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Retrospective Conversion Software for LC, OCLC, BNB and Bookfind CD-ROM Databases

ARD Prasad

Documentation Research and Training Centre
Indian Statistical Institute, Bangalore-560 059

ABSTRACT

The paper emphasizes the importance of retrospective conversion of bibliographic data from CD-ROM databases, in building local database of library collection. It describes a software Ida, developed for this purpose at Documentation Research and Training Centre and funded by National Information System for Science and Technology .

1. INTRODUCTION

One of the major bottlenecks in library automation is the data entry for creating databases. Although a library professional may master any software package in a few weeks, data entry may take years depending on the size of the library. Small and new libraries have greater advantage over large and established libraries because of lesser quantity of data involved.

Data entry in the case of bibliographical databases involves filling of data in work sheets and passing them on to data entry personnel for inputting. Once the data is entered, it has to be error checked.

In a typical CDS/ISIS software environment, data entry involves : (i) filling the worksheets, (ii) entering data in CDS/ISIS, (iii) taking printout in proofmode, (iv) correcting mistakes, and (v) editing the data in CDS/ISIS. Steps (iii) and (v) may get repeated again and again into a loop depending on how meticulously the job has been done.

This is an offshoot of the problem of verbosity of the bibliographic data. Unlike the numeric and general databases, bibliographic databases are characterised by large amount of textual data. That is why software like CDS/ISIS are developed as fine-tuned database management systems to take care of the following problems :

(a) Variable number of fields in a record,

(b) Variable length of each field,

(c) Variable length of records, and

(d) Use of tag codes (like that of CCF, UNIMARC, etc.) instead of field names.

In an ideal situation, once the data is available in computer-readable form, one

should be able to use it in his/her library in the required form. However, there are many problems in converting data from one form into another. Some of the problems can be avoided by bringing standards like ISO 2709, CCF, UNIMARC, etc. But, the existance of many standards defeats the very purpose of a standard. Although there is no contender to ISO 2709 standard with regard to record structure, there are many MARC standards. This situation forces many compromises on the part of the programmer in converting one form of data into another form.

The software Ida can convert the tags and format of the records downloaded from LC, OCLC, BNB and Bookfind CD-ROM databases into a format acceptable to the user's local database in CDS/ISIS. Those who own any of these databases can download the required information and by using relevant option in Ida, they can convert this data into the local format. Ida is basically meant for CDS/ISIS users. It may be noted that CDS/ISIS follows ISO 2709 format with minor modifications.

No attempt has been made here to describe how to download data from a specific database. The manuals that come along with the CD-ROM database describe this procedure. The following steps may give a broad outline of the work involved.

(i) Make a list of the International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) of the books in your library.

(ii) Enter these numbers in a computer file and do thorough checking to remove any error.

(iii) Use the interface software that comes along with the CD-ROM to search for bibliographic data against each ISBN of your file and download the relevant data into a file.

However, all the books in your library might not have been included in the the database used by you and all the books might not have ISBNs. Some databases may allow you to search by author and title for downloading information. For some books you may be required to enter data manually. In such a case, joining a network like DELNET, CALIBNET, or INFLIBNET may be useful. Your professional colleagues might have done your job to a significant level.

2. IMPORT FEATURES OF IDA

Ida is a retrospective conversion software for changing the tags and format of LC, OCLC, BNB and Bookfind CD-ROM databases into that of CDS/ISIS format. The converted tags need not have to conform with those of CCF or UNIMARC; they can be local tags in your database.

Ida is highly user-friendly and has the following features :

- MS-Windows look alike interface
- Optional mouse interface
- Editor for creating TAG Files
- Online manual
- Context sensitive and online help. Both help options are provided with hypertext facility

3. HOW TO USE IDA

3.1 Ida.exe

This is the main program file. To use this, type IDA and press 'Enter' Key at the system prompt in a directory you wish to work. Ida responds with a MS-Windows look-alike desktop. Ida works much like the MS-Windows; the major difference being Ida is an Application Program Interface (API) that runs in text mode whereas MS-Windows is a Graphical User Interface (GUI).

