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THE POLISH LIBRARIANS' ASSOCIATION

przeгляд biblioteczny

THE LIBRARY REVIEW

Founded in 1927

The Oldest Polish Research Journal in Library and Information Science

The Special Issue on the 85th Anniversary

Warsaw 2012

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**AN INTRODUCTION: “PRZEGLĄD BIBLIOTECZNY”
[THE LIBRARY REVIEW] IN THE PAST
AND IN THE YEARS 2005-2012**

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KEYWORDS: “Przeгляд Biblioteczny”. Content. Structure. Authors. Thematic.

ABSTRACT: “Przeгляд Biblioteczny”. [The Library Review] is regarded as one of the most important Polish journals treating the book, the library and information. On the 85th anniversary of the establishment of this quarterly, here we discuss both its general format, whilst also providing a general thematic conspectus of the articles published in the journal between the years 2005-2012.

Of all the Polish journals dedicated to library science, “Przeгляд Biblioteczny” [The Library Review] occupies an exceptional position, as it not only the oldest journal but for years has been regarded as one of the most important periodicals in its field. It is synonymous with the top scholars and practitioners in the field of Polish librarianship. “Przeгляд Biblioteczny” has managed to retain its important position by being an all-Polish discussion forum for the key

issues relating to contemporary librarianship, and book, library and information science. The elite position of the journal is confirmed by the fact that the Ministry for Science and Higher Education has assigned it the highest number of points from among all Polish scientific journals.

With 2012 marking the 85th anniversary of the establishment of “Przegląd Biblioteczny”, we have the opportunity of addressing English-speaking readers who are perhaps not familiar with the kind of articles which our journal publishes. And so in this introduction I will provide some basic historical facts about the journal, together with an overview of current activities and concepts.

*

The first efforts at establishing a Polish journal devoted to the theory and practice of librarianship were undertaken by the Society of the Public Library of Warsaw, which in 1908 began publishing a quarterly under the rather longish title of “Przegląd Biblioteczny. Czasopismo ilustrowane poświęcone bibliotekoznawstwu, bibliotekarstwu i bibliografii” [The Library Review. An Illustrated Journal Dedicated to Library Science, Librarianship and Bibliography]. The editor of the journal was Stefan Demby (1862-1939), who would go on to be one of the founders, and the first director of the National Library. In the years 1908-1911 six issues of the journal were published, only for it then to be suspended due to a lack of funds. Nearly twenty years later, following Poland’s regaining of independence, Demby and other activists of the Union of Polish Librarians returned to the idea of issuing a journal for Polish library science specialists. On obtaining funds for this purpose from the Ministry of Religious Faith and Public Enlightenment in 1927, they began to publish the journal with the unabridged title of “Przegląd Biblioteczny. Wydawnictwo Związku Bibliotekarzy Polskich. Centralny organ naukowy bibliotekarstwa polskiego” [The Library Review. The Publishers of the Union of Polish Librarians. The Central Scientific Organ of Polish Librarianship].

The first chief editor of this journal was director of the Jagiellonian Library, and head of the Union of Polish Librarians, Edward Kuntze, who would retain this post until 1948. His successor deputy was Aleksander Birkenmajer, one of the great scholars on the book of the inter-

war period. After the war, he founded the school of librarianship in the University of Warsaw – today the Institute of Information and Book Studies. The post of editorial secretary was occupied by Józef Grycz, another important person in the history of Polish librarianship, who was at the time the director of the Kórnik Library. Grycz compiled unified cataloging rules for Polish libraries, and was also a forerunner of modern librarianship in Poland.

“Przegląd Biblioteczny” has been the subject of numerous research studies, which have looked to assess the history of Polish writing, (see Grycz, 1937; Dembowska, 1977; 1997; Sordylowa, 2002; Banacka & Sosińska-Kalata, 2007; Sosińska-Kalata, 2008), and this year the journal will be the subject of a monograph dedicated to its activities and program (Gruszka, 2012).

1927 is considered to be the foundation year of “Przegląd Biblioteczny”. During the inter-war period, Kraków’s Jagiellonian Library published 13 annuals of the quarterly. Whereas, after the war, “The Library Review” was revived, firstly in Kraków (in 1946) and then from 1949 in Warsaw. In the years 1946-53, the quarterly was the scientific arm of the Union of Polish Librarians and Archivists, and from the founding of the Association of Polish Librarians (Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy Polskich, SBP) in 1954 to the present day it has remained Poland’s principal branch journal. In the years 1972-2003 the journal was published jointly by SBP and the Main Library of the Polish Academy of Science. Since 2004, SBP has been the sole publisher of “The Library Review”. Chronologically, the chief editors of “Przegląd Biblioteczny” have been Bohdan Horodyski (1949-1965), Zbigniew Daszkowski (1966-1968), Maria Dembowska (1969-1978), Barbara Sordylowa (1978-2003), Maria Lenartowicz (2004) and from 2005 to the present day, Barbara Sosińska-Kalata, the author of this piece.

