ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND THE FUTURE OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEPOSITORY LIBRARY SYSTEM

DEPOSITORY LIBRARY COUNCIL, 2016

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WHAT IS THE UN DEPOSITORY LIBRARY SYSTEM?

Global Depository Library System Founded in 1947 by the UN Library and American Library Association.

Currently numbers 362 libraries in 136 countries.

You can call it the “UNDL” if you want to be cool.

BRIEF HISTORY

Preceded by the League of Nations (LON) Depository System which existed from early 1920's to 1945.

The UN Sales Publications System classification system largely based on the LON system.

Many US Libraries were exchange partners for LON documents & publications; none were depositories.

SIGURD RASMUSSEN

Sigurd Hartz Rasmussen.

Lived to be 99 years old. Spoke a dozen languages.

Strung wire neck high on roads frequented by Nazis motorcyclists.

Librarian for LON Mission at Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton.

First permanent head of the UN Library.

Founder of the UNDL along with the American Library Assocation.

EARLY VISIONS OF THE UNDL

In May 1947, *Library Journal* announced that "arrangements were made with the American Library Association for twenty-five leading university and public libraries to function as depositories for United Nations documents.

UN records proposed depositories receive "all unrestricted material printed and mimeographed in the official language requested".

The International Advisory Committee of Library Experts recommended in 1948 that "the range of materials distributed be as inclusive as possible including the internal papers of the Secretariat."

A MORAL MANDATE

In order to make the documents and publications of the United Nations freely available throughout the world there shall be maintained a system of depository libraries to which documents and publications will be sent without charge under the conditions outlined below.

-- December 20, 1955. *Principles Governing United Nations Depository Libraries* U.N. Doc. ST/PB/4.

THREE KEY CONCEPTS

“Documents and publications”

“Throughout the world”

“Without charge”

UN DOCUMENTS AND PUBLICATIONS

- In the United States a “document” is “any informational matter printed by the U.S. government, at government expense or as required by law” 44 USC 1901 (1994).

- The United Nations distinguishes between documents and publications. Essential difference is UN publications are typically under copyright and sold to the public.

