

INTRODUCTION TO THE RUDJER BOŠKOVIĆ INSTITUTE LIBRARY

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ABSTRACT: The library of the Rudjer Bošković Institute is the greatest special library in the field of natural sciences in our country. Its acquisitions (books, periodicals, other materials) are in the field of physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, environment and marine sciences). The library is connected through a local area network to CARNET (Croatian Academic Research Network) and INTERNET. In addition to printed versions of bibliographic information sources, we have tried for several years to introduce our users to some tools of library online databases (book catalogue, journals catalogue) and to the recently acquired database of Current Contents (OVID programme - multiusers version). We have also tried to introduce them to access to INTERNET and its possibilities for information resources. The library personnel is confronted with new challenges: how to use better and more efficient techniques for information retrieval. New adaptiveness is required.

The library of the Rudjer Bošković Institute was founded in 1950, and has since grown into the most important source of information in the field of natural sciences in our country. Carefully collected acquisitions (books, periodicals, other materials) cover the field of physics, chemistry, biology, medicine, environmental and marine sciences. Its library holdings are about 30,000 books, 1,100 periodicals, 400 current title periodicals. Because of financial restrictions, the last few years have been unfavorable for new acquisitions. The number of acquired books has steadily decreased. In the most favorable years we were able to purchase about 600 books per year, whereas in 1994 we acquired only 120 books. However, in the last few years we have received important donations. New periodical titles are rarely procured, but the current periodical titles are not decreasing.

In the last few decades a great explosion has occurred both in publication and in information management technology. To meet information needs of our own scientists and also of external users (engineers, members of universities, students, etc.) our first efforts toward automation of library and information services were undertaken at the end of 1989. The local area network was installed and connected to CARNET (Croatian Academic Research Network) and INTERNET. We started with an online catalogue of monographs using MICRO/CDS ISIS. All books of our

collections are not yet in the database, but this work is in progress. This activity is welcomed by our users, since from their own PC they can browse and see previous acquisitions or those newly acquired.

Concerning current periodicals a database was set up in 1992 using our own software and providing access through a local area network.

Other library routines are not computerized, but we look for an integrated online library system. There are a large number on the market. We believe one with powerful functions should be chosen.

In addition to the catalogue and database of current periodicals, the library offers access to articles in sci/tech journals through Current Contents with abstracts (sections AGRI, CLIN, LIFE and PHYS). The other sections are without abstracts. This multiuser version (UNIX version 1.0 - OVID programme) is intended also for all institutions which are connected to CARNET. Some researchers welcome these acquisitions, whereas the others (ca 10%) still prefer to browse through classical hard copies.

At the beginning of 1994 the library was donated a SPARC file server with a 3 GB disk (named NIPPUR). This essential piece of equipment is used as host for library databases.

The library is engaged as principal investigator in a project entitled "Natural sciences" in the framework of the programme "System of scientific information in Croatia". Nine libraries in the field of natural sciences at the University of Zagreb are included in this project and are responsible for the coverage of their own collections (books and current periodicals). These project tasks are of great importance for the scientific community in Croatia. Since 1990 there has been a great need for a central book and current periodicals catalogue in the field of natural sciences. It is highly desirable to have such a catalogue that would cover a gap in this area.

Our library was the first to use the World Wide Web server so as to allow users direct access to its searchable databases (library holdings of monographs, current periodicals, bibliography of published papers (cited by CC) for 1993 written by our scientists, and also general information about the library). Through Cambridge Scientific Abstracts the library enabled users to have online access to various series of abstracts (Aquaculture Abstracts, Ecology Abstracts, Oceanic Abstracts etc.) Plans have already been made to expand services offered by the server.

This new era in library activities requires more adaptiveness of librarians. They should have knowledge of new technologies and should continually follow them, thus extending their knowledge. As information searches become technologically more complex, there will be an increasing need for librarians to assist users. We believe that in the future a library will be judged more by its services rather than by its collections. Our efforts go in this direction.

References:

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