

The Libraries of Serbia on their Way to the City 3.0

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1 ABSTRACT

Progressive and learned people worldwide focus on libraries as much as they can. The work of these institutions makes very strong influence on the intellectual life in a social community. Net infrastructure including the libraries of a city or a region deserves particular attention.

The Virtual Library of Serbia (VLS) is in free access. Except this, users may access Internet under very favourable conditions if they refer to central libraries in this state. It allows to users the search of the aggregates of databases with the aim to find full texts of articles from widely known academic journals. Of course, readers in Serbia contribute to the development of libraries 2.0 based on Web 2.0 thanks to their interest in this field and tendency to create usefull contents by themselves relying on new technologies. Libraries 3.0 would be based on 3D services.

The aim of this paper is to show how libraries of Serbia, particularly the central ones are being oriented in the new technological environment, to point out the possibilities of their further adjustment to users' needs and to draw the attention to problems which occur on their way to the city 3.0. Having in mind that the Virtual Library of Serbia as well as Serbian Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition function good in librarianship, there are real preconditions for further technical progress.

2 TECHNICAL PROGRESS IN THE LIBRARIES OF SERBIA

The image of the librarianship in Serbia is altered in comparison with the one fifteen years ago. Nowadays users may search by themselves or with a reference librarian the aggregates of databases in e-reading rooms. Searching e-journals and overtaking academic papers on CD-ROMs or pocket drives improves the research of users who could not find at least ten key academic titles referring to their scientific field in local collections during the last decade of the 20th century. This way the possibilty of developing scientific thought and publishing academic papers was very decreased. Of course, technical skills are insufficient for the success of search sessions if there is a remarkable lack of knowledge in a defined scientific discipline. In an isolation it is very difficult for an expert to obtain a real picture of any library and information process abroad. It is a fact that EIFL Direct Project includes the consortiums of libraries from many countries. Students and researchers in Basque Country as well as in Serbia keep using the services by EBSCO Host in libraries and in accordance with their topic and profession.

The libraries of Serbia are inevitably included into the process of social globalizing. Their sites are interactive. It doesn't mean that they have achieved the aims they wished to. Generally speaking, it is often difficult to achieve all of them. Libraries differ not only according to the type but also according to the level of automation. They also differ according to the software for processing library materials, according to the structure of personnel, projects etc.

The term Digital City or E-city refers to a connected community that combines broadband communications infrastructure; flexible, service-oriented computing infrastructure based on open industry standards; and innovative services to meet the needs of governments and their employees, citizens and businesses (1). If Belgrade is on its' way to become an electronic city it would be so logical to ask: what is the place of libraries in it? How do they work? Which problems do they face in this contemporary world of science?

2.1 THE VIRTUAL LIBRARY OF SERBIA

The Virtual Library of Serbia (VLS) functions since 2002. Libraries as the components of the VLS use software equipment COBISS 2 by the Institute for Scientific Information IZUM in Maribor (Slovenia) (2). The National and University Library in Zagreb implements software CROLIST for cataloguing and the classification of library materials. Nevertheless there are also some other softwares which are being used in Croatia.

Shared cataloguing in Serbia made possible for libraries to get integrated into one cooperative bibliographic and information system so that the collections of these organizations became visible for users who may

search them very easily and quickly. The use of time is much more efficient today than it was before, when the working process was on a lower level of automation. From users' point of view such know-how for the VLS is extremely good and it has as a result an adequate offer of reference information in time.

2.2 INTERNET SERVICES

Work with users keeps going on partly in reading rooms including Internet centres and partly on-line. Only some typical services are being used in reading rooms such as lighting up, central heating, accomodation, and usual ones concerning lending and returning materials. Technical progress is quite visible in Internet centres which are equipped in a contemporary way. However the lack of working space is always present, the number of high quality personal computers is usually insufficient, and laptops for the users and librarians are not acquired yet or there is a small number of them. There is a strong feedback between Internet and the development of intellectual freedom. Creating information-rich societies is a key element of poverty reduction and sustainable development (3). The libraries of Serbia made great efforts to create conditions for efficient search of numerous sites by users and getting actual information in all scientific fields. Many search sessions of databases are followed by the search of e-collections in free access. Librarians as knowledge managers should help users in order to find out an optimum combination of e-resources for their academic papers or experimental work.

