

National and University Library
Ljubljana, Slovenia (NUL)

ANNUAL REPORT TO THE CONFERENCE OF EUROPEAN NATIONAL LIBRARIES (CENL)

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SPECIAL TOPIC 1998-1999: MANAGEMENT OF THE LIBRARY (DEVELOPMENTS AND IMPROVEMENTS)

NUL is organised in divisions and departments, thus the organisational structure is linear. During 1998 changes occurred in the R & D Department, which had been covering under the same umbrella not only research projects, but education and training, and advisory functions to the library network as well, together with computing services. What we did is to have split the former R & D Department into three independent centres, as follows: R & D Centre, Education & Training Centre, and Library Advisory and Monitoring Centre. The benefits of such re-organisation are already obvious. Some additional changes in the library organisation and charter are nevertheless expected for 1999.

FINANCE AND FUNDING

NUL is financed mainly by the Ministry of Culture. The gross expenditure in 1998 was SIT 816 million (=\$ 4,8 million), which shows an increase of 9 % over the previous year, but this is again due to a rise in inflation rate. The grant covers salaries (131 full-time and 40 part-time employees), operational expenditure, R & D projects, publishing activity, investments, and accomodation fees for 10 separate locations. The Library was trying to get the most from sales of goods and services (SIT 119 million, nearly 15 % of the gross expenditure) and is increasingly required to do so. SIT 106 million (=\$ 623,000) were spent on library acquisitions (see below for further breakdown), an increase of 13 % over 1997, but the inflation rate has to be again taken into account (9 %).

LEGAL STATUS

In December 1998, the Government released a new legal Act on Creation of the National and University Library, published in its Official Gazette, which defines the Republic of Slovenia and its Government as the main trustee. At the same time, the legal document re-affirms NUL's leading position (»the first among equals«) and assigns to the Library a number of tasks and functions, usually associated with national and university libraries, together with its national and international responsibilities.

ROLE OF THE NATIONAL LIBRARY IN THE NATIONAL LIBRARY NETWORK

NUL is the leading research library in Slovenia. Nationally important functions, carried out by the Library, are various:

- collection of legal deposit copies, claiming, distribution
- creation of authority records on the basis of legal deposit, which can be used by other participants in the system
- creation of CIP records
- distribution of ISBN, ISMN and ISSN identification numbers
- union catalogue quality control
- interlibrary and document supply centre
- information gateway to electronically available sources, nationally and internationally
- research and development for the needs of the library network
- advisory and consultancy service for all library types
- education and training centre for the profession (basic and continuing)

LEGAL DEPOSIT OF MATERIALS

The results of updating the legal deposit legislation are slim. NUL organised a campaign to include non-print items with special emphasis on electronic documents, and a booklet was published and distributed at the main national book fair. The number of copies to be deposited with NUL is to be re-addressed, since the Library also functions as a dispatching centre for the libraries with the right to receive legal deposit copies. Important developments are expected to happen in 1999 through discussions among the Ministry of Culture, publishers and librarians, who would like to retain the number of copies.

In recent years, there has been an explosion of publishers and the comprehensiveness of the legal deposit intake has become a daunting task. A considerable amount of material which should be deposited with NUL, is not received (estimates vary from 5 % to even 20 %).

Otherwise the legal deposit intake in 1998 represented some 50 % of the total library intake (55,000 items against a total of 108,000 items).

BUILDINGS AND PLANT

At present, the Library works on two separate and, at the same time, deeply connected projects: renovation of the existing building, and continuation of initial phases for the new one. Renovation has finally brought about some important changes: the basement and the ground floor have been completely refurbished, and several public services have already been completed: the new periodicals reading room, café, public cloakrooms and lavatories; the new information centre, which will represent the »heart« of the NUL, is about to open. New telecommunication cabling has been successfully implemented, along with fire-protection system. The library has been left fully operational, which means a number of temporary moves for the staff and they have to cope with their daily portions of dust and noise, together with the users.

The work on the new building has been slow for several reasons (problems in acquiring the land, important archaeological site and arising from that, inclusion of excavated material into the project, lack of interest with the Government). Several promotional campaigns have been nevertheless carried out to increase public awareness.

