

## **International UBC/UNIMARC Seminar in Vilnius: New Ways For Implementation of Modern Techniques in Bibliography**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Report of a seminar organised by the Division of Bibliographic Control and the IFLA UBCIM Programme and held in Vilnius, Lithuania, in May/June 1994.*

Owing to the efforts of IFLA, different national bibliographic agencies of various countries are able to carry efficient exchange with information during the last decades. To intensify this co-operation on a broader scale, special UBCIM Programme has been created. The tasks of this Programme are being successfully resolved in varied approaches the most effective of which are regional seminars held every year.

The first official invitation to participate in the endeavor of the kind for the Baltic countries was received in 1992. The seminar took place in Budapest where problems on the utilization of the communications UNIMARC format were discussed and its application in the former countries of the socialist system were considered.

During the seminar numerous common aspects for newly independent countries were defined to be considered in the future: necessity for a more expeditious implementation of the machine - readable format of the bibliographic records, translation of ISBD into their native languages, speeding up solution of the terminological problems, enhancement of the preparation of authority data files in every

country, etc. However, the issues covered at the seminar brought up the existing peculiarities and divergences within the former socialist countries, conditioned by the objective factors, the most significant of which is the level of their autonomy.

In comparison with the Western European countries of the socialist block, the countries that were part of the Soviet system had less self dependency which had a negative impact on the entire development of the librarianship, i.e., problems involved deficiency of the national cataloguing rules (cataloguing was based on the Russian ones), absence of the ISSN, ISBN, ISMN national agencies, lack of knowledge about the MARC formats (in some cases MEKOΦ was applied) and, finally, IFLA documents and regulations were actually not followed directly and consistently. Main preference was given to the information that was obtained from Russian publications.

Consequently, the above mentioned reasons stimulated the Bibliographic Division of the IFLA UBC in collaboration with the IFLA UBCIM Programme Committee in arranging a special seminar for the Baltic States. The main goal of the seminar was to introduce local librarians with the latest developments in the sphere of bibliographic control, including suggestions on the usage and implementation of the ISBD and UNIMARC, effective functioning of the ISSN, ISBN, ISMN national agencies and aiming to make their activities more operational, application of authority data format and establishment of authority data banks in the countries.

Vilnius was chosen as an appropriate place for the seminar to be held and this decision was not accidental. Lithuania is one of the first Eastern European countries that reproduced the "UNIMARC Manual", choosing it as an internal format. Also, it is a leader in the creation of the national cataloguing rules in accordance with the International requirements and

establishment of the ISSN, ISBN, ISMN national agencies.

Supported by the IFLA Division of Bibliographic Control and the UBCIM Programme Committee and sponsored by the Open Society Fund Lithuania (Soros Foundation), the "Litimpex" Close Stock Company, the French and US Embassies, the British Council, the Center of Bibliography and Book Science of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania was able to host the UBC/UNIMARC seminar which was held in June 2-4th, 1994.

The seminar in Vilnius was distinctive in three basic aspects from other similar conferences held in different parts of the world:

- the countries represented were expanded on a broader regional scale;
- the scope of the issues raised was enlarged;
- the agenda was more diversified.

The seminar was attended by under 100 participants, including the visiting experts from different IFLA divisions and programmes. The majority of the participants were naturally from Lithuania. Still, the seminar was represented not only by the Baltic countries as it was planned before. Participants from outside the region arrived as well - delegates of research and national libraries of Denmark, Finland, Poland, Russia, Sweden, Slovenia and, certainly, Latvia and Estonia. All types of libraries were represented, but with preponderance of the research and national libraries.

The seminar was highly successful and positive, as visiting experts and executives from different IFLA divisions and programmes delivered technically informative presentations on particular issues that answered numerous questions of explicit

significance for us.

What are the new tasks facing the national bibliographic agencies, how should the organizational - functional structure of these agencies be organized for its optimal and utmost functioning?

Answers to these important points were presented in a noteworthy speech of the Chairman of the IFLA Division of Bibliographic Control Mr. Ross Bourne. He offered suggestions on the urgent actions of creation of the structure of the national bibliographic institutions as it is foreseen in the UBCIM Programme under the existing severe economic conditions.

From the viewpoint of the Eastern European countries his proposals were especially beneficial. Presently, the systems of the former socialist countries still encounter two types of institutional units, i.e., National Library and Book Chamber, that duplicate the functions of acquisition of the national press and its cataloguing. This should not be tolerated under the existing difficult transitional period in the developing countries and challenges should be made in adopting administrative methods and concepts of Western modern methods in managing and commencing automation in all spheres of librarianship and bibliography.

Besides, the duplicity of these functions is in contradiction with the IFLA documents [1], as was pointed out by Mr. Ross Bourne in his presentation. Emphasizing the importance of creation of the principles of the organizational-functional structure of the national bibliographic agency, the speaker made it obvious that theoretically one country should not have several separate institutions for the acquisition and cataloguing of the national press. These functions are as a rule carried out by national or other major libraries, receiving national publications under legal deposit legislation.