In 1978 the Editorial Board of the journal was established, headed up initially by professor Helena Więckowska. In the subsequent years, these roles were fulfilled by professors: Zbigniew Jabłoński, Krzysztof Migoń, Barbara Bienkowska, Barbara Sosińska-Kalata, and currently this post is held by Elżbieta B. Zybert. The board has drawn top scholars and specialists from the worlds of Polish academia and librarianship. In recent years attempts have been made to extend the Board’s membership to renowned foreign specialists. “Przegląd Biblioteczny” is reviewed in accordance with the double blind review rule, wherein 40 academics and branch specialists write opinions on all articles sent to the editorial offices.

*

In accordance with the original concept, “Przegląd Biblioteczny” is a quarterly journal – which is a typical format for Polish scholarly periodicals. In the past, due to organizational issues, this frequency was not always easy to maintain (see Gruszka, 2012). Since 2005, the journal has been published regularly, and the volume of the subsequent compilation annuals total 550-600 pages, with a subscription print run of 650 copies.

The archived annuals of the quarterly from the years 1927-2008 have been digitalized and are available in the SBP digital archive (http://www.sbp.pl/wydawnictwa/archiwum_cyfrowe) as well as the Bibliological Digital Library (www.bbc.uw.edu.pl/libra) run by the Institute of Information and Book Studies at the University of Warsaw. Information on the contents of current issues is to be found on the SBP site (http://www.sbp.pl/wydawnictwa/czasopisma_sbp). The contents of “Przegląd Biblioteczny” are registered in “The Library and Information Science Abstracts”, as well as in the internet Bibliography CEJSH – “The Central European Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities” (<http://cejsh.icm.edu.pl/>).

*

The contemporary internal organization of “Przegląd Biblioteczny” was shaped in the 1970s by Maria Dembowska, and has been subject to little change ever since. The basic structure of the journal consists of the sections: *Articles, Opinions and Viewpoints, Reports, Reviews and Reports from the World of Writing, From the Life of SBP and Chronicles*. Irregular features are *Research Workshops, Communiques, Information Snippets, Obituaries, and The Co-founders of Polish Librarianship*. The sections *Articles* and *Research Workshops* generally take up over half of the journal’s pages.

The section *Opinions and Viewpoints* features polemical texts, which present ideas, judgments, and commentaries pertaining to the development of both contemporary Polish librarianship and the system of scholarly communications. In turn, the section *Reviews and Reports from the World of Writing*, contains authorial contributions which have been either submitted or commissioned. Here we will find reviews of scholarly monographs on the book, libraries, and information. Two overview articles are also featured. The first, penned by Barbara Koryś,

discusses the most recent publications. The second, written by Jacek Wojciechowski, provides a critical conspectus of foreign publications.

The remaining sections feature reports and chronicles. The section *The Co-founders of Polish Librarianship* appears irregularly and features commissioned interviews with the most outstanding figures of contemporary librarianship or library research in Poland.

In 2011 the section *Chronicle*, which up until 2008 had recorded various national and international events related to library activity and library research was replaced by the *Chronicle of Academic Life*. It is now published twice yearly in issue 1 and 4. In issue 1, *The Chronicle of Academic Life* encompasses all important events and research undertaken by institutes and university departments of information and library studies at Polish universities. In issue 4, part of the section comprises a record of the most important events and scholarly works undertaken in Polish research libraries.

From the outset the journal boasted a permanent supplement, which was a bibliography of academic works from the fields of the book and library studies, as well as information studies. In the years 1970-2000 this supplement was titled *Bibliografia Analityczna Bibliotekoznawstwa i Informacji Naukowej* [The Analytical Bibliography of Librarianship and Information Science], and was compiled in the Bibliographic Institute of the National Library of Poland. In 2010 the director of the National Library brought to an end the publication of this supplement.

As with the majority of such periodicals, „Przegląd Biblioteczny” aims at publishing treatise and research articles. Over the course of the past seven years, the journal has published 140 scholarly articles, with 4 more to be added in the first quarterly of 2012 (see table 1). In most of the quarterlies, 4-5 scholarly articles are published, together with 12-15 shorter pieces, such as opinions, reviews, reports and tributes/commemorations. A larger number of short articles were published in the jubilee annual of 2007 (75), whereas the 4th issue for 2008 featured articles which honoured the memory of professor Maria Dembowska, who had passed away earlier that year, and who had been the editor of „Przegląd Biblioteczny” in the years 1969-1978.

