in a new programme during 2016-2017, with digital distribution the future basis. It announced that depositories would be able to access UN documents through a password-protected platform, and reported that it was working with its publishing office to coordinate print-on-demand documents through commercial companies.

4. The International Labour Organization (ILO) Depository Library Programme

The ILO consolidated its depository library scheme in the 1960s to provide free and equitable access to its publications and make them available to constituents and the general public around the world in a systematic manner. Individual departments had hitherto sent their publications to institutions, including libraries, but field visits and reports of researchers had made clear that ILO documentation was not always findable or correctly catalogued and shelved. ILO staff members were concerned about the accessibility of publications as many recipients of ILO publications were constituent bodies, university departments, and individual researchers, for whom findability of documentation was not necessarily a priority. Believing that the office had an obligation to provide broad access to its information products and ensure that its documents remained available to the public free of charge, the ILO Publications Branch, working with the ILO library, tightened the office's list of library recipients, questioning whether certain libraries should not be removed, and identifying others that could be invited into the programme. The aim was to work towards establishing a depository library presence in each member State.

Financial constraints also played a role in the office's decision to formalize its depository library programme. The production of publications was costly and with a tightened budget with the withdrawal of the ILO's main funder in the early 1970s, the office was required to reduce its expenditure. Publications branch and library colleagues created an exchange programme when they found that certain libraries were willing to provide institutional publications for ILO documents. At the same time, with computerization, the ILO library wanted to make its index and catalogue records available to other libraries.

¹⁴ UN, 2015, p. 2

¹⁵ *ibid.*

¹⁶ *ibid.*

The ILO had sent documents to member States as early as the inception of the office in 1919.¹⁷ The ILO formalised partnerships with libraries from the 1960s as mentioned above, growing the programme to 170 depositories as of 1995.¹⁸ Today the ILO has 138 depository partners in 130 of its 186 Member States.¹⁹ Contrary to the practices of other organizations, no contractual arrangements formalize the agreement that the ILO has with its depository partners.

The office nominates a library, in most cases the national library or the most representative university library of a country, and enters into partnership through an exchange of letters to designate the institution as an ILO depository. In accordance with the general policy, two or more libraries can be depositories in countries which are large or where there are major libraries active in ILO-related areas of specialization in addition to a main depository.

Under the depository library arrangement, partners are asked to catalogue and maintain ILO publications for a minimum of five years. They should make collections accessible to the public or to a large community of researchers, they should publicize the ILO collection, and they should be willing to exchange material with the ILO upon request. In exchange, they form a partnership with the ILO to serve the public, a partnership that enhances communication and benefits researchers and practitioners who consult depository material.

The ILO sends documentation to its partners, including publications from its major series - documents of the International Labour Conference, Sectoral and Regional Meeting papers and other official documentation, in specific languages, as agreed. Depositories can select additional material published by the ILO such as publications grouped together as special studies. The office does not provide working papers, seminar reports, or executive board (Governing Body) documents as these are not part of the official publications programme. In some countries, depositories have been links for the promotion and sale of ILO publications.

The office does not verify in a systematic way that conditions for partnership are met although the ILO can visit libraries for this purpose.²⁰ The ILO monitors what libraries do with its materials through periodic questionnaires, with libraries that do not meet basic conditions dropped from the programme. Programme files indicate, for example, that the library carried out a survey in 1998. The following year, the office culled the number of libraries in the programme, presumably when they did not respond or had indicated a desire to withdraw from the programme. Files also

¹⁷ In intra-organizational communication from the ILO Publications Branch to the ILO Office of the Legal Adviser, the Archives Committee is informed that the British Library and the Bibliothèque nationale, Suisse had received ILO publications regularly since 1919, and that the "English and French depository collections seem(ed) to be reasonably complete." (Karavasil, ILO Minute sheet of 06.07.92) Ivan Elsmark, Chief of the Publications Branch, furthermore indicates in an ILO internal Information note that the "oldest of (ILO document) collections (went) back to the 1920s." (Elsmark, Information note of 6.07.95)

¹⁸ *ibid.*

¹⁹ The ILO library lists its depository libraries by region on its webpage.

