

**FINAL REPORT
LA PAZ, BOLIVIA
LIBRARY FELLOW, KATHY HUMMEL**

Abstract

Four months in Bolivia, 11 February to 12 June 1998, was precious little time to introduce Bolivians to the intricacies of searching the Internet, so this project concentrated on teaching basic Internet searching skills to persons from the following areas: Centro de Documentacion e Informacion del Ministerio de Educacion, Cultura y Deportes (CIDIMECD), all the vice-ministries of the Ministry of Education, professors and students in the Faculty of Humanities of the Universidad Mayor de San Andres (UMSA) in La Paz, professors from PROIBAndes in the Universidad Mayor de San Simon (UMSS) in Cochabamba, selected members of the museum community, and four centers of the Centro Boliviano Americano.

My visit was the impetus to set up a RED in CIDIMECD and in PROIBAndes and to get electronic mail accounts for each career in the Faculty of Humanities at UMSA. Most of the students in my courses also have personal e-mail accounts. The majority are proficient in using two or more browsers to ferret out useful information. All have identified and bookmarked important Internet sites in their areas of interest. The major impediment to continued success is access to the Internet.

Information on project

Host Institution

The Centro de Documentacion e Informacion del Ministerio de Educacion, Cultura, y Deportes (CIDIMECD) was established in January and February 1998, under the auspices of the Ministry of Education. Its predecessor, Centro de Documentacion e Informacion de Relaciones Internacionales de la Secretaria de Educacion (CBDIRI), began four years ago under the Secretary of Education.

CIDIMECD is housed in two rooms on the first floor of the Ministry of Education in La Paz. One room is for research; the second room is for the collection. The holdings include 4,000 volumes (books and periodicals) on culture, science, technology and business. 12,000 entries are on microfilm from the RED Educativa Latino America y del Caribe (REDUC). Finally, there are one hundred educational videos and 1,000 university theses. The materials come from four sources: 1) Convenio Andres Bello, 2) UNESCO, 3) OBI (Organizacion de Estados Iberoamericanos), and 4) OBA (Organizacion de los Estados Americanos) .

Three persons work in CIDIMECD, two full-time and one part-time. Silvia Paredes is the head of CIDIMECD, having worked five years for the Ministry of Education. All three women are students in the library school at UMSA. The staff is in the process of organizing, shelving, and cataloging materials using MicroIsis.

Original goals of project

The purpose was to train Bolivian researchers in online searches of information found in the United States, specifically, to facilitate access to specialized United States databases

for Bolivian researchers working on education and to train Bolivian staff in how to access online data.

Changes in goals

In addition to training Bolivians interested in educational issues, I was to train selected members of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) in Getty Object I.D. and Internet searching. I was also to give a presentation at the national conference of museums in Santa Cruz.

Accomplishment of goals

-Facilitate access to specialized United States databases

A RED for one Internet course was installed at CIDIMECD in the Ministry of Education with equipment loaned from USIS, United States Embassy. Another RED was installed at PROEIBAndes in Universidad Mayor de San Simon (UMSS) in Cochabamba. UMSANet in the Universidad Mayor de San Andres (UMSA) in La Paz loaned us their experimental computer laboratory for two Internet courses, one for students and professors in the Faculty of Humanities and the other for library students.

All the Internet courses featured United States educational databases.

-Training Bolivian researchers on online searches of information found in the United States

Internet courses were given in the Ministry of Education, UMSA, UMSS, the United States Embassy, and four offices of Centro Boliviano Americano. Hands-on searching was emphasized as well as the use of electronic mail and Windows95. Bookmarks of educational sites were given to all students. Numerous informal one-on-one demonstrations of Internet sites were given to interested individuals.

-Training ICOM members in Getty Object I.D. and Internet searching

One demonstration of Internet searching and pertinent museum web sites was given in the United States Embassy for members of ICOM. Getty Object I.D., a system to classify and document cultural objects, was explained at this seminar. Some ICOM members also attended a talk given for police personnel at the Embassy in conjunction with MUCOPOL.

-The date for the national conference of museums in Santa Cruz was postponed to August 1998, after the termination of this fellowship.

Contribution of project to institution

CIDIMECD staff received personal "hands on" Internet training and had a demonstration of how a RED works. The Ministry of Education plans to install a RED in the next year, with access from CIDIMECD. Representatives from all the vice-ministries in the Ministry of Education were given one month's training and practice searching the Internet and using electronic mail. Continuing dialogue about Internet, library theory, and library practices in both Bolivia and in California was invaluable. Silvia Paredes assisted me in my other Internet courses in La Paz.

Additional experiences

Staff from Centro Boliviano Americano, a United States cultural center and English language school, received a brief introduction to Internet searching in Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Potosi, and Sucre. Local librarians and library students attended these demonstrations.

Centro de Ensenanza de Tecnicas Computacionales (MUCOPOL) sponsored my lecture to eighty police chiefs on Internet searching in relevant databases and Getty Object I.D. in the United States Embassy's auditorium.

Former Library Fellow, Eloisa Vargas, and I gave a joint presentation for UMSA library students at the Museo Nacional de Etnografia y Folklore (MUSEF). Eloisa spoke of her experience at Brigham Young University in Utah and her visit to the Library of Congress. I talked about public libraries and reference services in the United States, specifically Santa Ana Public Library in California, and my internship in the Hispanic Division of the Library of Congress.

Library students heard another talk on Internet at the Universidad Mayor de San Andres. UMSA is the only place where persons may study library science in Bolivia. The students received certificates for attending.

Employees of MUSEF received a brief introduction to Internet searching, current reference practices in the United States, and Getty Object I.D. In addition, I was shown the library and the museum's precious holdings to preserve Bolivia's cultural heritage.