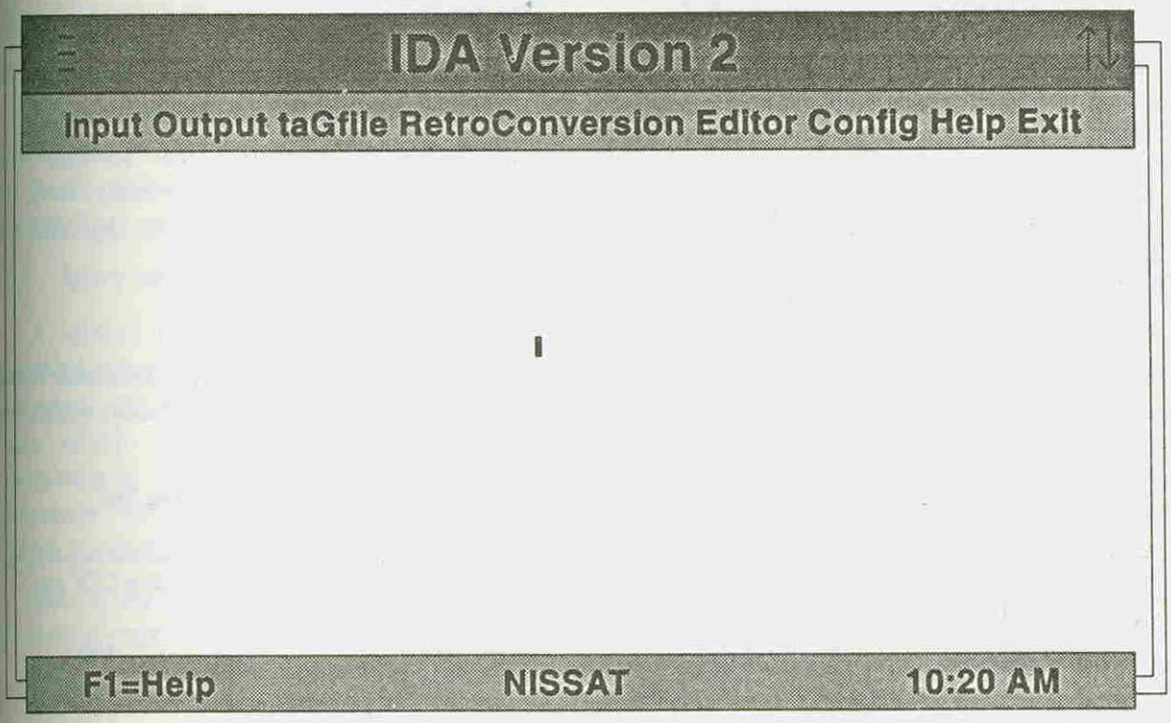

Figure 1. Opening screen of Ida software.

Ida allows the use of mouse. You only have to click the left button to choose a item in the menu. If you do not have a mouse, you can either press ALT key and the key of the highlighted letter of the menu item you wish to choose, or press F10 and move the cursor key on to the desired menu item and press 'Enter' key. If you still have no clues on how to go about, press F1 key to get context sensitive online help, which tells you what to do.

3.2 Ida.cfg

The cfg extension indicates that this is a configuration file. You can change the configuration of IDA, like display attributes of the screen depending on whether you use a monochrome or colour monitor. To modify the screen attributes, select Config in the main menu and you can save your configuration by choosing the respective option in the Config menu. The first screen of IDA is given in Fig. 1.

3.3 Ida.hlp

The hlp extension indicates that this file contains help messages. Help is provided in many ways. One approach is by selecting Help in the main menu. Another is by pressing F1 function key, which provides context-sensitive help messages. Sometimes, dialog box may contain a 'Help' button.

3.4 Input Files

The program diskette for Ida contains four sample input files which contain downloaded records from LC, OCLC, BNB and BOOKFIND with the following names.

LC.IN
OCLC.IN
BNB.IN
BOOKFIND.IN

The extension 'IN' is chosen to make the file name suggestive of its content. However, any other name can be given for

the file and it can reside in any drive or directory.

To supply the input file to Ida, select 'Input' option from the main menu. This can be done by clicking the mouse button on the menu item or pressing ALT-I or by pressing F10 function key and using arrow keys. Then the menu item 'Enter Input File Name' will be displayed. If you press 'Enter' key or click mouse button, a dialog box will appear. You can enter the input file name or choose to go to the list of files in the list box by pressing the 'Tab' key. You can use the arrow keys to move over file names and then press 'Enter' to select the required file. If the input file does not exist, you will get an error message, which allows you to re-enter correctly.

3.5 Output File

Choose the item 'Output' in the main menu and proceed in a manner similar to that of Input file.

3.6 Tag File

Selecting the required 'Tag File' is similar to that of selecting input and output files. However, if you wish to create/modify a Tag File, you can either use your favourite editor or select the item 'Editor' in the main menu.

The tag files should be created in a definite format. It should be an ASCII file containing tags of the source database and corresponding tags for the target database. For example, the file LCCCF.TAG is an ASCII file containing two columns. The first column contains the tags that are used by LC CD-ROM database, and the second column contains the corresponding CCF tags against each of the LC Tags.

For example,

100^a 300^a

means that subfield 100^a in the LC CD-ROM database is to be converted to 300^a of your local database.

Table 1 shows the sample file BOOKCCF.TAG which contains some of Bookfind CD-ROM database tags and the respective CCF tags.

3.7 Useful Suggestions

- Always use the specific subfield. Avoid using only the tag number without a subfield.

Table 1. Sample tag file

Bookfind tag	Correponding CCF tag
001	100
008^l	040^a
082^a	610^a
083^a	222^a
100^a	300^a
100^h	300^b
245^a	200^a
245^e	200^b
250^a	260^a
260^b	400^b
260^c	440^a
260^d	333^a
300^a	460^a
300^c	460^c
350^a	465^a
440^a	480^a
512^a	600^a
700^a	300^a
700^h	300^b
700^y	300^f
710^a	310^a
505^a	800^a
513^a	850^a
699^a	900^a
521^a	901^a
040^a	905^a

- Use ^ symbol as subfield indicator, even if the CD-ROM database uses '$'.

The sample tag files supplied with the software are meant for demonstration only. You have to decide which tag of source database is to be converted to which tag of target database.

3.8 Story of Ida

A divine cow is supposed to grant anything that is asked for. In Sanskrit literature, Ida is referred to as the divine cow which discovered hymns (mantras) pertaining to Gods. In this sense Ida is the bestower of all divine hymns--reciting which anything can be achieved.

"IDA DEVAHUH MANURYAGNANEEHI"
(a hymn for peace)

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