The number of articles sent to „Przegląd Biblioteczny” in recent years has markedly grown. Nonetheless, the size of the journal does not allow for the publication of more than 5 principle articles per issue.

Table 1. Number of texts published in “Przegląd Biblioteczny” [The Library Review] in the years 2005-2012 (issue 1)

Year	Number of published texts		
	General	Number of articles	Number of remaining texts (opinions, reviews, reports, tributes/commemorations)
2005 (73)	70	15	55
2006 (74)	66	19	47
2007 (75)	82	24	58
2008 (76)	101	32	69
2009 (77)	78	17	61
2010 (78)	75	18	57
2011 (79)	63	15	48
2012 (80) – no. 1	14	4	10
Total	549	144	405

*

From the outset, “Przegląd Biblioteczny” looked to monitor and treat the most important issues of contemporary librarianship together with providing current research in the areas of the book and library studies, and from the 1970s in information studies. Currently the thematic profile of “Przegląd Biblioteczny” features contemporary research on information and library science, which have taken on an interdisciplinary perspective and which include various aspects of the functioning of the book, the library and information in society. The central focus of the journal provides reflection on contemporary Polish and world librarianship and the directions of its development.

Articles published in this quarterly introduce analyses of various aspects specific to the library-information reality, aspiring to the identification of qualitative differences between applied practical solutions, but whilst also embracing generalized work and theoretical observations. “Przegląd Biblioteczny” publishes articles dedicated to the most significant problems and achievements of contemporary science on book, library and information.

Thanks to the political and economic transformation which has taken place in Poland over the past two decades, Polish librarianship has seen unprecedented development, particular

in terms of the implementation of technological changes. “Przegląd Biblioteczny” has provided a forum for analysis and discussions pertaining to: the computerization of library processes; the functioning of libraries in new social, economic and technological conditions. In turn, the journal has featured articles which broach topics such as: modern methods for managing libraries and developing a culture of cooperation based on ICT; standardization in library and information activity; the creation and functioning of library consortiums, the digitization and development of repositories and digital libraries; the shaping of new forms for scientific communication; the quality service for users; programs for developing information literacy; the evolution of the education paths for librarians and information specialists; and, redefining research theories pertaining to the book, libraries and information.

Table 2 presents themes typically featured within “Przegląd Biblioteczny”. 19 thematic fields are indicated as derived from the 144 articles published in the journal in the years 2005 to 2012. This breakdown of themes reveals the great diversity of issues that the journal has profiled: about half (55.55%) of all articles printed in this period relate to 6 different thematic fields, which fall under the broader umbrella of contemporary library science and scientific information, represented in proportion from approx. 12% to approx. 7%. The remaining 45% of articles cover 13 different thematic areas.

In the analyzed period the issues of the digitization of library collections and the creation of digital libraries dominated, as well as issues relating to theory and methodology of information and library accounted for 11.81% of the published articles. The divisions reflect the importance of digitalization not just in Poland but throughout the world, whilst also showing the extent to which “The Library Review” views the importance of methodological and theoretical research being carried out in Poland’s universities and specialist institutions. Two other thematic fields given pride of place in the journal are library management and library qualitative assessment (9.72%), as well as the analysis of library informational services (8.33%). A large number of articles touched upon library user studies (6.94%), as well as various library activities (research, prison, school) in Poland and the world (6.94%).

A relatively high percentage of biographical articles have arisen from the anniversary materials, which provided biographical notes on the editors of “The Library Review”, as well as materials dedicated to Maria Dembowska.

Table 2. Thematical distribution of articles published in "Przegląd Biblioteczny" [The Library Review] in the years 2005-2012 (issue 1)

L.P.	Thematic field description	Articles published in The Library Review in the years 2005-2012 (issue 1)	
		Number	Percentage
1	Digital libraries and the digitalization of library collections. Digital scientific Communications	17	11.81
2	Information and library science – theory, methodology, relations to other fields	17	11.81
3	Management of library and library processes. Measuring quality in libraries	14	9.72
4	Library information services. Searching in digital information resources	12	8.33
5	Studies on library use and library users	10	6.94
6	Librarianship in Poland and the World	10	6.94
7	People dedicated to the book	9	6.25
8	Librarians – profession, education, demographic issues	8	5.56
9	WWW pages of libraries and other institutions; information architecture, functions, quality	8	5.56
10	Bibliological Journals. Bibliological reference books	8	5.56
11	Information sources, bibliography, databases. internet information sources	7	4.86
12	Metadata. Cataloguing and indexing	5	3.48
13	Information literacy – library programmes and activities	5	3.48
14	Computerisation of libraries and library processes – tools, standards, effectiveness	4	2.78
15	Book institutions in Poland (IKiCz, PIK, IB)	3	2.07
16	The book market	2	1.39
17	Information activity beyond libraries. Public and economic Information systems.	2	1.39
18	Readership	1	0.69
19	Other (modern editorial technology, polonica in foreign writing).	2	1.38
TOTAL		144	100.00%