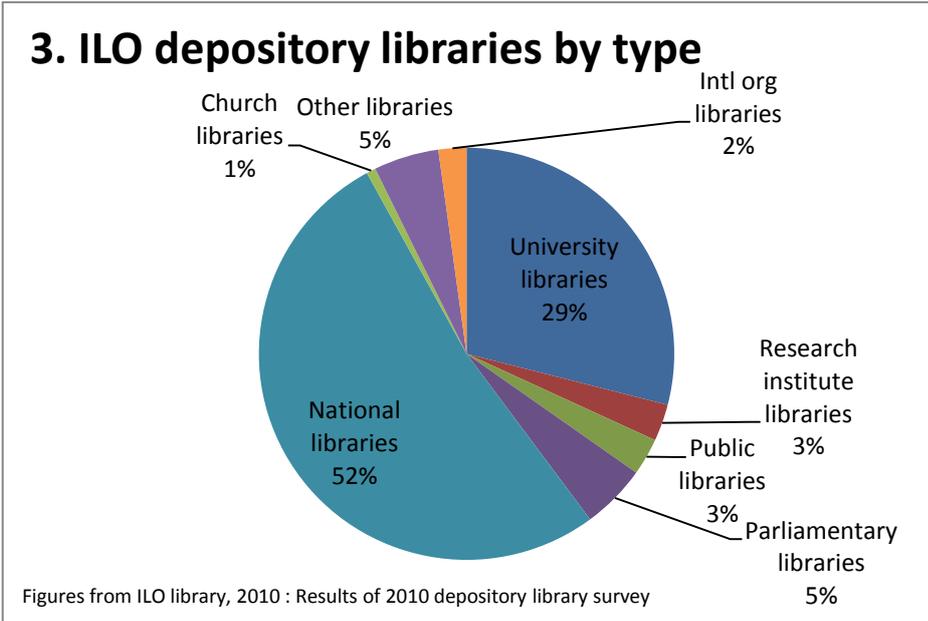
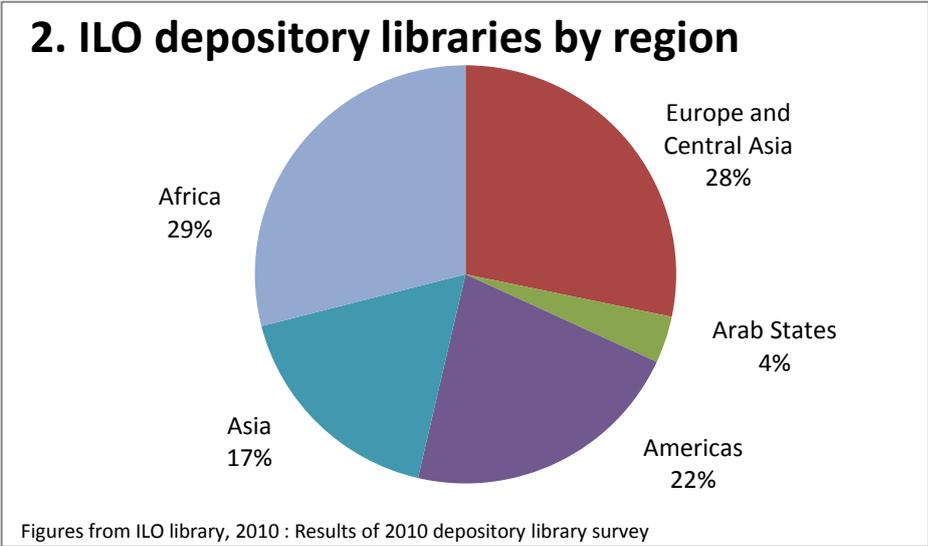
²⁰ Josephine Karavasil with the ILO Publications Branch, for instance, requested the ILO Library to be informed of library colleague missions to countries with depository libraries about their organization of ILO material, and whether publications were integrated in main collections or placed in a separate United Nations sector, whether there were public reading rooms and when libraries were open to the public, as well as how many individual and institutional clients consulted ILO publications and whether acquisitions lists were circulated. (Karavasil, ILO Minute sheet of 23.09.91)

indicate that the ILO library removed depositories from the programme following a 2002 questionnaire. The library did not remove partners following its 2010 questionnaire.

Libraries in the scheme

Currently 138 libraries participate in the ILO depository library programme, with the most in Africa (40), Europe and Central Asia (39), and the Americas (30), followed by those in Asia (24) and in the Arab States (5).