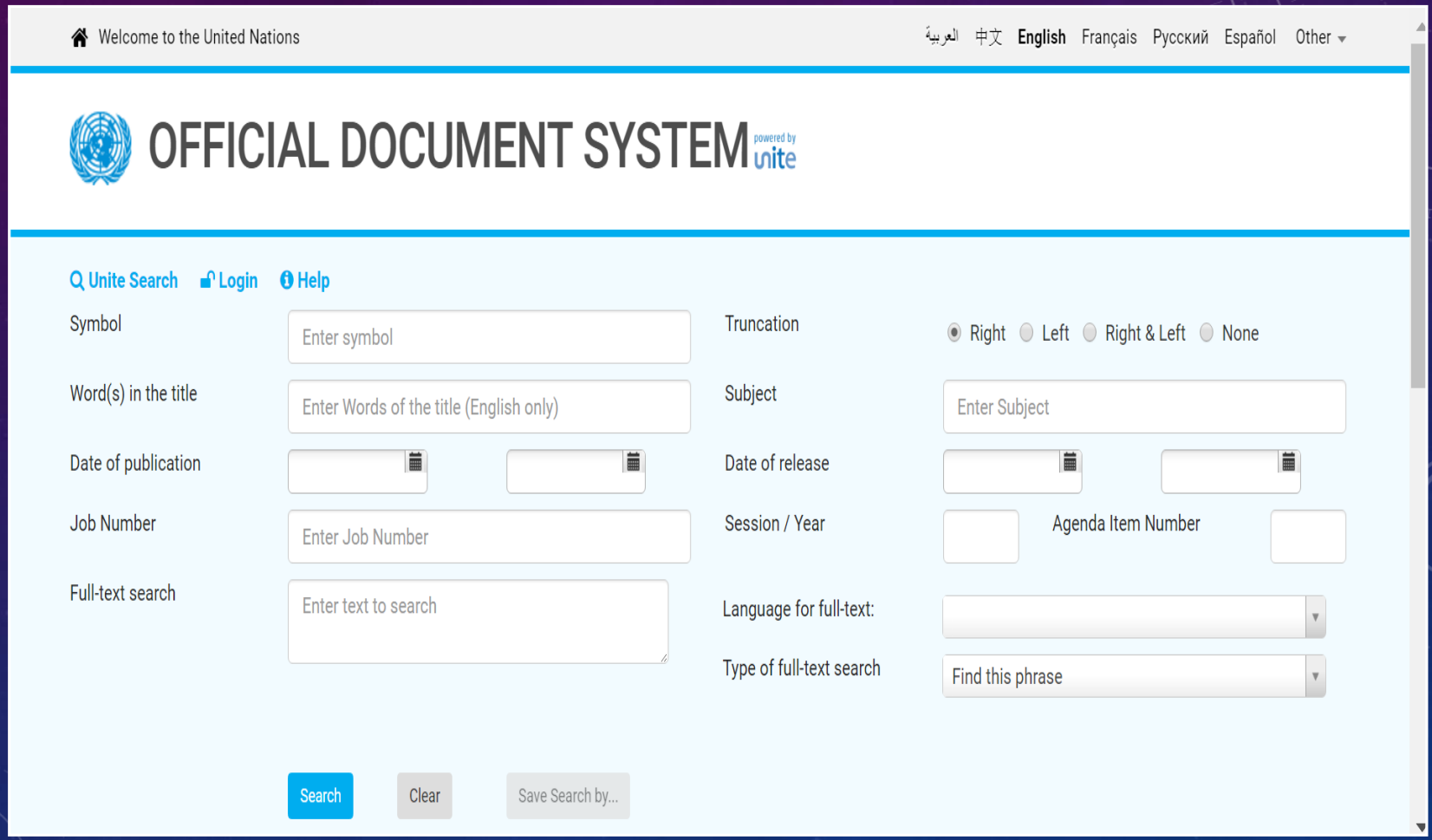
SCOPE, RIGHTS, AND MEANS OF ACCESS

Publications are the research output and scholarly communication of the United Nations: examples include statistical annuals like the *Demographic Yearbook*, journals, and scholarly monographs.

Documents include the *Official Records,* reports, and working papers that the UN produces in the course of conducting its business.

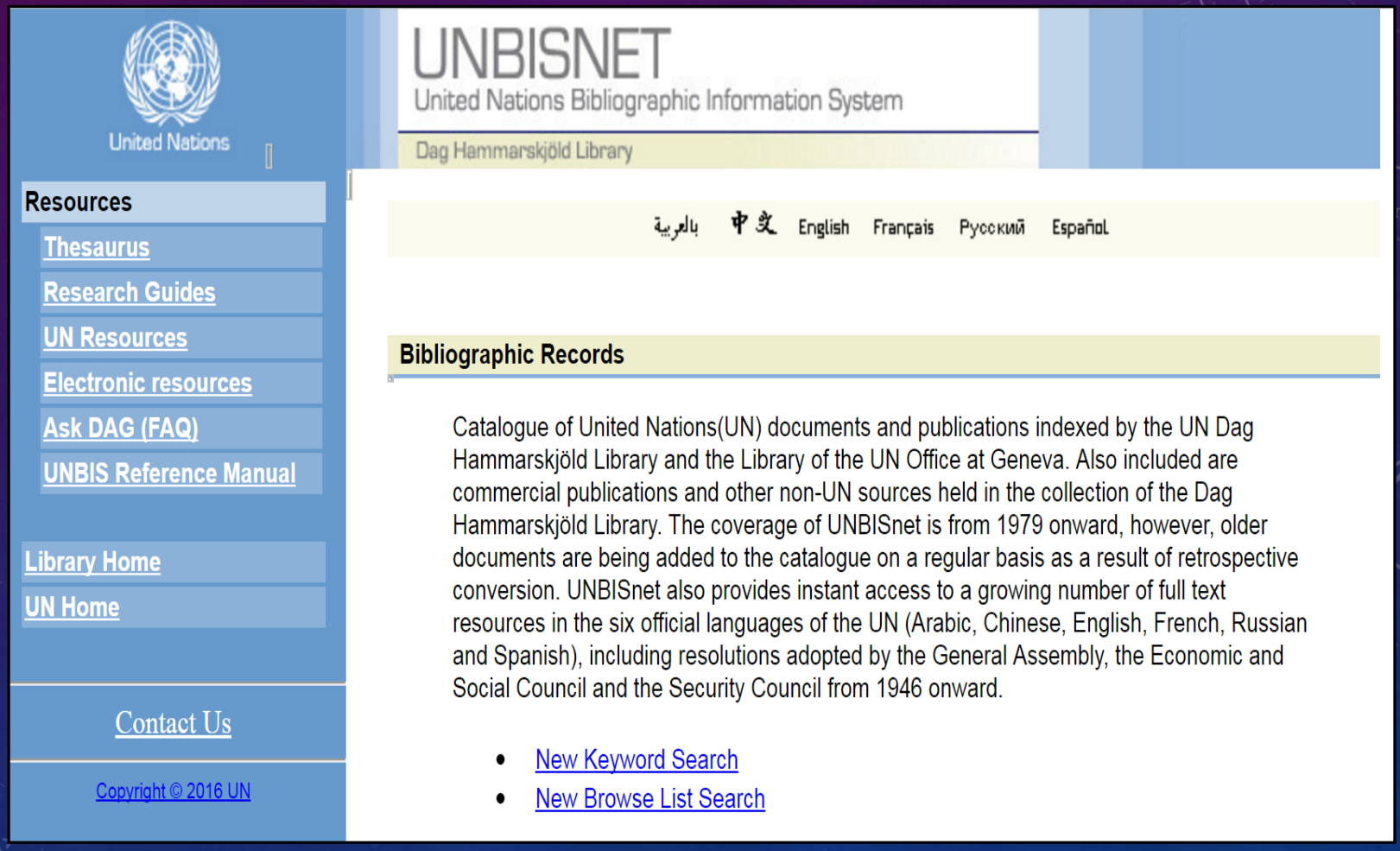
Documents are primarily discoverable via two online platforms: UNBISNet and the UN Official Documents System (ODS).