Information literacy and library and bibliographical metadata was represented in relatively low scope in the recent publications of "Przegląd Biblioteczny", whereas in the world of literature of library and information science these topics are frequently undertaken.

It is necessary, however, to note, that the majority of articles from this field were published in the last two issues of "Przegląd Biblioteczny", so it is subject matter which is more and more intensively explored by those authors publishing within the pages of this quarterly.

The diversity of articles in "Przegląd Biblioteczny" (presented in table 2) illustrates the variety of areas which are being researched by our contributors. In accordance with the thematic profile of our Editorial Council, the only criteria for publication in the quarterly is the highest standard of scholarship pertaining to any aspect of contemporary librarianship and information and library science.

*

Traditionally "Przegląd Biblioteczny" has looked to harness communication between researchers and specialists looking to incorporate new theories and methods in their practical activity. The wide circle of our contributors work either in academic or library institutions. Other contributors are primarily specialists associated with information centres and services. In recent years, we have also featured articles provided by foreign contributors and deemed to be of particular interest to Polish readers. We trust that these kinds of texts will transform our quarterly into a forum for discussion and debate about all issues concerning library and information science with an international reach.

*

Presenting this special issue of "Przegląd Biblioteczny" to our readers I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Professor Jacek Wojciechowski who first suggested publishing a selection of the most interesting "Przegląd" articles translated into English to celebrate the 85th anniversary of our journal. Seven translated articles published in the years 2005-2010 making this issue have been independently assessed and selected by the Editorial Council and ordered by the original text publication dates available in the end of each translation. All articles are preceded by corresponding updated notes on authors, lists of keywords and abstracts.

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Warsaw, 28th June 2012

THE LIBRARY'S ADDED VALUE

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KEYWORDS: Libraries. Social profit. Public mediation. Communication processes.

ABSTRACT: The idea of a library's added value is the unique social profit of a library's activity. It is a profit unknown by any other kind of organization or institution. It is generated by the professional activity of the staff and the intentional preparation of library processes. The main expression of this value is mediation within public communication, which takes place principally within the library. The structuralization of the offer is straightforward: arrangement, selection and weeding of the stock, knowledge and all subjects of any communication transmissions, all of which are subsequently conveyed to the public. These transmissions are based both on the library's own collection and on the collections of other libraries, with the productive addition of the electronic network's offer. The library's tender, as one unit, is predestinated for the actual public and proffered in a suitable context. It is promoted and made free to all library users. The library is also a regulator of most communication processes, and it also generates its own in-house information. What is more, the library prepares its own program of various ventures and entertainments for the public, in the facilitation of forms of public communication, assistance to all kinds of formal education, or as an aid to the cultural and social environment. All this, in sum, represents the library's added value, and seems to be a good justification for the social usefulness of a library as a public institution.

I acknowledge the fact that proper terminology distinguishes the term “value added”, which has been used in reference to economics and economic practice. In fact, VAT is a tax on the “value added”. However, as Dariusz Grygowski has recently pointed out (Grygowski, 2001, p. 184), some scholars have begun to associate it also with library practice (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2004, p. 245).

Nevertheless, I would contend that when applying the term to librarianship, one has to narrow its meaning by redefining it in order to suggest alternate denotations. What is noteworthy is the fact that the original meaning assumes that value added is countable and expressible in monetary terms (zlotys, dollars, euro), whereas in library practice such calculability or fiscal estimation cannot be countenanced.

PRELIMINARY NOTES

In general, what is understood by value added is every increase in value earned through work with respect to the original value and the total cost incurred. Such an increase is calculable and appraisable in the domain of economics, manufacturing, commerce or services. Seldom is it possible to evaluate value added outside of these fields.

Invariably, value added always stems from work and creative thought. It also constitutes a contribution to the value, be it measurable or not, which can be attributed to the final result of a human action. That is why it can be associated with the broad definition of a library’s activity.

In the realm of library science, value added shall be understood as a way of organizing the communicative mediation, which results in an otherwise unattainable change of social mind-set. Thus, it consists in a rise in social awareness value, possible **exclusively** thanks to library usage.