The diversity of type of libraries is an asset for the ILO programme as depositories have different orientations, and serve different client bases. Over half are national libraries (72), followed by main university libraries (40). Other depositories are parliamentary libraries (7), libraries including those of non-governmental human rights institutions, and government agencies for scientific information, the promotion of employment and the development of documentation and information (7), research institute libraries (4), public libraries (4), international organization libraries (3), and church libraries (1). At times constituent groups inquire whether they can be depository libraries but the ILO discourages their participation as documentation is not the top priority for such bodies.²¹



4.1 The current programme: Results of the 2010 survey

An ILO survey in 2010 confirmed that depository libraries remained interested in receiving official documents and being part of the programme.

²¹ In addition, the tripartite nature of the ILO makes housing a depository library with constituent organizations not practical.

The office had sent its questionnaire to 80 depository libraries, 60% of its partners, to take stock of the scheme. The questionnaire was designed to update contact details and examine whether libraries were satisfied with the programme. It solicited views to improve the scheme, particularly in light of advances in digitization of documentation.

Librarians of 37 libraries, 46 percent of 80 libraries, responded. A handful wrote that they were moving towards digital publications, some asked for publications other than those that they received, and others updated contact details.

(1) Year library joined the depository library scheme

The majority of librarians did not respond to this question, possibly because they did not have information readily available. Of those that did, two indicated that their libraries had begun to receive ILO documents before 1950, two from 1951-1980, and three from 1981-2010.

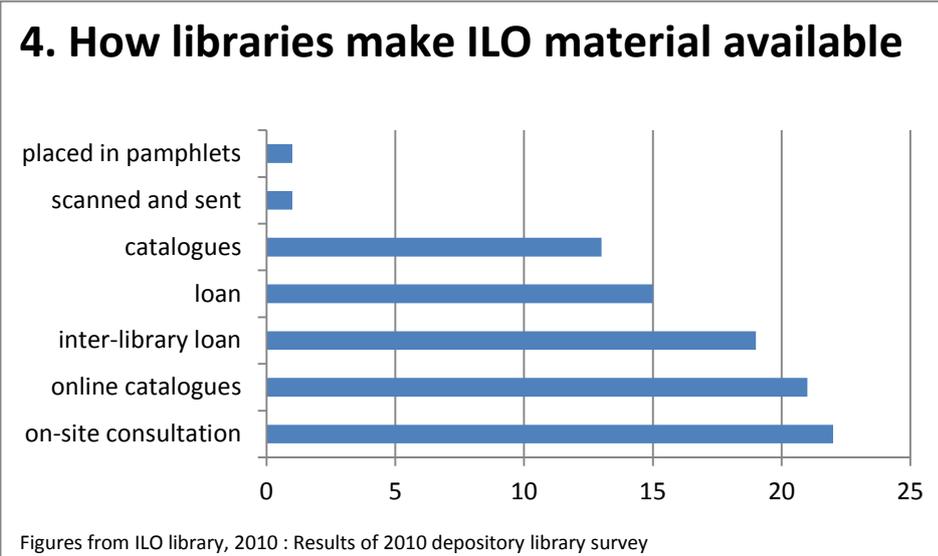
(2) Documents provided

The ILO sent various numbers of ILO publications to depositories in accordance with titles that they had selected. Through the questionnaire, some libraries modified their selection of titles.

(3) Access to and promotion of ILO publications

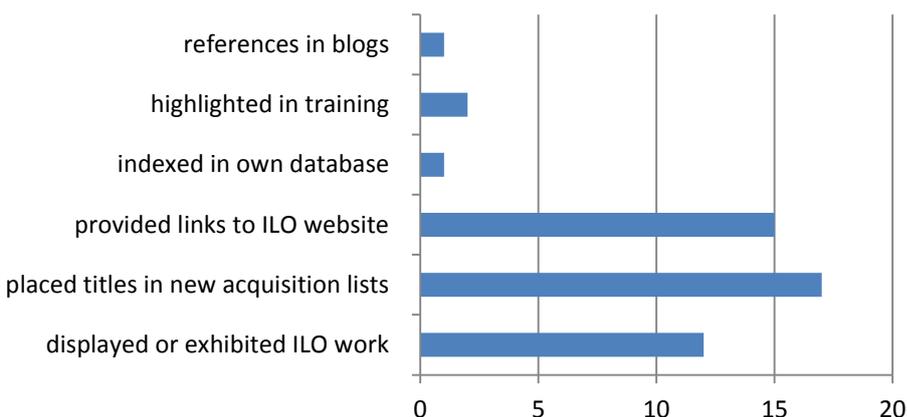
Almost all librarians indicated that their libraries made ILO collections available to the public. The UN Library in NY reported that it asked the general public to consult other institutions before approaching it for research as its resources were for UN member states and UN agency personnel.