UN OFFICIAL DOCUMENT SYSTEM



United Nations Official Document System

UNBISNET



United Nations Bibliographic Information System

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES

Governing Document for the UN Depository Library System.

Specifies the rules, procedures, and types of content to be received on United Nations Deposit.

Currently reads "*All depositories shall receive automatically, and according to their needs, all publications offered for sale.*"

ST/AI/189/ADD.11/REV.2

UNITED NATIONS

ST

Secretariat

ST/AI/189/Add.11/Rev.2
18 August 1995

ADMINISTRATIVE INSTRUCTION*

To: Members of the staff

From: The Assistant Secretary-General for Public Information

Subject: REGULATIONS FOR THE CONTROL AND LIMITATION OF DOCUMENTATION

Addendum

PRINCIPLES GOVERNING UNITED NATIONS DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES

I. GENERAL

1. In order to make its documents and publications available throughout the world, the United Nations maintains a system of depository libraries to which such documents and publications are sent under the conditions outlined in sections III and IV below.

II. AUTHORITY TO DESIGNATE DEPOSITORY LIBRARIES

ST/AI/189/Add.11/Rev.2

DEPOSITORY FEES

Originally almost all UN content was freely sent.

In 1974 the number of depositories receiving free and comprehensive collections was reduced to one per county.

Other existing depositories were required to pay a small contribution. In 1974 this was $500.

In 2012 the fee was $1,000 and $1750 for “partial” and full depositories, respectfully.

DEPOSITORY EXCLUSIONS

- Over the years a growing number of United Nations publications categories were not included on deposit.
- Generally these were publicaitons from UN Funds and Programs such as UNICEF and UNDP that do not report to the UN Secretariat.
- By 1995 the list of “exclusions” had grown to over seventeen separate categories.

UN "DECLARATION" ENDING PRINT DEPOSIT

In July 2013, UN Depository Libraries received an email from the United Nations Department of Public Information, stating that due to a "confluence of circumstances" following damage caused by Hurricane Sandy, the printing and distribution of material from the United Nations Publications Office in New York would cease.

(Email message to UN Depository Libraries, July 10, 2013).

THE DAWN OF DIGITAL DEPOSIT?

The message also stated that "at the earliest possible opportunity we will provide Depository Libraries with online access to their *standard range of publications* via the UN e-Collection, once it is launched. This access will be on the *same fee basis* in 2014 as applied to Depository Libraries in 2012."

A CONSULTATION PAPER

A new strategic direction for UN Depository Libraries – consultation paper

Summary

This is a consultation document which invites comments from UN Depository Libraries. It does not at this stage represent the policy of the United Nations. Depository Libraries are invited to respond to this review. The deadline for responses is **30 June 2014**. Final decisions on the review are with the Publications Board of the UN.

The United Nations Depository Libraries (UNDL) system is a worldwide network of libraries that, historically, received copies of the most important United Nations documents and publications. Membership was subject to meeting certain standards and payment of a subscription, with free membership for national, and some parliamentary, libraries. Income covered only a fraction of the costs of the system. Since late 2012 hard-copy documents and publications have not been distributed by the UN in New York, initially because of damage in Hurricane Sandy. Due to the shift to online publishing, the costs of physical production and distribution, and budget reductions, the programme is no longer viable. The Dag Hammarskjöld Library (DHL), which coordinates UNDL, has reviewed the purpose and future of the service from 2015 onwards.