2.3 E-BOOKS AND E-JOURNALS

E-journals may be searched by the users themselves in the library or at home if they have the consent of the central institution (central library). The first search session is usually the most difficult one. Academic papers are being overtaken sending to an e-mail address, saving on a CD-ROM, pocket drive or in a printed form. The librarians working on the first service line usually focus on the user who should search information electronic resources. Training courses are indispensable for library staff and users regardless of the level of qualifications. In local frameworks the Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition of the Libraries of Serbia (known as KOBSON) exists. Thanks to the functioning of the Consortium, more than 35.000 journals in full text may be searched. The offer of KOBSON consists of more than 30 e-services for users and it includes EBSCO, Emerald, Science Direct, Proquest, Blackwell, Kluwer, Springer, Sci Finder, JSTORE, etc. Except the acquisition of foreign academic papers, main aims of associating the libraries of Serbia into the Consortium were: transition from classical e.g. paper editions to the electronic form and the promotion of access to the electronic information (4).

| Year | No. of articles overtaken in full text |
|------|--|
| 2004 | 652.187 |
| 2005 | 676.838 |
| 2006 | 834.650 |
| 2007 | 941.557 |

Chart 1. E-Articles in full text overtaken within Serbian Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition
Resource: www.nb.rs

The National Library of Serbia has a key role in negotiations with publishers and competent financiers. The users have also a possibility to search e-books although there is a relatively small number of them in comparison with total number of books published in e-form.

3 FROM LIBRARY 1.0 TO LIBRARY 3.0

Contemporary library had its' own way of development. It was not just the way from library 1.0 to library 2.0 which is maybe defining its' own way to library 3.0. At the same time it was a way from a very simple organization with warehousing as one of key characteristics towards a marketing oriented library. A modern library should be able to plan its' sustainable development in a changing environment taking into account human, technical and financial resources as well as its' organizational structure.

3.1 LIBRARY 1.0

It would be difficult to conclude whether library 3.0 is a concept or just a very progressive library which implements technical innovations under the conditions of social transformation and globalizing. For the library 1.0 warehousing was in a way characteristic. In that period, generally speaking, libraries were not leaving their buildings during the working process neither in Serbia (this paper is written on) nor elsewhere.

3.2 LIBRARY 2.0

More advances is Library 2.0 as a contemporary organization under an intensified influence of information technologies. So, libraries are not warehouses for books and periodicals any more. They leave their buildings. Classic or paper catalogues are being replaced by the electronic ones. Library 2.0 would be very difficult to imagine today without blogs or wikies which make the work on web more successful and efficient. Text, sound and picture synchronised cause remarkable progress in comparison with previous modest results of searching classical library collections in Serbia. Users focus their attention more and more to multimedia resources of information and materials in general.

The research of serbian Web 2.0 space, carried out until today, show that local libraries do not have a particular influence on its' creating. In addition, these institutions usually don't use new technologies for promoting and creating new services. Their offer is being completed from time to time but promotion activities do not follow the idea of the Library 2.0. Maybe some librarians in Serbia make efforts to change such a situation or have already invested certain energy in that direction but results are not known to the professional public yet. (5)

The Municipal Library of Belgrade makes efforts in order to create usefull contents and it implements Web 2.0 technology. These ativities are remarkable in Serbia but in comparison with the libraries of developed countries they are still very modest. (6)

3.3 LIBRARY 3.0

Discussions on libraries 3.0 contribute to penetrate deeper the world of the virtual librarianship which is particularly developed in urban areas. Semantic web will probably be unavoidable. Writing on libraries Shultz mentions Second life. User spends weekly more than fourty hours on-line. He penetrates the virtual graphic world. Except this, he is being permanently stimulated by computer animations of cultural and the educational institutions which create them inviting users to see their on-line contents and rely on their services.

An enormous number of scientific, academic and other information as well as literature cause that user feels the need to address himself to a librarian in order to find indispensable materials easier and faster. Professional staff will help the user to combine library instruments in an optimum way and find feet in searching many information resources. Interactivity in the contact with users becomes very expressed. An intellectual dialogue is being developed.

Library 3.0 includes 3D services. Such a library implies multidimensional orientation in the virtual environment but also an unavoidable survival of paper materials, important role of librarians as well as marketing services in contemporary technological environment. The users make choice of a librarian they would cooperate with as well as collections and information resources they would use (7). Libraries of Serbia didn't reach that phase yet. The situation is similar in great number of libraries in OECD countries. However libraries of Serbia follow progressive tendencies in theory and practice trying to implement them as much as they can. They will gradually come closer to the library 3.0 but slower than such institutions in the countries of European Union.

In the city 3.0 libraries point out a professional and manysided work with users in an electronic environment taking into account a permanent growth of information as well as great wealth of contents that may be found searching Internet. No matter whether the library is 2.0 or 3.0 it would be indispensable to follow the needs of users permanently. Electronic groups of readers as well as focus interviews may contribute to this. Marketing orientation is undoubtedly important to achieve successful work of libraries in Serbia and therefore it is an imperative nowadays (8).