Librarians wrote that on-site consultation and photocopying were the most common means of making ILO documentation available to users (22). They also indicated other modes: on-line cataloguing (21), inter-library loans (19), loans (15), and catalogues (13). Some wrote that they scanned and provided ILO documents by mail (1) and included ILO work in pamphlets (1).



Depositories were expected to make ILO material available and educate users about its publications. Librarians reported that they displayed or exhibited ILO work (23), placed titles in new acquisition lists (17), and provided links to ILO resources and the ILO Library catalogue, Labordoc, on their websites (15). One librarian reported that s/he indexed ILO publications in the library's own database (1), while others indicated that they highlighted the availability of ILO documentation in orientation programmes for new students (1) and student, staff and reader training (1), as well as placed references in blogs (1). A number of depository librarians reported that they had an internet presence; some mentioned that they advertised on their websites that they were ILO depositories.

5. Promotion of ILO material

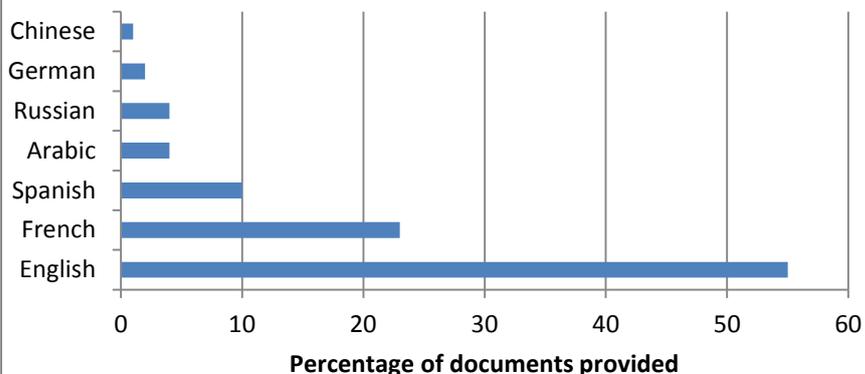


Figures from ILO library, 2010 : Results of 2010 depository library survey

(4) Languages of publications sent

According to ILO distribution unit lists, the office sent documents to depository libraries in the following languages: English (55%), French (23%), Spanish (10%), Arabic (4%), Russian (4%), German (2%), and Chinese (1%). Certain librarians indicated language preferences different from language versions of documents received, and preferences for publications

6. ILO material sent by language



Figures from ILO library, 2010 : Results of 2010 depository library survey

in additional languages. The survey showed that 60% of partners received ILO work in 1 language, 30% in 2 languages, 9% in 3 languages, and 1% in 8 languages. Distribution unit figures indicate that texts categorized as special studies were provided to depositories in English (78), French (38) and Spanish (20) versions.²²

(5) Dissemination of documents in electronic or print form

Of those that responded to a question regarding electronic or hard-copy preferences, 14 librarians indicated that they wished to receive publications in print. 8 preferred publications in electronic format, while 10 wished to receive both print and electronic documents. Five libraries did not respond.

²² These figures are for the ILO's 2013 Wage Report.

(6) Other

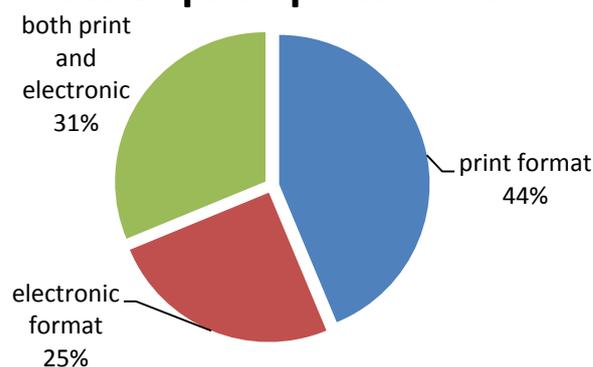
While there was little change in library addresses, depositories provided telephone and telefax numbers and email contact details that differed considerably from ILO records.

Summary

37 depository libraries responded to the 2010 ILO Library

questionnaire. That less than half of partner libraries returned the questionnaire suggests that the depository library programme may not have been a priority for a number of libraries. Librarians that did not respond may have been over-stretched, unable to do more than their normal duties, or insufficiently knowledgeable about the depository programme to provide answers with confidence; addressees may have transferred to other positions or have left their libraries, possibly resulting in ILO communication left unattended.