It is expected that the UN E-Collection of sales publications will become available in 2015. This will form one part of the offer to UNDL. The other part is improved online delivery of UN documents and free publications through a Digital Repository – also due to be operational by 2015.

The key question of the review is: what value is there in a 'Depository Library' when anyone with an internet connection can access the same content? Six sources of enduring value were identified.

A new strategic direction for UN Depository Libraries – consultation paper

SIX SOURCES OF ENDURING VALUE

1. Impact in the member states

The UNDL system remains a relatively cost-effective method for the UN Secretariat to interact with people in the member states.

2. Specialist knowledge and genuine accessibility

The UNDL help fulfil the UN's commitments to transparency to all the world's citizens. Content that is available digitally may still be non-transparent due to the complexity of UN information. The USP (Unique Selling Point) of the Depository Library is its specialist knowledge to help clients connect with UN content despite this complexity. This USP implies a commitment to developing the specialist knowledge required in the role. The new UNDL label will require some minimum standards of expertise to be met in addition to other service standards.

3. Efficient targeting of specialist researchers

UNDL members serve vibrant specialist research communities which make use of UN content, normally as part of much wider research activity. The UNDL is an efficient and effective conduit for UN knowledge to reach specialist research communities. Knowledge that reaches specialist research communities will often be multiplied.

SIX SOURCES OF ENDURING VALUE -CONTINUED

4. Networks, technical and human

Libraries subscribing to the E-Collection should be able to integrate catalogue data with the publications, eliminating physical and professional processing. The Digital Repository (DR) will open up a similar possibility for UN documents and free publications. The DR should also allow libraries to be selective in which documents and free publications they receive; and to choose between downloading selected material or creating links to content that is stored and organised on the DR. Technology also now supports much greater sharing of knowledge and effort in the UNDL system. UN-related services and expertise can be promoted and transferred through wider library networks.

5. Intangible benefits

The UNDL system has value in terms of prestige and authority, both for the Depository Library (in terms of its collection and status as a UN partner) and for the UN (the association with some of the most prestigious libraries worldwide). The intangible benefits can be developed, through e.g. provision of branding materials and increased support to the UNDL from the wider UN system. One branding question is the name: to continue with “Depository Library” or to change to e.g. “UN Partner Library”. Another is to consider a star rating system for UNDL to indicate the level of service offered.

6. Preservation of authentic documents

The UNDL system provides the benefit of ‘redundancy’ in the preservation of UN documents and publications. These duplicates are also a control on the authenticity of documents preserved at UN Headquarters. This role remains relevant even with digital documents.

THE UN E-COLLECTION AND THE DIGITAL REPOSITORY

In May 29, 2015 UN Depository Libraries received another email from the Dag Hammarskjöld Library (DHL) stating that:

- "Depository Libraries will receive a comprehensive and integrated service from DHL including distribution of relevant paid/unpaid publications and documents through the *Digital Repository*"

- "Depository Libraries will have *full access to all relevant publications*"

- "Depositories will receive significant discounts for print, as well as a discount on the subscription to the United Nations new *e-Collection*.

(Email message to UN Depository Libraries, May 29, 2015).

THE BEST OF INTENTIONS?

“The pricing for the E-Collection… which is not guaranteed and could go up or down, is that the price will be around $10,000 for a standard annual subscription.”

“The annual registration fee for UNDL status is also provisional. It will include an E-Collection subscription and is currently projected at $5,000 for libraries in Higher Income states (as defined by the World Bank); $2,500 in Upper Middle-Income states; $500 in Lower Middle Income states; and $250 in Low Income states.”

