RISS International: A Gateway to Korean Research Information

SOOJI LEE
Korea Education & Research Information Service (KERIS)

ABSTRACT

RISS International is the single gateway to access comprehensive resources about Korea and Korean Studies. It has been developed and managed by the Korea Education and Research Information Service (KERIS) in Korea, a governmental agency under the Ministry of Education and Science & Technology (MEST) in Korea. It provides an opportunity to access approximately 1 million fulltext Korean Journal Articles, Theses & Dissertations produced in Korea. The Korean Journal Articles database includes articles from core journals of individual research fields in Korea, such as History, Korean Language and Literature, Religion, Political/Social Science, Education, ICT, and so forth. In addition, RISS International offers the KERIS Union Catalog, the only bibliographic database of university libraries in Korea, and the database is a basis for the location of the materials and ILL/DDS service if a material is in non digital format. RISS International is a fee based service for institutional members abroad. Ever since its launch on November 2007, 14 institutions joined RISS International and have utilized the service to facilitate research activities of Korean Studies.

1. OVERVIEW

RISS International\(^\text{1}\) is the unique gateway to comprehensive research outcomes of Korea. With its easy to use search and retrieval interface, it provides professional resources regarding Korea and Korean Studies for researchers and librarians of the world. The Korean Journal Article database covers more than 80% of the core journals\(^\text{2}\) of each research field in Korea, and the number of core journals included in RISS International has grown rapidly. In addition, the KERIS Union Catalog, the national bibliographic database of resources located at university libraries in Korea, has been the primary location to find resources regardless of the format as digital or non digital. As reported from the recent survey, the KERIS Union Catalog is ranked on top as the major point of entry to find scholarly information, and the main purpose of utilizing the KERIS Union Catalog and the fulltext databases is to find resources for professional research papers and to write theses and dissertations\(^\text{3}\).

The idea for developing a research information service for foreign researchers outside Korea began in 2006, when the number of visits to RISS (Research Information Service System) from outside Korea was starting to increase. After optimizing the information architecture and the front-end user interface for the efficient IR system, RISS International started its pilot testing on November 2006, with 13 foreign institutional members. The results of the RISS International pilot testing was reported in Boston, USA in March 2008, in front of East Asian librarians who attended CEAL Meeting of 2008. Fulltext of Korean Journal Articles, Korean Theses & Dissertations have been successfully

\(^{1}\) RISS International: http://intl.riss4u.net

\(^{2}\) Core journals of the individual research fields in Korea are evaluated and selected by Korea Research Foundation (KRF, http://www.krf.org), and the number of journals reaches app. 1,500 as of March 2009.

\(^{3}\) User Survey Report 2008, 16-17
downloaded even with local viewer software, and MARC records of the KERIS Union Catalog have been imported to foreign local bibliographic tools such as OCLC Connexion and individual IRS where Unicode was supported by the system.

RISS International is the service operated by the Korea Education & Research Information Service (KERIS, http://english.keris.or.kr/es_main/index.jsp), a nonprofit organization advancing higher education through efficient use of Information Technology, under the Ministry of Education and Science & Technology (MEST) in Korea. Different from other commercial vendors in Korea, KERIS considers the full-text and MARC records of RISS International as a national asset, so that anyone who is majoring in Korean and Korean Studies should be able to access the resources provided by RISS International without a high cost barrier. RISS International is open to the researchers and librarians abroad with minimal operational and site maintenance cost by individual member institutions.

2. WHAT DOES RISS INTERNATIONAL COVER?

As the most comprehensive research information service, RISS International covers; 1) more than 1.6 mil fulltext of Korean Journal Articles, Korean Journal Articles Expanded, Korean Theses & Dissertations, 2) more than 8 mil bibliographic records of university library holdings including monographs, serials, and a variety of non-traditional materials, and 3) fulltext of primary resources of Korean History have been added recently.