7. Electronic vs print preference



Figures from ILO library, 2010 : Results of 2010 depository library survey

5. Recasting the ILO programme

Before the development of the world wide web and the explosion of electronic documentation, it was assumed that the ILO would send publications in hard copy to its depository library partners. The ILO used its programme to make documentation available and depositories were honoured to receive publications from the office. Depositories catalogued documents that they received and provided access to them on-site, through scanning as well as through inter-library loan.

With its 2013 reforms, the ILO made development of knowledge and research a top priority and reorganized means to draw attention to its work and make its findings and reports available. This is an opportunity for the library. The ILO, through the library, can see how its depository library programme could contribute to further propound ILO research, policy advice and instruments as presented in office documentation. The library can encourage depository partners to expand the availability of ILO information at little cost.

It would be straightforward for the ILO to move towards electronic dissemination of publications through its depository programme. The library has already made ILO documentation easily findable through the internet. The library facilitates access to work through an online catalogue, and has digitized and linked 120,000 files. All official documentation is already accessible electronically.

The aims of the programme would remain the same despite an emphasis on digital access. The ILO library would coordinate with depositories as front-line service providers. It could provide a public link through which depository librarians could access most documents provided through the programme (See Annex I: Proposed ILO website for depository libraries), and depositories would have the option to continue to receive hard-copy versions of documents.

The ILO library could do three things to breathe energy into its depository programme. In addition to (1) a consultative process, including a survey of depository libraries and collaboration with field colleagues, modification could include (2) re-orientation towards ILO documentation in electronic format and provision of technical support, as well as (3) building of a community of practitioners to encourage exchange on means to access ILO materials and educate the public. A timeline is proposed to manage the process.

5.1 A strategic direction through a consultative process

It is suggested that the ILO consult partners before modifying the programme. Social dialogue is the foundation of the substantive work of the ILO, and it would be remiss of the office to modify a programme that makes it possible for constituents, researchers and the public to access documentation without seeking partner library views. The ILO library should welcome an exchange of information on issues of common interest before designing programme changes.

A consultation could explore how partners valued the ILO depository scheme. Depository librarians may feel that today's wide availability of online material makes the maintenance of tangible collections less important, and priorities for their collections may have changed. Through a questionnaire, the ILO could solicit partner views regarding their collections and work.

A consultative process would in addition permit the ILO library to apprise depositories of developments. The ILO should clarify institutional changes in printing and dissemination of documents that have affected depository partners, and the ILO could notify partners of electronic access availability of documents.

A survey would help the ILO library to learn about depository library concerns. How partners have experienced institutional changes, and how they are balancing evolving needs to process and access digital collections could be understood. Consultation may reveal that libraries find depository services to be redundant when most materials are accessible through the internet. On the other hand, partners may find value in remaining members. They may be committed to the ideals of a scheme that allows them to provide access to international organization material which researchers and practitioners find difficult to access.

The survey that follows can guide development of the programme. The ILO library should invite partners to complete the survey online, and also send it in hard copy to all partners.

5.1.1 New ILO depository library questionnaire

This survey is mandatory for all ILO depository libraries. We would appreciate it if you would complete it online this month.

Depository libraries that do not return the questionnaire will be assumed to no longer be interested in being part of the ILO depository library programme.

Name

Title

Signature (internet submission will be considered as a signature)

Date

Part 1: Information about your library

Library name

Address, including city and country

Telephone number, including country code

e-mail contact

Library web site

Library director

Staff member responsible for ILO depository collection, with year s/he took up this duty

Electronic tools available for public use

Number of public computer terminals in your library

Internet access, including details of connectivity

CD ROM, tablets or other readers

Other

Social media

Social networks in which your library is active. Please explain.

Digitization

Do you provide services based on digital collections?

What percentage of your materials is in digital or electronic formats?

How does your library balance the need to process and access digital collections with the need to process and manage paper collections?

Depository collections

What other depository collections does your library house?

Do you continue to collect hard copy documentation of other depository programmes in the same magnitude as in the past? Please explain.

Part 2: The ILO collection

In which year did your library begin to receive ILO documents?

How many copies do you receive of each ILO publication?

1

2

other number

How many ILO publications did you receive in 2010?

How many ILO publications did you receive in 2015?

In which languages does your library receive ILO publications?

Arabic

Chinese

English

French

German

Russian

Spanish

In which official languages would you like to receive ILO publications?

English

French

- Spanish

Possibilities for digital access

Most ILO publications are available online and can be accessed through the ILO Library website page for depositories.