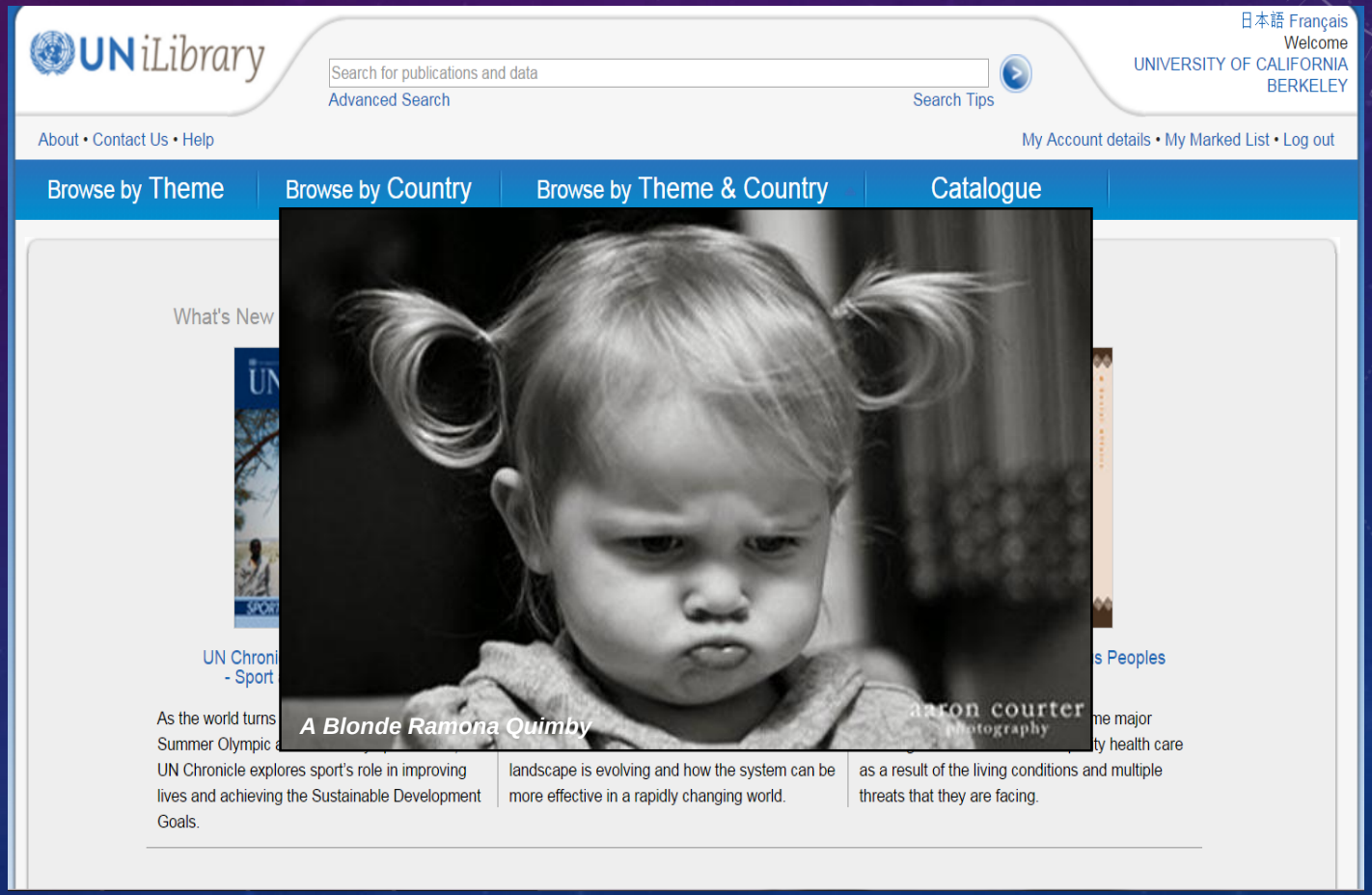
“This rate will be further discounted by 40% for Depository Libraries registered on 1 January 2014 which pay their 2015 registration fee within three months of launch of the E-Collection.”

Dag Hammarskjöld Library (2014)

WHAT HAPPENED NEXT

- Iain Watt, Head Librarian at the UN Dag Hammarskjold Library in New York and lead author of the consultation paper, left his position to return to the European Parliament.
- Maritina Panigua, head of the DHL Outreach and Professional Development division also retired at approximately the same time.
- Ultimately the UN e-Collection was never launched - in spite of being promoted at several GODORT meetings and announced in DttP.
- Then UN Depositories got the News…

The UN iLibrary!



UN iLibrary

The UN iLibrary and the OECD

- Rumors began to swirl that the OECD was involved.
- In a February 17, 2016 email from the OECD, we read that “In response to the great interest in pricing for this new platform the details have been posted today on the site, the annual list price has been set at 12,500 USD.”
- No formal distinction was made in pricing between depositories in developed and developing countries.
- Later we were informed Depositories would be given a 10% discount the first year. This was subsequently changed to a permanent 10% discount.

UN iLibrary “Features”

High pricing for content that is already almost all free.