Undoubtedly, this increase is by no means calculable due to the size, dynamics and incalculability of the very input, as well as a general inability to single out the areas of total value generated **solely** by libraries. However, what can be comparable (although not at all calculable) are the forms of library mediation or ways of managing library mediation, as they can

be contrasted with all other forms of mediation in communication. Nevertheless, these are not the final outcomes.

This is what constitutes the core of all difficulties with measuring library processes and their outcomes. Then again, it is untrue to say that what is incalculable means invaluable. On the contrary, the incalculable added value is the fundamental feature of librarianship which defines its meaning and makes it worthy of discussion.

There are two major sources generating the added value in librarianship, namely the staff, librarians and information specialists, and all the processes enriching the inventory and facilitating the services. Above all, it is the staff that adds the value by gathering the resources and information, configuring and reconfiguring them, as well as processing, completing, transforming, using and promoting their content. The addition of value also takes place whenever a service is delivered in a suitable manner. The better the quality of service, then the greater the value added.

Among other factors directly generating value added are knowledge and skills of librarians, their intellectual virtues, creativity and reliability (Bakken, 1998, p. 82; Gorman, 2003a, p. 28; Grygrowski, 2001, p. 184). When combined with specific resources and service conditions with regards to the recipient, these factors build a setting which is impossible to be found anywhere else but in a library.

Adding value occurs through a set of various library **processes**, not necessarily limited to services. These processes include gathering, archiving, cataloguing, classifying and organizing the resources and information background. Also: facilitating access to various contents, as well as providing, completing, using and promoting them. In addition, other processes can be enumerated, namely user communication training and the animation of the public space so as to facilitate local networking (Edwards, 2002, p. 152; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2004, p. 245). This is an enhanced and strategic vision of library mediation in public communication, which is unique in the sense that it is free of charge.

STRUCTURALIZATION OF THE OFFER

An essential and extremely important contribution of librarianship to the public communication involves organizing the vast and dynamic supply of communication. What brings order to such an environment is systematization, i.e. grouping, mutually relativizing and evaluating the transmitted messages.

SELECTION

In public communication the supply of messages is not only enormous, but also continuous. Previous messages overlap with current ones, and indeed often occur simultaneously. The two major organizing factors, namely the type of medium and chronology, that is the dates of entering the transmission, do not have the capacity to fully manage the chaos. Libraries do not acquire all of this incoming data. In fact, instead of acquiring it automatically, they select the resources and contents according to their own criteria. Thus, some messages are qualified to enter the library mediation, whereas others are rejected (Akilina, 1996, p. 97; Atton, 1996, pp. 91, 107; Latham, 2003, p. 14). This is where libraries in an exclusive sense – create add value for their users.

The same applies to Internet resources, which, on the whole, add up to communication junk. A library, while providing access to the online content selects the data and adjusts the selection criteria to the actual or assumed expectations of the users (Latham, 2003, p. 7; Owens, 2002, p. 12).

It is the selection which constitutes the basis for the remediation, i.e. digitalization of certain printed materials. Thanks to libraries, such resources gain an additional mode of circulation.

The publications selected by libraries are certainly more widely available and those filtered out are greatly disadvantaged. One form of **selection**, which contributes to the quality in the library supply, is removing materials and contents from the library stock and mediation. Through the choosing of items to be removed, the library self-modifies its offer.

There is also a method applicable mostly to Internet resources and publications, i.e. **filtration**, which consists in blocking content unsuitable for public dissemination. This is also a form

of adding value by the library, as it affects the communication supply – although at times criticized and associated with censorship, – it is much more often accepted. In the public libraries of the USA filtration is a common practice (Estabrooke & Lankner, 2003, p. 257).

EVALUATION AND ARCHIVIZATION

Along with selection comes the order imposed by **evaluation** according to the content and application value. The items are evaluated against a certain model and other items. What follows are decisions concerning the inclusion or exclusion of items on the basis of the evaluation.

Due to the successive supply of new messages, the process is continuous, which requires changes in evaluation criteria. Such changes result in the need to make new decisions regarding the items to be removed: those to be entered into transmission and those to be archived. Consequently, thanks to libraries, a new value is added to an already existing one.

The above is applicable also to communication supply on the Internet, where the speed of the addition is much more valued than its quality. What is transmitted is only the latest version of the message, which implies the temporal character of such an addition (Adamiec, 2004, p. 110; Tennant, 2003, p. 41). That is why it is necessary to evaluate the supply (Latham, 2003, p. 18) and the archivization of the messages according to their content value rather than the date of their transmission.