-What is your preference for receiving publications

- in print
- in electronic format
- in both print and electronic format

Electronic format delivery

Are you interested in electronic access to ILO publications?

How would electronic access to the majority of ILO materials affect your depository services?

Print

For what reasons do you prefer to receive paper copies of documentation?

- Paper copies are needed for archival purposes.
- The library does not use or is not familiar with digital technology.
- Librarians and users prefer paper copies of documents.
- Other. Please explain.

Please indicate publication titles that you wish to continue to receive in hard copy.²³

Are you satisfied with the current system for distributing ILO publications? Please explain.

Part 3: User access to ILO collections

Does your library make ILO publications available to the public?

- Yes. Please give details.
- No. Please give details.

How does your library make ILO publications available?

- through a library catalogue
- through an online library catalogue
- through loans
- through interlibrary loans
- through on-site consultation
- through on-site access of ILO websites
- through photocopying
- Other. Please explain.

Do you catalogue ILO depository materials?

- all ILO depository materials
- some ILO depository materials
- no ILO depository materials

ILO depository library service users

What users consult ILO material at your library?

Which ILO titles or resources are most heavily consulted?

What interaction do you or your colleagues have with ILO document users?

What support could better help you serve users of ILO depository materials?

Promotion of the ILO depository collection

Do you promote ILO collections or make them visible?

How do you share information about new ILO resources?

- new acquisitions list
- displays
- library webpage links to the ILO website or the ILO library database, Labordoc
- Other. Please explain.

²³ Depository library documents are listed in Annex I.

Part 4: Library concerns

What institutional changes have affected depository processes in your library since 2010?

What modifications has your library undertaken in terms of:

- physical spaces to house collections
- personnel
- library orientation
- training
- computers and computer space for library users
- internet connection
- other. Please explain.

Part 5: Depository library programme improvement

How is the ILO depository library service important or not important for your library?

How many hours do you spend each month on the ILO depository collection?

Would you like to spend more or less time on the programme?

Does your library have administrative pressures to expand or reduce the ILO collection or other depository library holdings?

Library familiarity with ILO material

Do you consult the ILO library site?

Do you consult ILO databases?

Would you like support to navigate ILO sites including the library catalogue, Labordoc?

Reference support

How could the ILO better support your library to assist users?

Would support be useful for you to promote depository holdings?

Would you be interested in a facebook page to receive and share information concerning the ILO depository library programme?

Do you have comments and suggestions, for example on requirements for specialist knowledge about ILO documentation or navigating ILO electronic sources?

Other comments

Consultation with other stakeholders

A consultative process to improve the depository programme could also involve other groups. In addition to obtaining the views of librarians with depository partners, the ILO library can consult field-based office colleagues responsible for information and communication. These colleagues could be invited to share their views on ways to improve the depository programme. They could be asked to visit depositories to understand partner concerns, see how depositories manage ILO documentation, and explore support to promote ILO work.

Field colleagues could moreover recommend partners for the programme. Over half of depository partners are national libraries and it would be interesting to confirm that they are, with their multifarious priorities, the best institutions to make ILO documentation available to the public. Libraries and documentation centres connected to institutions active in ILO-related areas that serve targeted audiences may be better suited for the programme. Field colleagues may know of libraries that are easily accessible to large populations, and sufficiently well-equipped and well-wired to provide user access to electronic resources. With their knowledge of local actors and conditions, ILO colleagues could identify appropriate libraries for the

programme, particularly in the 56 member states in which the ILO does not have a depository library presence.

5.2 Electronic dissemination of ILO documents, and technical support

The ILO can transition its depository library programme to digital mode. Implicit in encouraging depositories to access publications electronically is a shift in programme orientation from supporting collections of hard copy documentation to brokerage of access to documentation. As discussed, the majority of publications provided in hard copy to ILO depository libraries are already available in digital format,²⁴ and introduction of a depository library-designated site on the ILO library webpage would facilitate partner access to these documents.

With digital access, depositories would not need to own hard copies of documents. Many libraries already use the online environment to service their communities, subscribing to full-text databases, cooperating virtually in reference services and scanning publications for electronic delivery.

Although a digital paradigm would be offered, depositories would have a choice in how they handled ILO documentation. The ILO would continue its mailing service to libraries that wished to receive documents in hard copy. Libraries that preferred to treat digitally-available documentation like printed material could download, print, catalogue and store material. Libraries could alternatively download documents into catalogues, storing them electronically in their servers. A fourth possibility would be to do away with treating ILO publications available digitally by accessing digital publications electronically as needed. The latter could be easiest for depositories, although some librarians could prefer to store documents to assure user access in the event of uncertain or slow internet connectivity.