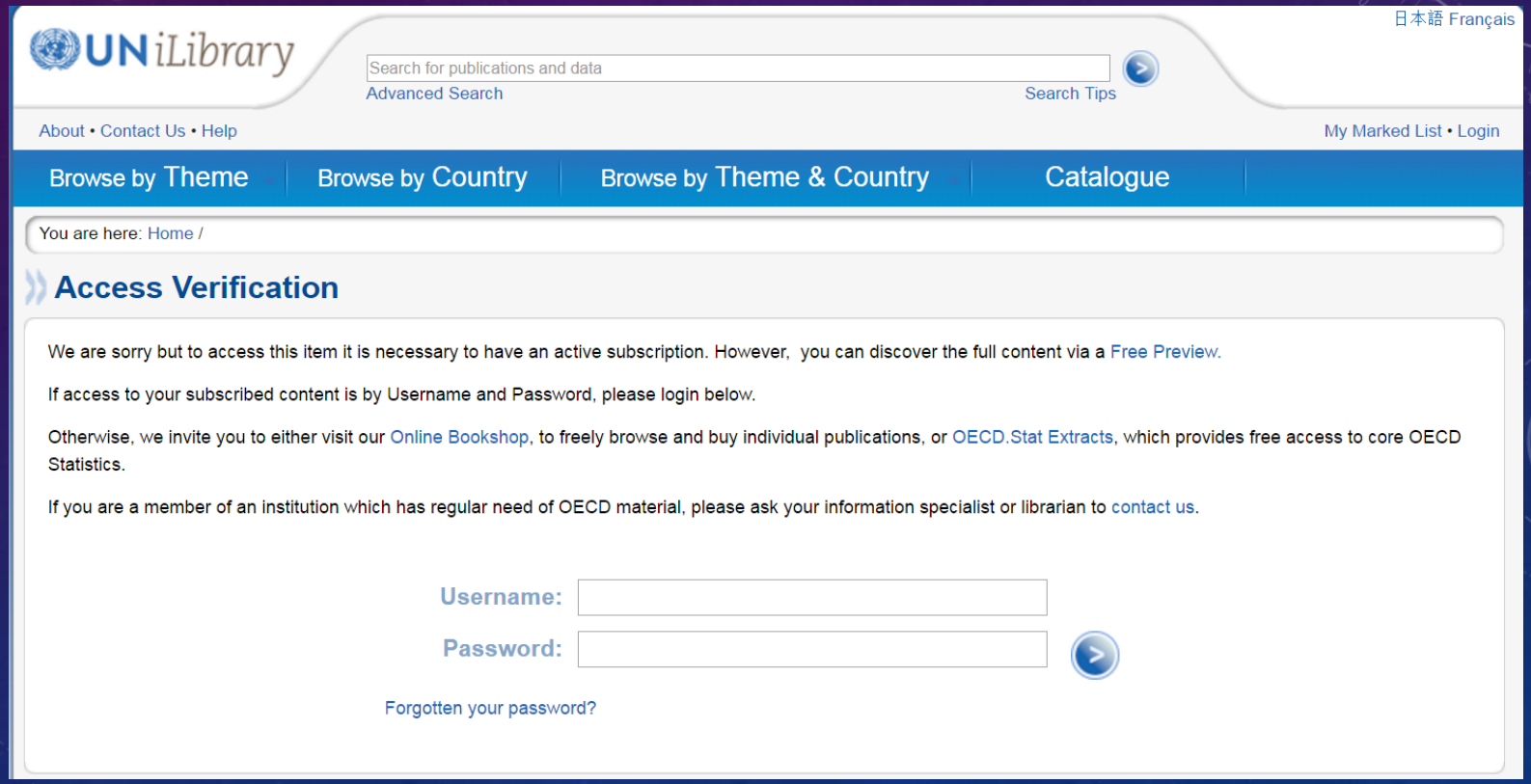
“Read only” for everyone. You can read it but not download it.

This is apparently called “freemium access.”

“Perpetual access to subscribed content.” The UN has no official digital preservation policy.