4 E-USER IN EUROPE AND SERBIA : SOME EXAMPLES OF GOOD PRACTICE

There are many university libraries in the world which offer full texts of electronic articles and books to their members. Of course, this is not the content of all academic editions published by a university. As Clifford Stoll argues: “The bookless library is a dream, a hallucination of online addicts, network neophytes and library-automation insiders... Such a dream assumes that the library’s books are all digitized and available on the computer. They aren’t. They never will be.”(9) There are some limits which fetter library users such as an indispensable username and password. It isn’t unusual because the consortiums for coordinated acquisition in diverse countries or the consortiums with similar competences pay high fees for the access to the aggregates of databases. It cannot be considered as bad practice at all. However from the user’s point of view, free access to information stimulates easier his intellectual work and therefore it would be probably the best solution.

4.1 THE ELECTRONIC SERVICE “EMERALD”

Numerous scientific libraries in the world use many electronic services thanks to electronic publishing. One of those which contain high quality databases is Emerald Group Publishing Limited. It became widely known after several decades of professional experience in the field of management research. Its offer is focused on marketing, management, librarianship and informatics but it is also complemented by the works from linguistics, sociology, politics, psychology etc. Emerald offers not only electronic articles but also electronic books as well as many on-line products and services (10). So, the offer is not in free access. Certain subscription has to be paid by interested institutions, respectively, consortiums.

4.2 THE ELECTRONIC SERVICE “PROQUEST”

There is a high quality e-service for library users in university environments which is known worldwide as PROQUEST. It offers access to full-text databases. Except this, PROQUEST includes a database *Dissertation Abstracts*. It is thanks to PROQUEST that users in Serbia could access the following databases across Serbian Library Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition (KOBSON): ABI/INFORM Trade & Industry, Career and Technical Education, Dissertations & Theses, Nursing & Allied, Health Source, ProQuest Agriculture Journals, ProQuest Education Journals, ProQuest Computing, ProQuest Social Science Journals, ProQuest Science Journals, ProQuest Telecommunications (11). Electronic articles in full-text which may be found across PROQUEST are academic and very reliable materials for users in diverse scientific fields who prepare their undergraduate, postgraduate theses, scientific articles, other papers or just attend their postgraduate studies. During several previous years the members of academic libraries in Serbia were using the full texts of electronic articles offered by this famous publisher. Time will show whether it would be so in the next period.

4.3 THE “GALILEO PORTAL”

Institute and Museum of the History of Science in Florence (Istituto e Museo di Storia della Scienza, Firenze) has on its own site a library in free access which is useful mostly to professors and researchers who work in the academic field of this institution. It is an interesting data that famous Italian astronomer, philosopher, mathematician and physicist, Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was born 445 years ago. The library of this Institute makes possible for on-line users to access freely many works which illustrate the creativity of this and other scientists also from the period of middle-aged Italy. That is very important for understanding the evolution of scientific thought in astronomy and also out of it. The “Galileo Portal” makes possible the access to many Galilean resources published on the site of this Institute (12). Extensive materials are downloaded into the archives which may be searched on-line from abroad.

5 CONCLUSION

Contemporary library in Serbia may achieve an efficient development and the growth of income only by combined methods. The quality of services makes influence on the loyalty of users. They work in and out of the library 2.0 as they will work in and out of the library 3.0 one day.

No matter whether the library performs its activities on one or another technical level it shouldn’t be forgotten that is organized because of internal and external, real and potential users. The development of libraries stimulates enlightenment, the creating of e-sciences and e-culture as well as the development of

intellectual freedom. Therefore the libraries in Serbia confirm themselves as the factor of peace and stabilization in the social community. In fact, it is a common characteristic of many libraries in the world.

Except this, in the city 3.0 these institutions will stimulate more intensively a dialogue between the citizens of different political orientation.

Thanks to the implementation of innovations and the efforts of library staff users are being prepared for their academic, respectively, business activities. Market orientation keeps strengthening in the economies in transition. Urban areas adjust themselves to modern tendencies thanks to the development of ICT worldwide. Thomas Power described the progress of the World Wide Web in the following way:

«Web 1.0 - Find Me

Web 2.0 - Join Me

Web 3.0 - Follow Me.» (13).

Libraries are and they will be «at the heart of the Information Society» with very important tasks towards population, particularly the young. Thanks to the World Wide Web libraries contribute a great deal to the process of social globalizing. The Communication Era requires from library staff to be well prepared for the next decade in order to instruct users in a professional way. Only under such conditions library members may really contribute to the development of the Learned Society.

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