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<td></td>
<td>Articles</td>
<td>Theses &amp; Dissertations</td>
<td>Korea History Online</td>
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<tr>
<td>KJA⁴</td>
<td>490,000</td>
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[Table 1] RISS International Contents (as of Mar. 2009)

Usage statistics shows that 30,000 bibliographic records are added per month, and 417,000 fulltext KJA/KJAEs are downloaded monthly and 693,000 theses & dissertations are downloaded per month as of March 2009. Bibliographic records are uploaded to the KERIS Union Catalog by more than 200 university libraries, which consist of 100% of all 4-year university libraries in Korea. TOC is also available for the recent publications. Among 1,500 core journals registered in the Korea Research Foundation (KRF, http://www.krf.org), researchers can access 84% of them, and it will be up to 100% by the end of 2009. As for theses & dissertations, more than 90% of the most recent publications are included via the dCollection system which utilizes metadata harvesting over OAI-PMH.

⁴ KJA = Korean Journal Articles, KJAE = Korean Journal Articles Expanded, KISS = Fulltext Database provided by Korean commercial vendor, KSI (Korean Studies Information Co., http://www.kstudy.com), DBPia = Fulltext Database provided by Korean commercial vendor, Nurimedia (http://www.nurimedia.com)
3. HOW DOES RISS INTERNATIONAL WORK?

Major features of RISS International includes; 1) Federated Search of multiple resources, 2) a fulltext download service for KJA/KJAEs, theses & dissertations and Korea History Online, 3) ILL for non digital materials, and 4) MARC download service.

3.1 Federated Search

Researchers of RISS International can perform federated searches for various resources from multiple locations, for example; 1) KJAE comes from commercial database vendors, such as KSI (KISS) and Nurimedia (DBPia), 2) part of Korean Theses & Dissertations whose metadata is harvested over OAI-PMH is located at individual university libraries and linked to RISS International, 3) fulltext of historical resources provided by Korea History Online comes from 19 historical institutes such as Kyujanggak Institute for Korean Studies, Academy of Korean Studies, and the Korean Democracy Foundation, and so forth.

There will be major shift in search engine in the course of year 2009, and the important features being added are; 1) intuitive interface for advanced search option, 2) searches limit by language, 3) automatic typo detection, 4) related search, 5) word completion, and so forth.

3.2 Fulltext

There are three types of fulltext provided by RISS International; 1) KJA/KJAE, 2) Korean Theses & Dissertations, and 3) various types of fulltext from Korea History Online.

3.2.1 KJA/KJAE

Approximately 0.5 million Korea Journal Articles (KJA) had been selected and digitized by the Korean Knowledge Information Management Project developing nationwide academic infrastructure including fulltext databases in the fields of Education, ICT, Culture, and Science & Technology of Korea. KERIS was assigned as the National Education and Research Information Center in 2001 and has focused on digitizing academic resources, especially in university environments.

Korean Journal Articles Expanded (KJAE) comes from two different commercial vendors in Korea: one is Korea Studies Information Co., known for its fulltext database KISS; the other is Nurimedia which also markets its fulltext database, known as DBpia, in and outside Korea. Apart from the federated search of all the resources, fulltext open on the conditions that each individual member institution is signed up. Researchers can
access the fulltext of KISS only if the institution that s/he belongs to pays the annual subscription fee to KSI. Librarians or Information Professionals of the institution should check the availability of fulltext by contacting KSI. Fulltext from DBPia will be accessed by any researchers of RISS International member institutions\(^5\), and each member institution should pay for the use dependent upon the number of downloads. Pricing policy and payment options will be negotiated between Nurimedia and RISS International, and it will be announced to RISS International member institutions in the near future. Librarians or Information Professionals of the member institutions should be in charge of updating institutional information whether they are part of the consortium or not, so that researchers of his/her institution will not be left out from accessing essential fulltext for their research.

3.2.2 Korean Theses & Dissertations

The total number of theses & dissertations produced over the past half of the century in Korea is about 1 million, and more than sixty percent of the texts available at RISS International are in PDF format downloadable with Acrobat Reader. Recently, particularly over the past 5 years, the dCollection system developed by KERIS and implemented to the university libraries has contributed to harvest metadata for up-to-date federated searches of theses & dissertations as they are produced. By the end of year 2008, the dCollection system has been implemented in almost all 4 year university libraries which produce more than 95% of the theses & dissertations of the year.

3.2.3 Korean History Online

Various types of fulltext related to Korean history have been added to RISS International since Dec. 2008. Fulltext such as materials about the Korean independence movement, modern day newspaper articles, Bibyeonsa Deungnok, and Seungjeongwon Ilgi, provided by Korean History Online are composed of materials linked to the participating institutions where those fulltext have been digitized and archived. These fulltext are open to researchers of RISS International member institutions as Korean Theses & Dissertations are as well.