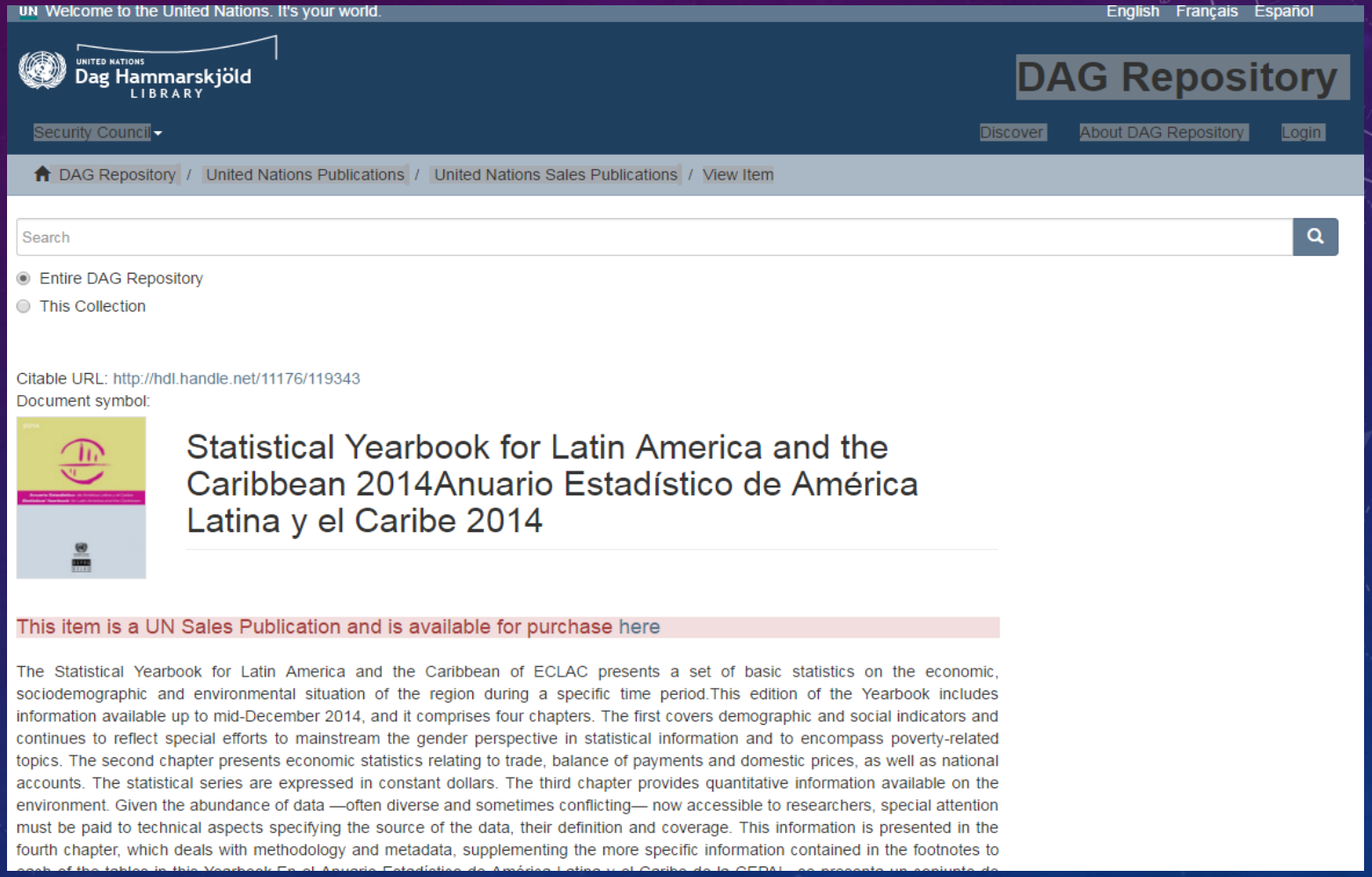
No data on the site yet, but that has been promised.

“WE ARE SORRY BUT TO ACCESS THIS ITEM IT IS NECESSARY TO HAVE AN ACTIVE SUBSCRIPTION. HOWEVER, YOU CAN DISCOVER THE FULL CONTENT VIA A FREE PREVIEW.”