In electing to access material through the internet, depositories could maintain hard-copy collections of historical documentation, or replace tangible copies with online access. In any case the ILO library would ensure that digitized documents remained accessible not only currently but retrospectively in the future.

In terms of copyright, depositories would have implicit permission to copy, refresh and migrate ILO publications when they downloaded them for their collections.

The use of the internet to make documentation available presupposes that depositories have computer facilities, internet connectivity, and technical capacity to mine available materials. Although 21 librarians indicated in the 2010 survey that they provided on-line cataloguing, while 15 provided links to the ILO website or the ILO library catalogue, and a number said that they had an internet presence, libraries did not share information about their digital capacities. Many are likely to have computers for use by the public and technical capacity to provide electronic access to ILO documents, but some depositories may appreciate technical support. The ILO library could make efforts to understand depository requirements for assistance and training and ensure that depository library staff keep abreast of technological

²⁴ The ILO cannot digitize all titles provided through its depository programme because of copyright agreements with co-publishers. Partners could continue to receive such publications in hard copy through an indication of interest.

developments to treat and search for bibliographic or documentary resources, and advise on maintenance of network infrastructure to meet information demands.

5.3 Reference support, buttressed by a community of practice

A third area, moving away from the dissemination to the promotion of knowledge, could emphasize outreach and communication with depository libraries in an electronic environment. A primarily online service offers opportunities for the ILO library to develop its depository programme towards building a community of practice to support partner capacities in reference assistance.

Depository librarians have expertise developed through working with different collections. They may welcome opportunities to learn more about ILO documentation to help users unfamiliar with the ILO. While waiting for survey responses from partners, the ILO library could focus on assisting its community of depository partners to improve discovery of information.

Social networking offers possibilities to nurture collaboration. The ILO library can use Web 2.0 tools to open, for example, a community facebook page for its partners. The site would allow depositories to share information, ask questions and contribute good practice (including photos of library exhibits, libraries and their staff), and librarians separated geographically could build, in communicating with each other, a network to provide mutual support. Through the site the ILO library could inform partners of newly-publicized material. The site could be a forum for discussion, and reinforce depository librarian competences. Through the facebook facility the ILO library and depository partners could share ideas and promote collaborative learning including on raising awareness of the availability of labour-relation information, and means to assist users in finding elusive material.²⁵ The ILO could share its library research guides, an accessible means to research ILO information,²⁶ and encourage depositories to produce their own reference guides, inspired by those created by other libraries.²⁷

Through a survey that takes stock of the depository programme and a facebook interface that helps depository partners to support each other, the ILO library, with its partners, could contribute to determining the future direction of the depository programme.

5.4 Timeline: Programme modification

The library can begin work on modifications once library colleagues have discussed possibilities. An initial twelve month horizon is proposed for assessment, implementation, evaluation and on-going modification of the scheme.

²⁵ All users including depository librarians could continue to access the ILO library reference service, Ask a librarian (library@ilo.org). ILO library reference service colleagues respond to queries each working day, with items requiring specialist knowledge handled by office colleagues responsible for technical areas.

²⁶ ILO research guides are on the ILO library site: <http://www.ilo.org/inform/lang--en/index.htm>

²⁷ See for example Cornell University's guide for conducting ILO research: <http://guides.library.cornell.edu/c.php?g=32257&p=203318>.

2016	January - March	April – June	July - September	October - December
I. Assessment				
A. Programme assessment	-ILO library review of assessment and proposal to recast depository programme			
II. Implementation				
B. ILO library webpage for depository libraries	-Edit text -Translate into French and Spanish -Upload text onto library website			-Modify webpage in accordance with library partner suggestions
C. Field-based ILO information colleague input	-Inform colleagues of depository library programme review -Solicit colleague views regarding programme through library facebook site -Organize skype discussions with interested field colleagues	-Continue skype discussions with field colleagues, soliciting views on libraries to be included in the programme	-Share survey results via library colleague facebook page	-Solicit field colleague views of survey results and means to develop programme
D. ILO depository library programme survey	-Prepare survey electronically -Edit text -Translate into French and Spanish -Invite depository partners by email to complete survey electronically by end April -Post survey to all depository libraries, asking them to return it by end April	-Compile survey results -Analyse responses and prepare tables -Draw conclusions	-Prepare synthesis of survey results -Announce survey results via facebook page -Thank depositories that responded	
E. ILO depository librarian facebook page	-Set up social network site -Translate into French and Spanish	-Invite depositories to join programme facebook page -List ideas to post each quarter on facebook page	-Again invite depositories to join programme facebook page -Post quarterly content on facebook page	-Solicit views of survey results and means to develop programme -Post quarterly content on facebook page
F. Programme administration:			-Meet with distribution unit	-Update depository library programme