3.2.4 KOCW

Began in 2008, KOCW (Korea Open CourseWare, http://www.kocw.net) has been the official web publication of the university courses and lectures, as other worldwide OCW and OER initiatives does. There are about 200 open courses from the universities in Korea, and the subject area varies including Computer Science, Psychology, Education/ICT, Social Welfare, and so forth. RISS International will extend its contents to open educational resources of various file/content types so that researchers and educators will be able to experience how online courses work under the university environment in Korea. Individual courses are composed of at least 15 video recorded lectures with lecture notes and syllabi, and lecture files will be added monthly from May 2009 onward continuously.

3.3 ILL

When a material retrieved by the federated search in RISS International happens to be in non digital format, researchers of the member institutions can request an Inter Library Loan if it has at least one holding library, which means that a responsible librarian or information professional can photocopy the material to deliver. A Librarian or information professional should authenticate whether the users belong to the appropriate

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\(^5\) It excludes member institutions who participate in Korean Online Database Consortium initiated in the United States (aka the Consortium).
institution first, because s/he will pay for the cost and deliver the material to the users. The ILL service of RISS International does not work reciprocally at this moment, so that the central fee management system issues the invoice to RISS International member institutions only at the end of each year.

![Figure 2] ILL Process

3.4 MARC download

Librarians or information professionals can download MARC records to process Korean materials for their online catalog. MARC records originated from KORMARC standards are ready for the conversion to MARC21 format so that RISS International member institutions can utilize the records in the course of “Order to Cataloging,” only if their IRS or bibliographic tools support conversion to MARC21. MARC records of the recently published materials in Korea are created and FTPed by the Korea Book Trade Promotion within 24 hours of the publication everyday, and these records are marked with a bright orange icon in the result lists. About 100 records have been added to RISS International (KERIS Union Catalog) since approximately 25,000 new books are published per year in Korea. Romanization to the descriptive fields will be added applying the McCune Reischauer rules from the third quarter of the year 2009.

4. HOW DO I GET ACCESS?

The RISS International is a fee-based membership service targeting institutions abroad. Librarians or information professionals of the institution should apply for the membership submitting the signed agreement. The membership fee is $1,000.00 (USD) flat per year regardless of the institutional size and enrollment. The fee will cover site management and the operational cost of RISS International. University libraries gain access through IP ranges registered by the primary contact librarian or information professional; otherwise access will be authenticated by a referring URL.

4.1 Requests for Membership

If a librarian or an information professional tries to access RISS International, s/he will be directed to the page below asking for a membership application or trial service. The most important issue on the application is to register IP ranges/referring URL according to the institutional characteristics. Users of RISS International member institutions will only be able to access the site over the registered IPs and referring URL. In addition, accurate information about individual subscriptions to other fulltext databases offered by KSI or Nurimedia will allow users to gain the fulltext they need efficiently.
4.2 Trial Service

Researchers, librarians and information professionals of non member institutions can request a “Trial Service Account” of RISS International. The only information required to open the account is an email address and the account will be valid for 7 days. Users with trial service account are not allowed to open fulltext, but they can experience the process to retrieve the information they need, including exporting/emailing and ILL.

5. Admin Tools

Only the primary contact person of the member institution can access the Librarian Only page with his/her particular IP address registered, where s/he can review the usage statistics, confirm the ILL process and the ILL invoice. RISS International usage statistics reports search hits and the number of fulltext downloaded by individual member institutions. The ILL librarian will be able to monitor and confirm the transaction, including who makes the requests, where the materials are, and the cost.

6. Summary

As the most comprehensive scholarly outcome service of Korea, RISS International should be a prerequisite to researchers abroad whose professional interest lies in Korea and Korean Studies. It is the only service to allow researchers to perform a federated search and to obtain the materials whether they are digital (fulltext) or not (ILL). Since its
official launch, RISS International has tried to include as much scholarly resources as possible regardless of the location. In addition, RISS International is the only service to provide MARC downloads with conversion to MARC21 format in order for librarians and information professionals to process for their online catalog where, in most cases, researchers begin their search for the materials.

REFERENCE