ACQUISITIONS

In 1998, there was a total amount of about SIT 106 million spent on all kinds of library acquisitions, not counting the legal deposit intake. 71 million were spent on foreign-language material (32,4 databases, 10,6 books, 27,9 periodicals), an increase of 23 % over 1997, and

the rest was spent on buying duplicates of legal deposit, together with relevant materials of historic and national importance.

We continue to develop in-depth research support around some traditionally strong areas (humanities and social sciences). Any expansion of our acquisitions in terms of widening subject areas to cover is impossible, due to the lack of finance. We do provide, however, reference collections also for science and technology, and electronically available information resources also cover all disciplines.

Some 398,000 items were taken in (of which 341,000 legal deposit copies). 108,000 items were added to the collection while 286,000 items (mainly legal deposit copies) were dispatched to other libraries in Slovenia. Accession of books: 20,300; periodicals: 53,500 items (=nearly 3,000 current titles); 6,300 accessions of sound recordings and printed music; nearly 5,000 accessions of cartographic and pictorial material; 1,453 AV items; 17,000 accessions of manuscript items, and 120 current CD-ROM titles.

CONSERVATION/PRESERVATION OF COLLECTIONS

Microfilming of Slovenian periodicals has been continued, whereby priority is given to most ancient daily newspapers and those receiving heavy use. In this way, some 168,000 shots were prepared in 1998. The Preservation Department restored 19 damaged bindings, some 2,000 separate sheets and a number of acid-free boxes and folders to store the items.

Finance has been probably the largest single factor which has limited the extent of our conservation and preservation programmes. Some projects have nevertheless been outlined and financial support has been obtained from the Open Society Institute – Regional Library Programme (Budapest), as follows: digitisation of an important collection of Slavonic manuscripts; electronic cleaning of nationally important sound recordings, now available on vinyl records; and organisation of workshop dealing with a special topic (in 1998 conservation and restoration of parchment bindings) to improve the skills of staff.

The Conservation & Preservation Dept. successfully participates in the EU 1681 Eurocare Laclepa Project (Laser Cleaning of paper and Parchment), taking on its own part of the research involved.

IT AND NEW TECHNOLOGY

A large amount of work was required in maintaining an extensive PC network, including the computer laboratory, necessary changes with moves of several departments to new locations within the Library, along with newly added computers and the shift to NT operating system. New functions were also added to the central system (www environment, Gabriel mirroring procedures) and local network. Another area of concern is the CD-ROM server, the management of which is seriously hindered from both technical and information provision point, due to the lack of staff. In 1998 a switch to new versions had to be made twice, and considerable efforts were required to run the system in terms of maintaining, testing, and loading the database updates. There were 75 databases available via the CD-ROM network, providing access to bibliographic and full-text databases. The server can be accessed by some 70 academic libraries, so education and training schemes had to be organised for all users.

SERVICES TO READERS

In 1998 NUL's membership amounted to a total of 11,200 registered users (7,500 students among them). The number of visits reached an impressive 185,000. Library users borrowed some 270,000 items, an increase of 12 % over the previous year. The same trends could be identified in the interlibrary loan and document delivery services (25 % up, mainly due to the increase in the national ILL, whereas the international service numbers are 5 % up, compared to 1997). It is a highly effective and fully automated service which uses all internationally

renowned information providers and document suppliers (OCLC, Blaise-Line, DBI-Link etc.). At the same time, some 115,000 information enquiries were successfully dealt with. Online searches can be done using OPAC in the national union catalogue, Internet, commercially available databases and hosts, and CD-ROMs. Access to electronic journals has also been provided for the first time.

Charging is applicable mainly with commercial databases and interlibrary loan/document delivery.

Unfortunately, we cannot report any progress in expanding opening times (lack of staff, renovation of the building), and the number of user work stations has hardly moved forward either. Hopefully the new information centre (due for completion in 1999) will ease the pressure to some extent. The on-going renovation process in the building has been a major »disturbing« factor (dust, noise) in the library work with users.

EXHIBITIONS

NUL prepared 10 exhibitions on various scales, mainly to celebrate important anniversaries of renowned men of both national and international posture. In 1998 four exhibitions were put up to underline the international co-operation of Slovenia in the fields of culture, history, and science with several nations (Australia, Austria, the Czech Republic, Sweden).