Depository partner list			colleagues to rectify contact reports in accordance with survey results	files and tables -Update list of depository libraries posted on ILO library website -Prepare list of depository libraries per member State
III Evaluation				
I. Programme evaluation				-Evaluate programme one year after depository programme study
IV Modification				
				-Prepare further modifications for future based on evaluation

6. Conclusion

“The only constant is change.” — Heraclitus

What is the utility of a depository library programme when documentation is accessible online? At first glance it would appear that users everywhere have access to as much information as they could want via the internet. It becomes apparent through internet searching, however, that information sources can be restricted, costly, and difficult to find. Information is not freely available in spite of an explosion of digital sites and services.

Closing the ILO depository library programme is possible. The ILO sends fewer documents to depository partners than in previous years, and with most office documentation available digitally, many depository libraries are likely to opt out of the programme when they learn that they can access materials online.

The likely result of providing depositories with easy access to materials is a reduction in the number of libraries that wish to continue to receive documents in hard copy. Librarians may wish to have their institutions continue to be part of a partnership with the ILO, however. They may find it useful to be informed of the availability of new publications, and may appreciate ILO library efforts to simplify their work, support reference skill upgrading and learn how others promote ILO work.

Officials of the ILO, like colleagues of other international organizations, agree that the office must strengthen its research networks, and emphasize a wide external dissemination of its findings. The ILO library can continue to work with depository library partners to make the institution’s documents available, particularly as the ILO approaches its centenary in 2019. A handful of partners have collected ILO documentation since 1919 and these, larger national libraries, may be pleased to celebrate the centennial with the office. Librarians of other institutions can use their

specialist knowledge to promote the work of the ILO, and reach audiences interested in social and labour matters.

The ILO library vision is to be “the first choice for information about the world of work,” while its mission is to “... connect and engage with users around the world to promote and share ILO knowledge, as part of the ILO's goal to be the global centre of excellence on world of work matters.”²⁸ The ILO library can strengthen its network of library partners through communication of easy access to ILO references and support of fellow librarians in institutions across the globe.

²⁸ ILO library vision and mission are posted on the library website: <http://www.ilo.org/inform/about-us/mission-and-vision/lang--en/index.htm>

7. Annex I: Proposed ILO website page for depository libraries

ILO Depository Library Resource Page

Knowledge creation and knowledge sharing are fundamental for the International Labour Organization. Each year the ILO publishes studies, reports, books and other materials on the world of work. The ILO partners with national and academic libraries across the globe to make its collections available and promote their use. Find a [depository library](#) near you.

Depository libraries can access major ILO publications through the links below. The sources are also available through the [ILO Library](#) webpage.

Official documents

- [International Labour Conference \(ILC\)](#)
- [Regional Meetings](#)
- [Sectoral Meetings](#)
- [Official Bulletin](#)

Series A: Information on the activities of the ILO, texts adopted by the International Labour Conference (ILC) and other official documents

Series B: Reports of the Committee on Freedom of Association (CFA) of the Governing Body of the ILO and related material

Journals

- [International Journal of Labour Research](#)
- [International Labour Review](#) (electronically available through subscription)

Flagship publications

- [Global employment and social outlook \(2015-\)](#)
replaces [Global employment trends \(2003-2014\)](#) and [World of work report \(2008-2014\)](#)
- [Global wage report \(2008/9 to 2014/5\)](#)
- [World social protection report \(2014/15\)](#)

Statistics

- Labour statistics: [ILO STAT database](#)
- [Key Indicators of the Labour Market \(KILM\), 8th edition \(2014\)](#)

Data

- [ILO databases and resources](#)
- [ILO knowledge portal](#) (country information and data on labour laws, standards, policies and statistics)

Research guides

- [ILO research guides](#)

Latest publications

- [New titles](#)

Depository libraries can receive alerts of availability of electronic documents, receive support to facilitate access of documents and publicize the ILO collection. Contact Ask a Librarian: library@ilo.org.

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