



Integration of university libraries in Bulgaria for utilization of world information resources

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161 — "The media is the message!" The convergence of media in rapidly changing societies from a user perspective as well as the demand for preservation — Audiovisual and Multimedia Section with Preservation and Conservation

Abstract:

Today the main sources of information for most Bulgarian university libraries are traditional print journals and their electronic versions. University libraries increasingly use external electronic resources, creating and participating in various consortia, the main purpose of which is the right choice of electronic resources and reduce the value of access to the participants.

In the report are represented the established consortia in Bulgaria, enabling the Bulgarian universities and corporate research teams access to important international academic electronic resources. Also is described the first Bulgarian National Consortium for databases access, providing a broad interdisciplinary coverage: Science Direct, ISI Web of Knowledge, SCOPUS, Embase, Engineering Village, Pro Quest, etc.

The integration of Bulgarian university libraries in the use of global information resources, correct organization and integration of the electronic resources in the electronic collections of educational and scientific resources, created in the library, are the way to building a contemporary digital university library.

The economic and social changes experienced in Bulgaria since 1990, resulted in significant changes in the university education and library systems. The reduction in university funding led to a sharp reduction in the number of purchased scientific literature and in the subscriptions to scientific journals and electronic resources.

Up to now printed books (50-85%) and printed journals (45-60%) still prevail as the most common types of information sources in Bulgarian university libraries. Other types of sources (electronic versions of journals, collections of eBooks, abstract and full text

databases) still do not exceed 20% of the total amount of available library resources. Electronic books are the least used in libraries [1].

Unlike Western countries and the U.S., Internet in Bulgaria is still the most widely used source of information in libraries, running well ahead of even electronic library catalogues. The main reason for that lies in the insufficient attention being paid to the training of teachers and doctoral students for work with electronic information resources. Lecturers need to be introduced regularly and systematically to the external information resources, useful to them; they need to learn the strategies of information search in electronic resources and the principles of navigation in various specialized databases and later on, how to transmit that knowledge to their students. This will be one of the most important tasks facing university libraries in the near future.

In recent years university libraries have gradually begun to increase the share of electronic publications in their funds. Sometimes this is achieved at the expense of reducing the current subscription to periodicals. Most libraries, however, are switching to combined subscriptions for printed and electronic versions of selected for subscription journals (print + online).

Over a relatively short period of time employees in Bulgarian university libraries acquired the information of major foreign manufacturers of electronic resources and can already boast of certain success in their usage. They learned to evaluate the proposed resources according to basic criteria: conditions for access to electronic resource, content, update of the resource, convenient cataloging, resource value. Library professionals have realized that in the implementation of the fundamentally new level [2] of information provision of scientific researches and higher education it is necessary not only to provide access to electronic resources, but also to set up such an organization of resources that will enable them to "fit" in the university digital library of the future. People working in university libraries realized the need to join their efforts for access to electronic information resources through creation and participation in library consortia whose primary purpose is the right choice of electronic resource and the reduction in its access cost for participants.

Modern library consortia integrate libraries of different departmental subordination and from different regions. Moreover they differ in the level of development of their technical equipment, in their telecommunications infrastructure and technology. Often participants in the consortium use different software for exploiting the information resources. This fact has to be taken into account when organizing their joint activities, as well as in the choice of technology.

Library consortia may be state, regional or branch (in type).

Participants in the future consortium choose their leader on their own and he/she can be one of the consortium members or a member of a relevant external body. International experience shows that a uniform model of library consortium does not exist and everything depends on the specific situation, i.e. on the objectives of its creation and the multitude of tasks facing its members.

The rules for information resources access, conditions for work with them, the cost-sharing mode between participants, the mutual obligations of partners (including liability for breach of agreements), rights on the archive – all this is described in detail in the License agreement, signed by the owner of the information resource and each participant in the consortium [3].

The resource access cost for each participant is determined by the owner of the information resource and depends on the number of bachelor and master students, faculty and PhD students in the university or on the number of scientists in the research institute that participate in the consortium.

In many eastern European countries the creation of library consortia is initiated by the university community itself and is realized on the site of one of the major universities that has the technical capabilities and the experience in using electronic resources. A significant part of the consortium funding is taken by the state as a rule.

Until recently state structures in Bulgaria did not participate in financing the consortia for cooperative access to international information resources. University libraries determined the financial means for participating in them on their own.

Over the last 7-8 years in Bulgaria several consortia, organized by distributors of information resources have been established, providing Bulgarian universities and research units with a joint access to prestigious world academic electronic resources:

1. *Consortium providing access to the STM collection of books and magazines SpringerLink*, which contains the full texts of articles from 1750 journals, 27000 e-books and digitized archives. The consortium was established in 2003 and currently it unites 10 Bulgarian university libraries.

2. *Consortium providing access to the electronic collection of EBSCO databases*, including one of the largest global multi-disciplinary databases Academic Search Premier, MasterFILE Premier databases, ERIC, Emerald Fulltext, etc. The consortium was established in 2003 and by 2011 it comprises over 40 participants - university and regional libraries.

3. *Consortium providing access to VINITI RAN (All-Russian Institute of Scientific and Technical Information of the Russian Academy of Sciences) databases*. The consortium was established in 2002 and unites the six largest Bulgarian universities. The information resource contains 29 thematic databases in the field of natural and exact sciences. The total amount of information is more than 25 million documents. The databases are referral, so participants in the consortium are given the opportunity to order and through the system for electronic delivery of documents to receive electronic copies of full texts of documents recorded in the VINITI database (articles from journals, books, descriptions of patents etc.).

4. At the beginning of 2009 the first *Bulgarian National Consortium for database access* was established, providing a broad interdisciplinary coverage: Science Direct, ISI Web of Knowledge, SCOPUS, Embase, Engineering Village, Pro Quest to all academic and university libraries in the country. The consortium is fully funded by the Ministry of Education and Science for a period of three years. Bulgarian scientists, lecturers, PhD students and graduate students have access to the most valuable global information resources that were practically inaccessible to them before, due to their high cost.

Next step in the information provision/coverage of Bulgarian universities is the *creation of consortia for access to global collections of full-text electronic books (e-book collection)*. This electronic product has great future as a source of information in the training of bachelor students and PhD students and already occupies a well deserved place on the market of electronic products and services in the developed countries.

Bulgarian scholars and library professionals are aware (of the fact) that the collective access to global electronic academic resources, their correct organization and the proper structuring of all electronic collections of educational and scientific resources, created in the library, are the way to building a contemporary digital university library.

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