THE COLLECTION

The collection has always been the main library value, defining its purposes. It comprises a set of resources, selected and configured in a unique way. The materials, arranged according to a systematic pattern, form a structure, which in itself generates an added value which does not exist in any other environment.

It is up to each library to determine which items will belong to its collection, therefore individual institutions implement their own acquisition policies. However, such policies are frequently misunderstood due to a misconception of the term “books”, which tends to be interpreted by an analogy to dry goods. It is also the library who transforms simple data

and separate items into resources (Bagrova, 1999, p. 7; Latham, 2003, p. 15), which represents another example of added value.

However, the notion of collection can be extended to the selected electronic resources, available online. The library selects only such resources which can be deemed useful for the users. The institution makes the resources available and organizes their structure, also supplementing its own resources (Latham, 2003, p. 7; Sowards, 2000, p. 142). Readers do not need to be concerned with ownership issues pertaining to library, stores and available materials as from their point of view all that matters is the opportunity to make use of the resources. Thus, the collection can also be extended to the collections owned by other libraries, to which the library grants the access for its users (Frolov, 2002, p. 41). This kind of service radically enriches the library's own collection.

Since electronic materials are still not considered to be publications (Kasperkiewicz, 2004, p. 159) and the complete digitalization of communication seems illusory (Apostle & Raymond, 1997, p. 18) this sort of a mega collection may prove solid and truly unique.

As a result, the collection is diversified, as well as multi-semiotic, and forms a gateway library. The collection consists of the library's collection and the resources housed in other places, as well as subscribed or free electronic materials (Gorman, 2003a, p. 8; Rusbridge & Royen, 2002, p. 123). There is no other mega collection of this sort.

ADDRESS

What remains a valid point is that such a collection is not merely a system of haphazard elements, but its structure is appropriately addressed to specific library users: the users of **this** library. The old idea of accumulating resources that would meet the needs of everyone seems now obsolete. The dominant contemporary practice rests upon the recognition of the actual and current expectations of the existing audience and the anticipation of future expectations, which determine the configuration of the mega collection (Dillon, 2002, p. 124; Shuman, 1997, p. XXV). This is what constitutes the theoretical guidelines followed by modern libraries with a degree of divergence.

Consequently, such a great deal of specificity, i.e. addressing the resources to the specific community of users is another crucial element of added value, which relates exclusively to one community and can be attributed to a **specific library**.

MEDIATION

The mediation between communicative resources, including electronic data (Bagrova, 1999, p. 147), and the users is also added value in character and constitutes the main objective of the library. The core of the mediation is to inform the users about the offer in a way that allows them to make use of the resources, as well as – to transmit the contents. The information concerning the supply of messages is also available outside the library, yet it is never as universal, exhaustive and tailored to the needs of a specific audience, a fact which points to the areas that contribute to the library's added value.

ARRANGING THE NOTIFICATIONS

Commercial and functional communicative information hinge upon fixed search patterns. They are governed predominantly by chronology, whereas the shift between searching for information and delivering it through a medium is sometimes inefficient. In contrast, the method of grouping and classification of materials employed by libraries is always multi-threaded, flexible and easily adapts to the recipients' expectations.

Only in the library is information about resources accompanied by the information concerning their location (Onwuegbuzie et al., 2004, p. 239). There is no other environment which would provide integrated knowledge of both electronic and printed resources (Tennant, 2003, p. 44). With regards to such knowledge, the library is an unmatched source of information and truly brings order to the chaos.

What is especially worthy of note is the fact that the information apparatus, which has developed over the centuries and has been enriched with electronic information, enables one to encompass the communication supply in a convenient and useful way. There are some deficiencies in systematization pertaining to online content, which in itself is subjected to constant changes, however they are negligible to an extent that does not reduce the value of library notifications.

ADJUSTMENT AND PROMOTION

Next to the structure and the constant improvement of the library information tools, an equally significant manifestation of library practice is the ability to use it skillfully, i.e. by recognizing the needs of the recipients and the communication supply in order to adjust the offer to individual expectations (Block, 2003b, p. 851; Dillon, 2002, pp. 126, 128; Roy, 2002, p. 217). The scope of the communication supply mediated by the library is nowadays vaster than ever and comprises collections owned by other libraries coupled with the electronic offer published on the Internet. What is noteworthy, libraries are seeing a very far-reaching adjustment of notifications about the supply, i.e. modifying the content and supporting the search for materials. These are the activities performed only by the library on a large scale and with the advanced level of individualization. As such, this is another example of added value that makes it especially useful for society.