It was of paramount importance for the specialists of the Baltic States to perceive awareness of the fact that our readiness for accepting reforms, reorganizing acquisition of the national press and its cataloguing, dissemination of bibliographic information is accurate and needed.

Another timely presentation, in our opinion, was that of the Chairman of the US Library of Congress Mr. John D. Byrum on the concept of ISBD that caused enormous attention and interest among the librarians from the Baltics, Russia and other countries. This was well understood, as most of the Eastern European countries have not yet translated those substantial recommendations into their native languages. As mentioned before, majority of the former Soviet countries are still using Russian cataloguing rules which, in some extent, are based on ISBD.

A pressing problem of today, according to numerous specialists, was an aspect stressed in the presentation of Mr. John D. Byrum about the necessity of ISBD arising from automation. He emphasized that ISBD remained virtually significant as the use of automation facilitated the accuracy of presentation of the elements in the description.

A further topic discussed and underlined in the presentation was the treatment of the elements of bibliographic description in the native national languages. It is essential for us to establish the unique bibliographic features to be described and to interpret them accordingly.

A workshop on the next day was mainly dedicated to the analysis of the terminological problems. During the ensuing discussions participants were instructed on the ways of reaching an unanimous agreement between one or other opposing groups in search for an adequate term, also, what options should be preferred when a state language does not have an equivalent for the definite term.

Recommendations and consultations advanced the preparation for publishing of the Lithuanian version of ISBD. Discussions with the colleagues from Latvia, Estonia, Slovenia revealed that they are facing similar terminological barriers and preparation and publication of ISBD in these countries is now still on the preliminary stages.

Since ISBD was not a brand-new subject matter for the participants, the format of the authority data, the mechanism of their preparation and promulgation worldwide are not thoroughly known to the specialist from the Eastern European area.

National bibliographic agencies have always been concerned with the forms of presentation of personal and corporate authors in national bibliographies and catalogues. However, currently the concept of authority files exceedingly extended. Besides, automation requires updated knowledge for the recording, maintenance and transmission of these data.

Therefore, the presentations of Ms. Francoise Bourdon from the National Library of France "Name Authority Control in an International Context" and the one delivered by Ms. Mirna Willer from Croatian National Library "UNIMARC/AUTHORITIES Format: a New Tool Towards Standardization" received special attention of all seminar attendees.

The report of Ms. Francoise Bourdon was more oriented towards standardization of authority data on the international level, i.e., drawing up standards for headings and formulation of international rules concerning headings and national usage of those standards compiling national headings.

More detailed commentaries were given on the guidelines for Authority and Reference Entries (GARE). Considerable part of the presentation dealt with the management of

authority data, improvement of international exchange of authority data and circulation of information worldwide.

Ms. Mirna Willer concentrated upon the authority data format -UNIMARC/AUTHORITIES, specifically underlining its organizational functional structure with illustrations of the samples from the fragments of this format.

The above mentioned presentations built up a cyclical series dwelling on the creation of the authority data system that was supplemented by another report of Ms.McGarry from US that we would talk over later in this paper.

During the discussions both speakers gave comprehensive and detailed interpretations concerning the role of the national bibliographic agencies in creation of authority files and facilitating international exchange of these data.

Ms. Mirna Willer in the workshop had again to refer to her report giving a more detailed structure of the UNIMARC/AUTHORITIES and answer the questions on the differences in the description of the bibliographic and authority data formats, the ways and means of combining these descriptions, the basic structure for the data bank.

Ms.Mirna Willer shared the experience of the existing and functioning data bank at the Croatian National Library, introducing the descriptions of the bibliographic and authority records with necessary illustrations that were very beneficial for our further operational activities.

Subject headings expedite search within the automated systems in the libraries that constitute essentials of the linguistic supply. The report delivered by Ms.Dorothy McGarry from the University of California, US, titled "International Cooperation in Subject

Analysis" was based on the principles and functions of subject headings and their format GSARE.

This report caused wide interest and serious discussions that were prolonged during the next day's activities. It was apparent that bibliographers of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania were very active in the dispute, since they translated and issued the "Rubricator of the Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania" and started subject cataloguing. Naturally, such work brings out lots of undefined issues. Following the points raised at the seminar, attempts are being made to look for possible resources to speed up the translation and issuing of the Lithuanian version of GARE and GSARE.

Changes in the publishing scene of the former countries of the socialist system are dictated by the market economy. Till now, the effective mechanism for regulation of the publishing and trade activities is not yet designed.

The most significant elements for the efficient functioning of those above spheres are the International standard numbers: ISSN, ISBN, ISMN.

Distinguishing between the various themes discussed at the seminar, another session was devoted to the reflection of the functions and advantages of the International standard numbering systems (ISSN, ISBN, ISMN). As these systems are not yet established in some countries, including some Baltic countries (mainly ISSN and ISMN systems), it was of great significance to hear presentations from the direct sources - Ms.Sussane Santiago (Director of the International ISSN Center) and Dr.Hartmut Walravens (Director of the International ISBN agency), that gave expert recommendations on the usage, application and benefits of this standard numbering systems for publishers, book trade, libraries.