PUBLISHING

The Library continued to publish the Slovenian National Bibliography both in printed form (8 volumes) and on CD-ROM. Four catalogues were published in a book form to highlight respective exhibitions. An important set of publications (5) was issued to fill the gap in translations of international cataloguing standards, together with other listings. Four monthly periodicals continued to appear in regular intervals. A 1998 Education & Training Directory was also published.

CATALOGUING AND OTHER TECHNICAL PROCESSES

NUL contributed some 27,000 records to the COBIB national union catalogue (monographs and articles). The total increase of inputs to the local database was 40,500 records, thus reaching the total of 430,000 records.

Legal deposit copies enable the Library to create authority records for the national publishing output, so NUL is committed to process the intake as quickly as possible to provide full MARC records. A lot of work has been done to review the records prepared by other participants in the system, together with releasing licences for the new-comers. At the same time, the Library works on introducing UNIMARC format structure updates, along with all necessary testing and implementation.

Retrospective conversion of the card catalogues was devised in two phases. Phase 1 (Library's most ancient catalogue, 1774-1947) was completed in 1998. Records (65,000) are now available in both UNIMARC and COMARC national format. Phase 2 (the catalogues 1948-1988) has just begun. It is expected to reach a total of 400,000 bibliographic records.

Update of the Slovenian National Bibliography on CD-ROM was also published. An essentially improved user interface acts as the main feature: better design, UNIMARC records, addition of electronic resources, cartographic material and printed music, improvements in indexing etc.

OPAC is developed by the computer host (IZUM), so NUL has little impact on its development. In 1998 there was an addition of access to a number of foreign electronic journals.

LIBRARY CO-OPERATION

NUL has been deeply involved in library co-operation, nationally and internationally, which can be seen under several separate headings. We would like to add that the Library is a member of the most important library associations, among them IFLA, FID, Aslib, BLA, LIBER, IBBY, and CERL. NUL is actively participating in a number of standing and executive committees, belonging to the previously mentioned bodies, along with taking part in annual CENL meetings and conferences, Gabriel Board & Team, Cobra Forum, CECUP, and ELAG. The Library also acts as the ISBN and ISSN national agency. In the framework of exchange of library professionals, several librarians visited our institution, thus librarians from the Czech Republic, Albania, and Bosnia.

NUL regularly provides national bibliographic records to the OCLC WorldCat database, and some 17,000 UNIMARC records have been successfully included into the CERL Hand Press Book database. Some internationally important research projects have also been started with the co-operation of the Library (see other headings). It is perhaps worthwhile emphasising that the inclusion of the Information and Documentation Centre on the Council of Europe into NUL (Autumn 1997) has proved to be a particularly happy decision. With a myriad of its activities and documents, the Centre fills an important gap in Slovenia.

STAFFING MATTERS

The staff of NUL numbers 131 full-time and some 40 part-time employees. It is necessary to underline that the Library is seriously understaffed up to a point where several working processes are hindered. There are a number of functions and tasks which NUL is entitled by law to fulfil, but they continue to remain unfulfilled. With the onset of electronic age, we are facing new challenges (for example, collection, processing, preservation of and access to electronic documents), and however well organised, we employ hardly enough full-time librarians to cope with the present amount of work. At this very moment we should be opening 30 new full-time positions.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING

NUL is by law entitled to carry out an extensive education and training programme, in terms of basic, specialist and continuing education schemes, intended both for librarians co-operating in the national library network, and others (publishers, for example). In 1998, courses of all kinds were attended by more than 1,000 librarians, among them 45 working for NUL.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

R & D Department deals with many research projects on its own (retrospective conversions, development of SNB on CD-ROM, authority control, national cataloguing rules, etc.). There are a number of other on-going projects: the two terminological dictionaries of librarianship (one with national significance, and the other gathering several nations and institutions around a multilingual dictionary), and the already mentioned preservation project (Laclepa). NUL also acts as the main advisory and monitoring library centre in the country for all library types (public, academic, special, school libraries). Activities in the field included statistical surveys, co-operation in the new library legislation and many other library-oriented standards, compilation of a national library directory, and a huge number of problems and issues relating to the advisory function were dealt with on a daily basis.