In addition, the library not only adapts its offer to expectations, but it also operates in a creative way as it mediates according to its own agenda. This means that it promotes selected media in accordance with a self-defined idea of usefulness. Such a promotion discounts other media and, at the same time, allows the library to promote itself its accompanying services (Dillon, 2002, p. 119; Fichter, 2003, p. 123; Roy, 2002, p. 230; Walter, 2001, p. 112), which proves successful thanks to the low degree of formality and diverse channels of exerting impact, especially individual relations and direct communication (Nęcki, 2003, pp. 11, 13).

In this way, both the library and its staff create new forums of public communication, which is, in turn, value added (Grygowski, 2001, p. 184) and a distinctive feature of the library. It is also a feature co-determining the library's role in the public communication, and there is no premise that would suggest otherwise.

THE OFFER

Clearly, the library as an institution was established in order to make the public communication offer available for society. It is not the sole institution fulfilling this objective, yet it stands out considerably among other establishments thanks to the scope and manner

of providing the service of mediation in public communication. This difference constitutes one of the major added values as generated by the library.

LENDING

The libraries that form a cooperative network can provide wider access to communication materials and directly transmitted contents than other institutions would. Moreover, the access granted by the library is relatively easy and free of charge. The lack of any direct fees makes libraries institutions of wide outreach.

When compared to traditional practices, the current offer has been recently enriched and diversified. Organizing and providing access to resources nowadays applies not only to one or more libraries, but also to the devices which enable users to participate in public communication via electronic media (Akilina, 1996, p. 96; Gorman, 2003a, p. 31).

It is important to remember that not everyone possesses such devices at home and some people need assistance when it comes to searching for the data they need. Currently, the multi-semiotic and multi-media aspects of the library offer are growing in significance. The offer is consolidated, which meets the social expectations directed at either printed resources or online content (Bagrova, 1999, p. 146; Block, 2003a, p. 5, 2003b, p. 78). The library offers an extensive range of resources and looks to raise awareness concerning their complexity, and, over time facilitates the transmission of materials and their admission at no cost. Once again, we have a clear example of added value.

PROCESSING THE CONTENTS

The library's added value also takes the form of librarian participation in its regulation of the processing and acquisition of contents by users, which accompanies the provision of services in the library. It can be assumed that most of these services are not affected by the said regulation yet there are processes that come with recommendation, correction or verification on the part of the librarian aimed at modifying user interpretation. Such feedback occurs in the case of the transmission of both printed materials and online contents (Block, 2003c, p. 86; Chu, 2003, pp. 2-3; Gordon, 2003, p. 3; Grygrowski, 2001, pp. 153, 188). The necessity and utility

of such regulation stems from the possible alternative interpretations of a message. However, the regulation is by no means uniform in character.

When the library supplements the reception of information it should facilitate the narrowing of the content so that the meaning becomes disambiguated; provided, of course, that this is possible. Whereas in the process of interpreting the texts, which do not fulfill the informational function, i.e. partially-open texts, the regulation should be limited to suggesting the most suitable ways of analyzing the content without concertizing. The rule is that each recipient individually processes and completes the transmitted message, which can be only hinted at by the librarian, who cannot impose any interpretation (Ecco, 1994, pp. 5, 75; Elkin et al., 2003, pp. 36-39; Rosner, 1992, p. 243).

This regulatory task is not easy to carry out in the case of texts other than informative ones. Certainly, it is considered necessary due to recurrent misinterpretations. Thus, whenever introduced, the regulation proves invaluable.

The same regulation is going to be needed on a more regular basis when the new form of literary communication designed for the electronic means of communication, namely the so-called Liternet, has become more widespread. The Liternet is based on an interactive convention, which requires the activity on the part of the recipients, who can enjoy a great deal of freedom of interpretation (Adamiec, 2004, p. 177; Chymkowski, 2002, p. 86; Eco, 1994, p. 177; Kluszczyński, 2001, p. 96).

From the general point of view, such interpretational attitudes are somewhat rare. For this reason the librarian's intervention and regulation may prove decisive for the social reception or rejection of this new form of literary transmission. This is one more way of perceiving and assessing the library's added value.

THE ADDED CONTENT

However, the library's areas of activity do not cover exclusively the distribution of the already existing materials, or the transmission of already formulated contents. The institution not only regulates the way in which the messages are interpreted, but it has also become a transmitter of certain contents by issuing commentaries or appendices to the transmitted content,

or by communicating the content composed by the library (or, to be specific, the librarians) (Alstad & Curry, 2003, p. 12; Block, 2003b, p. 76; Gordon, 2003, p. 3).