Reviewing the importance of this numbering, both speakers stressed the advantages and usefulness of both International and national ISSN, ISBN, ISMN agencies in carrying out universal bibliographic control and, also, effective furnishing the users with information for both international and respective country use.

Workshops dealing with ISSN and ISBN issues were mainly attended by people involved in the programs. They were extremely interesting and useful for the specialists employed in the sphere and these entering this field. The fact that the seminar resulted in establishing the ISMN agencies in Lithuania, Estonia, Latvia speaks for itself. Specialists working in the national agencies discussed numerous contradictory or unclear points occurring in the process of their work. Also, very significant and basic questions of the supply of the ISSN, ISBN agencies with the appropriate hardware and software were considered along with the necessity of staff training. After the seminar, the chiefs of the ISSN and ISBN national agencies were given an opportunity to acquire training in Paris (International ISSN Center) and participate in the Panel meeting in Berlin (International ISBN agency) where one of the matters was the possible establishment of the ISMN agency in Lithuania. It resulted in the new opportunity for our country - the ISMN agency was established and started functioning. Besides, all our national agencies are awaiting for the appropriate software suggested and required for usage by all associated agencies. Under existing financial situation, the only problem remains in acquisition of efficient hardware suitable for the necessary software.

Report of Ms. Gunila Larson from the National Library of Sweden offered numerous information on bibliographic statistics as she surveyed the structure and objectives of the UNESCO statistic publications.

Besides, she gave analysis on the functions

of the national bibliographic agency, i.e., registration of the country's publishing output, underlining that currently only several countries are involved in this work. The workshop dealing with the registration and preparation of the national press also considered the structure of statistic publications.

The most outstanding and appreciated presentations were given by Ms. Fernanda Campos from the Portuguese National Library and Mr. Alan Hopkinson from the UK Tate Gallery that shared expertise on the structure application of UNIMARC and its realization through CDS/ISIS.

Ms. Fernanda Campos focused her speech on UNIMARC as one of the essential tools of IFLA assisting in the advancement of the bibliographic standards, directed for work within the automated field.

The speaker conveyed information about the advantages of UNIMARC as a communications format stressing its availability of usage as an internal format of the system as it is now practiced in the national libraries of Portugal and Croatia. This was especially important to those participants who started its usage as an internal format.

An abundance of questions arose for Lithuanian specialists, since UNIMARC is being introduced in most of the libraries country-wide for the preparation of bibliographic records for machine-readable catalogues. Thus, workshops on this subject were particularly attended and brought about many pertinent and concerned points: is UNIMARC format adequately understood and accurately utilized as an internal format; are there some options or suggestions for its usage in special cases of description; what are the basic requirements and specifications in describing multi-volumes and serials, using the linking techniques.

Various obstacles and difficulties were elucidated during the seminar, that the specialists involved in UNIMARC are faced with. It was emphasized, that application of UNIMARC requires enormous efforts with deficiency of national cataloguing rules. The viewpoint of the experts was unanimous, i.e., cataloguing rules should be created and developed before introducing the usage of UNIMARC and only then those rules should be adapted to this format.

Ms. Fernanda Campos presented a publication prepared by Ms. Mirna Viller as an ideal sample of the model, where national cataloguing rules are compatible with UNIMARC [2-3]. She suggested the Eastern countries to pursue the same techniques and practices.

As currently Lithuania does not have its own cataloguing rules, the Center of Bibliography and Book Science, encouraged by the recommendations obtained at the seminar, prepared two methodical guidelines that should assist and profit for the cataloguing of monographs and serial publications [4-5]. One of them is already published, the other is ready to go to the printer.

From the organizational point of view it was very useful that representatives from the Baltic countries were given an opportunity to present their opinions at the seminar. They discussed the present situation in their countries, talked over the most urgent problems and examined the issues to be resolved. The questions raised by them were once again emphasized during the workshop.

UBC/UNIMARC Seminar, determined on the modernization in the fields of bibliography and librarianship was an extraordinary event both for the development of librarianship in Lithuania and in the rest of the Eastern Europe. This was the first endeavour of the kind organized in this part of the world that gave answers and solutions to the essential

problems facing us and specialists of other countries regarding implementation of UNIMARC, reorganizing bibliographic and libraries' work under new conditions and, certainly, offered stimuli for fresh ideas in updating job activities, formed the unique understanding of the different areas of bibliography and librarianship.

The seminar stimulated lots of other Lithuanian libraries to join automation. In this way, I feel confident to declare that the meeting might be considered a true achievement in the field of Lithuanian librarianship and bibliography.

On the grounds of the presentations delivered at the seminar, we prepared a special issue of the "Bibliographic News" in the Lithuanian version where all speeches are included.

Finally, I would like to summarize a general and almost unanimous conclusion of the participants of the seminar that I find in the messages of thanks received after the meeting. Our mutual venture is a real achievement in advancement of new problems, beneficial in the presentation of recommendations on the means of their solution and implementation. Above all, it is the first successful and accomplished in its tasks experiment of the kind, where several related areas were combined, that enabled to look upon the existing difficulties from the methodical viewpoint.

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