As an honored guest, I visited libraries and museums in La Paz, Santa Cruz, Cochabamba, Sucre, and Potosi. Several informal exchanges with librarians and library professors in La Paz enhanced our mutual appreciation for library services in Bolivia and in the United States.

Experience living in another country

Living conditions

Adjusting to living at almost 12,000 feet above sea level in the Altiplano required a major adjustment for one accustomed to living at sea level. Thankfully, I had a safe and sanitary home in which to stay in the southern part of the city, at a lower altitude from my work in the center of La Paz. I learned much from my host, an American with almost twenty years of overseas experience. While I would have preferred to live with Bolivians and immerse myself in the culture, this was not possible. As the economically poorest country in South America, Bolivia is a safe place to live. I relish being able to walk alone without fear. Working without an office was new for me. The laptop computer loaned to me by the American Library Association enabled me have a portable office. Still, access to the Internet was difficult.

Festivals, cultural highlights

Bolivia has two primary cultures: Aymara and Quechua. La Paz' Alasitas, a festival of abundance in the spring, dates back to Inca times and honors Ekeko, the tiny god of abundance. Oruro, the folklore capital of Bolivia, has its annual Carnival festivities with thousands of dancers and musicians. Native markets, especially the Sunday market in Tarabuco, were splendid opportunities to see locals in all their regalia and to savor the local artesanía.

Bolivia is a country where 60% of its people are pure indigenous who speak Aymara or Quechua as their first language and who cling to their respective traditional cultures. Pachamama, the earth mother, is honored by most persons of Quechua ancestry. The syncretism of Roman Catholicism and folk religion is pervasive. "Modern western European dress" is adapted by some in the major cities, but rejected by most in the countryside. When visiting the smaller villages, one can imagine what life was like one hundred years ago.

Travels

Conducting Internet courses allowed me to briefly visit Cochabamba, Santa Cruz, Sucre and *Potosí*, experiencing the changes in climate in Bolivia. A quick three-day weekend to Cuzco and Macchu Picchu, Peru, was a chance to see a colonial city and explore an archaeological site of the Inca civilization. Tiahuanaco and Samaipata are two pre-hispanic archaeological sites in Bolivia that I visited. I plan to see the summer solstice celebrations on 21 June in Tiahuanaco where indigenous peoples from many parts of Latin America will perform ancient traditional ceremonies.

Memorable people

-Rene Arze, Director of the National Library and the National Archives in Sucre, gave me added insight on the accomplishments and challenges of his institution as well as a perspective on Bolivians and Bolivia. Insufficient legal protections for copyright and a lack of a national information policy were two of his concerns.

-Blanca Torres, retired librarian and scholar extraordinaire in Sucre, introduced me to numerous professionals and personally explored her beloved city with me.

Comments on fellowship

Value of fellowship experience

The international exchange of information and forming professional friendships encapsulate the endeavors of my four months in Bolivia. By teaching Internet skills, Bolivians have access to information from the entire world. Because Latin America is my area of personal interest, I cherish the time spent in learning more about the culture and traditions, ancient and modern, of the various indigenous groups.

Going to the United States Embassy several times a week to access Internet gave me an insider's look at the United States Information Agency and a further appreciation of my country's efforts in Bolivia.

Reflections on living and working in another country

Living in a third world country presents its challenges. Having lived and worked in Mexico, Belize, and El Salvador prior to coming to Bolivia, I was familiar with many vestiges of Latin culture. Patience and openness to change are traits I learned long ago. Living in a country where traditional indigenous beliefs and customs still prevail was a blessing. Witnessing the invasive nature of United States " American culture" was an eye opener; for example, the media speak in dollars as well as in the local currency, Bolivianos. The slower pace of life was a welcome change for me.

Any personal on-going benefits or projects that will continue the fellowship work Thanks to e-mail, I plan to stay in contact with many Bolivians, offering my professional assistance and personal friendship.

Acknowledgment and distribution of the final printed report

Name, title and address for the individual to be acknowledged in the final printed report

Silvia Paredes Pareja, Documentalista e Archivista, Centro de Documentacion e Informacion del Ministerio de Educacion, Cultura, y Deportes (CIDIMECD), Avenida Arce 2147, La Paz, Bolivia

.Names and addresses of persons copied on the final printed report:

- Silvia Paredes Pareja, Documentalista e Archivista, Centro de Documentacion e Informacion del Ministerio de Educacion, Cultura, y Deportes (CIDIMECD), Avenida Arce 2147, La Paz, Bolivia
- Donald Terpstra, Kate Byrnes, and Cecilia de Cordova, USIS, Embajada Americana, Casilla #425, La Paz, Bolivia
- William Jackson, Graduate School of Library and Information Science, Dominican University, 7900 West Division Street, River Forest, Illinois 60305, U.S.A.
- Rob Richardson, Director, Santa Ana Public Library, 26 Civic Center Plaza, Santa Ana, CA 92702 U.S.A.
- Mr. and Mrs. Paul A. Hummel, 1672 David Drive, Escondido, CA 92626, U.S.A. - Barbara Ford, President, American Library Association, 50 E. Huron Street, Chicago, Il., 60611, U.S.A.
- Loretta Sanchez, 1529 Longworth House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515-0546 - Christopher Cox, 2402 Rayburn House Office Bldg., Washington, D.C. 20515-0547

I wish to formally thank Silvia Paredes and CIDIMECD for allowing me to work with her and her institution and for befriending me. Without the assistance of the United States Information Services (USIS) Bolivia and the American Library Association (ALA) in Chicago, my stay would have been impossible. It is with sadness and regret that I realize that this year is the final year for the library fellowship program. I am thankful for the opportunity to spend four months in Bolivia and hope that my Internet training will be continued by my students.