In 1977, ICCROM developed its first computerized databases to support the interchange of information and, in the case of the library, reviewing the subject index, adopting standard formats such as UNISIST.

Less than ten years later in 1985, the Getty Conservation Institute proposed that the Art and Archaeology Technical Abstracts (AATA) database be combined with the ICCROM Library database. Another agreement was signed the following year between Getty and the National Museums of Canada. This collaboration led to the formation of the Conservation Information Network (CIN), to which the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) and Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) were major contributors – together with Getty and ICCROM. Plans for a database accessible to the international conservation community were developed under the framework of the CIN.
By May 1986, ICOMOS had agreed to contribute bibliographic records produced by its Documentation Centre to the CIN database, with the Smithsonian Institution’s Conservation Analytical Laboratory joining as a partner on the project in June of the same year.

The bibliographic database of the Conservation Information Network, known as BCIN, was unveiled a year later, in 1987, at the Eighth Triennial Meeting of the International Council of Museums (ICOM) Committee for Conservation in Sydney, Australia.

At its launch, BCIN contained more than 100,000 citations, representing the holdings of seven libraries and documentation centres:

- Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI)
- Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN)
- Getty Conservation Institute (GCI)
- International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)
- International Council of Museums (ICOM)
- International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
- Smithsonian Center for Materials Research and Education (SCMRE)
In **1995**, BCIN was made available on the World Wide Web. In those early days of the internet, the database was an extraordinary tool, allowing subscribers from around the world to access bibliographic information and export it to their own local working environment.

At the same time, the information stored in the database was used to produce printed materials, such as Volume 23 of AATA, compose thematic bibliographies and lists of acquisitions, which were either printed or put on floppy disks and delivered to subscribers. Institutions with limited budget could also build smaller local databases, which remained compatible with the main system. Over the years, as digital storage mediums evolved, more information was able to be held and shared using CD-ROM and optical disks.
HISTORY

In addition to BCIN, which focuses on technical literature, two other databases were originally maintained by CIN: a database on conservation materials (MCIN) and a product and supplier directory (ACIN). However, BCIN has always been the most popular, as demonstrated by the results of the Conservation Information Survey conducted in 1992–1993. Another database on photographic conservation literature (PHOCUS), developed by Klaus Hendricks at the National Archives of Canada in the early 1980s, was also made available through CIN before being merged with BCIN in 2000.

BCIN became widely used by museum and heritage professionals, conservators and researchers in the field. Thanks to the contributions of partners, the database grew steadily with periodical uploads of references of journal articles, books, technical reports, conference proceedings, audio-visual and unpublished materials, as well as the first 34 volumes of the AATA (prior to 1998).

To ensure the database remained comprehensive, easy to use and affordable, access was provided at a low cost. In 1995, a flat fee of USD 100 replaced the previous sign-on charge, with a free one-month trial period introduced a few years later. At the time, the CIN was used by more than 500 institutions and individuals in over 30 countries – mostly from Canada, the USA and Europe, but also from Australia and Japan.
The CIN encouraged use of the database through a bilingual newsletter, Network News, published in English and French. Early issues contained articles such as the report of the clean-up project in 1990, information on training activities, and a section dedicated to technical questions and answers. Since 1993, the newsletter has been published by CHIN, which took over management of CIN from Getty.

On CIN’s 10th anniversary in December 1997, its Board of Directors met in Rome. The agenda included items such as the cooperation and contribution of partners, the criteria for admitting new partners, associated projects, target audiences, payment options, and marketing. During the meeting, the Board took the decision to remove the ACIN and MCIN databases from the CIN, concluding both were outdated.
In **2002**, with CHIN hosting the CIN website, BCIN was made available. In the following years, statistics showed a considerable jump in usage; from around 396,000 page views in **2005** to 6,580,000 in 2009, with access growing from around 291,000 in 2005 to over 6,453,000 in **2009**. However, this trend began to decline during the second decade of the twenty-first century. Recognizing the need to upgrade and modernize, members floated the idea of migrating to a new open-source platform in **2016**. CHIN continued to host the platform during this transition phase, which ended with the launch of the new platform in **2021**.

The main difference between the original BCIN and the library resources platform built with VuFind is that there is no longer one unique database to which all BCIN Members contribute, but rather a single search surface thatBrowse all contributing catalogues at once. Currently, BCIN provides access to more than 260,000 bibliographic references to relevant literature in the field of conservation and preservation of cultural heritage. Contributing institutions steadily add new resources to their catalogues, so BCIN is constantly growing and updating.

**REFERENCES**


CIN Network News.