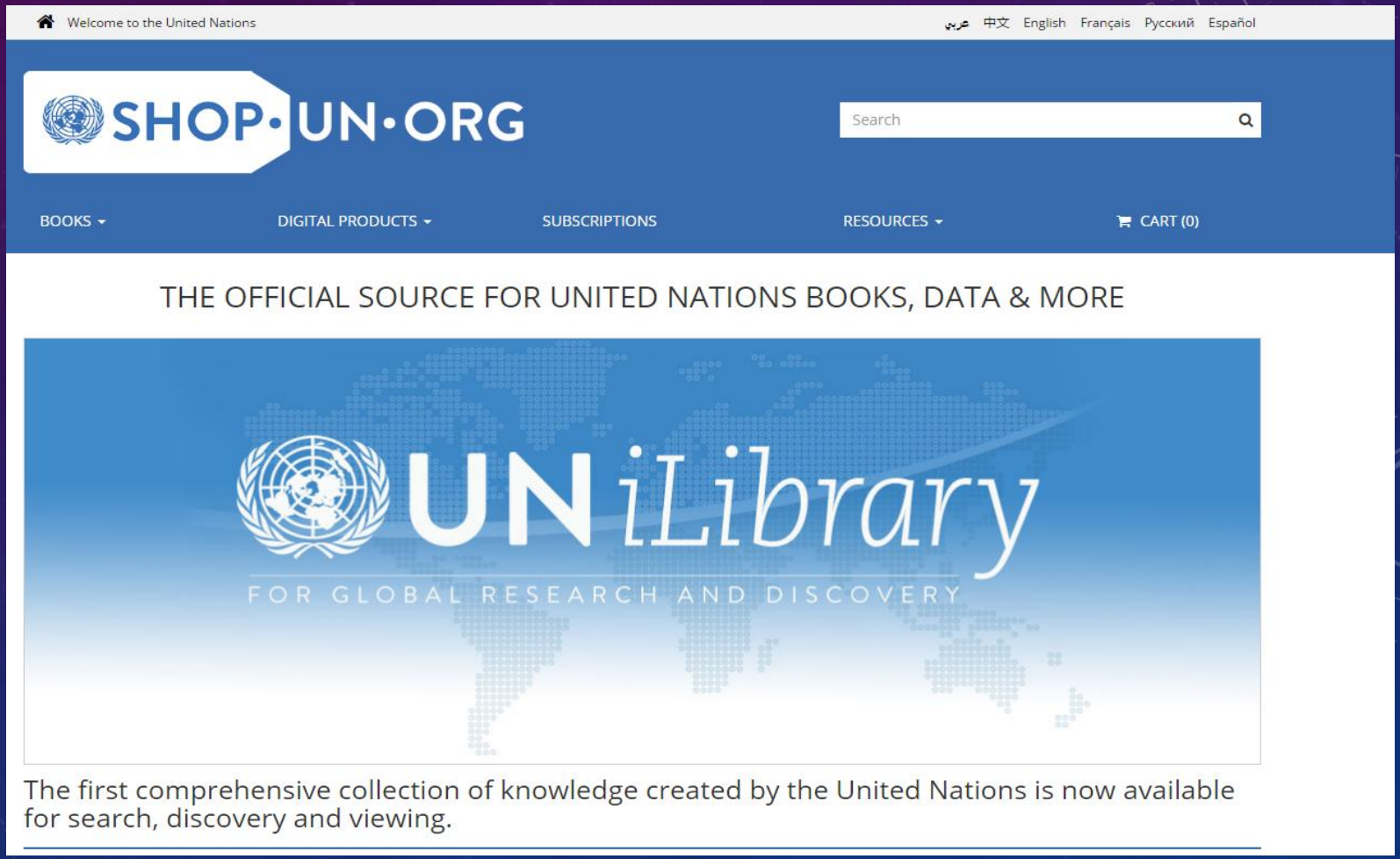
United Nations iLibrary

THE DAG REPOSITORY



Statistical Yearbook for Latin America and the Caribbean 2014

SHOP.UN.ORG



Shop.UN.ORG

ALA RESOLUTION ON THE RESTORATION OF THE UNITED NATIONS DEPOSITORY LIBRARY SYSTEM

Resolution on the Restoration of the United Nations Depository Library System

IFLA AND THE SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS (SDGS)

- **“Ensure public access to information and protect fundamental freedoms, in accordance with national legislation and international agreements”**

  -- UN Sustainable Development Goal 16:10

- **“UN Depository Libraries have an essential role in communicating information and research to help decision makers achieve the (Sustainable** Development) **Goals”**

  -- IFLA Report on Libraries and Implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda

GERMAN UN DEPOSITORY LIBRARY ADVOCACY

Gefährdung der Informationsversorgung durch Depotbibliotheken der Vereinten Nationen

Stand: 14.9.2016

Entwurf für eine Stellungnahme des DBV von den deutschen UN-Depotbibliotheken, namentlich der *Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin – Preußischer Kulturbesitz*, der Universitätsbibliothek der *Freien Universität Berlin*, des *Max Planck-Institut für Ausländisches Öffentliches Recht und Völkerrecht*, der Fachbibliothek des Walther-Schücking-Instituts der *Christian-Albrechts-Universität zu Kiel*, der *Thüringer Universitäts-und Landesbibliothek Jena* sowie der Universitätsbibliothek der *Universität Potsdam.*

German National Library Association (2016).

ACADEMIC COUNCIL ON THE UNITED NATIONS SYSTEM (ACUNS)

ACUNS

CURRENT STATE OF PLAY

- Very few libraries have purchased the UN iLibrary. The last report we have is there have been a total of ten total purchases worldwide.

- Out of these, four are in the North America and two are UN Depositories. As far as we know only depository in the United States has purchased this.

- There are rumors that the UN and OECD may propose a new pricing schema.

- We urge libraries not to purchase this until there has been an opportunity for formal discussion and participation with the UN Depository Community.

WHAT YOU CAN DO TO HELP

THANK YOU!

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