In the process of providing informational services, librarians often do more than just refer to specific resources or databases and mediate. They look to their own knowledge, consciousness and experience in order to give advice, inform and explain various issues. For this reason many large libraries hire specialized librarians. Their expertise and experience frequently become the source of commentaries supplementing the transmitted materials and contents. There is also the library practice of producing informative (or non-informative) materials, including databases, in the library's own name and constitutes the most tangible evidence of added value to the communication messages generated by both the library and librarians.

OTHER LIBRARY ACTIVITIES

Another crucial area of library practice are additional activities which differ in their scope, depending on the type of library. Sometimes they are not immediately related to the main occupational tasks, but rather loosely or closely attached, as the case may be. They can be regarded as contributing to the library's added value.

COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS

Through the provision of services, the library has become a place of gathering for those members of a community who choose to use it. This is an opportunity for the library to engage in a spontaneous or intentional exchange of opinions on any subject. There are not too many places that would offer a similar environment for interaction (Alstad & Curry, 2003, p. 13; Gorman, 2003a, p. 69), which amounts to an exceptional type of added value, usually attributed to public libraries and, less often, academic libraries (campus libraries) or school libraries. This value inspires various communal and teamwork-based undertakings, which typically involve reciprocal communication. Such activities are organized by libraries or as a grass-root initiative with a library's minimal support, or indeed permission.

The possible repertoire is vast, ranging from exhibitions, lectures and meetings to clubs, special interest groups and – highly creative – and varied public discussions (Alstad & Curry, 2003, p. 15; Elkin et al., 2003, pp. 40-42, 61-77). No matter the form, all these activities focus

upon the transmission of some kind of content and the exchange of opinions, more or less pertaining to the resources available in a library and, at times, completely unrelated to the basic mediatory objectives of the institution. With such activities the most important value added is the **mutual contact** between members of a community, and the prevention of alienation and exclusion.

The same value is generated by integrating **ideas of localism and regionalism** that stimulate a sense of community and manifest themselves in the librarianship through the **concept of a local and regional information system** (*New library...*, 1997, p. 13). Messages concerning a local or regional community are transmitted via different channels. What actually constitutes the value added is the integrated, merged concept of an information system gradually implemented in the librarianship, especially in public libraries with regards to the social-territorial environment. However, this value added less often considers academic libraries (in relation to the academic community) and very rarely school libraries (in relation to the school environment).

Something which may contribute to the idea of filling the local space with an integrating library project is the Internet, namely a means of online communication which involves dialogs such as blogs, chats etc. From an individual and private perspective, they only imitate social interaction and function as surrogates for real relationships (Mandel, 2003, p. 111). The library can alter this situation by creating **real teams** operating in the blogosphere, which may facilitate an exchange of opinions via the Internet. Aside from virtual relations, real direct relationships may be developed. As for the essence of discussion in the blogosphere, it resides in the equality of all opinions and is never disrupted by way of library mediation. Sometimes there may arise the need for moderation on the part of one or more libraries (Cywińska-Milonas, 2002, pp. 99-100; Fichter, 2003, pp. 121-122; Marecki, 2002, pp. 5, 15). If such a moderation takes place, it is an obvious act of adding value to the form, which is valueless without the said library's contribution.

THE EDUCATIONAL BASE

What I consider to be a separate added value in the library's activity is the **notion of the library's educational base**. It comprises much more than the mere support for scholarly education through the operation of school libraries and public libraries or academic libraries which

is assigned as a basic duty to these institutions (Gorman, 2003a, p. 76; 2003b, p. 160; Heery & Morgan, 1996, p. 6; Love, 2002, pp. 151-152). It is a separate undertaking, developed on the basis of the regular practice and extension of service, and the exploration of new perspectives. Moreover, it can be associated with perennialism and the ideas of lifelong learning as well as individual development, as opposed to actual practice or education policies. This concept presumes the creation of an appropriately configured **system** of support for education through the activity of all libraries in all possible areas, albeit there is still some way to go (Gutek, 2003, pp. 288, 290; Matlina, 1998, p. 46; *New Library...*, 1997, p. 6). Having said that, the existence of an idea which determines the guidelines for further assumptions and new practices should be acknowledged and commended. Indeed, owing to this particular idea, the liberalization of barriers hindering the usage of libraries for educational purposes and the strategy of interlibrary loans have been made possible. This concept has inspired new plans for the development of electronic services, which actually locate the entire educational support within libraries. It is also a blueprint for the plan of deploying e-learning infrastructure in these institutions (Grygowski, 2001, p. 152; Heery & Morgan, 1996, p. 98). The social value added of this concept is thus undeniable.

USER COMMUNICATION TRAINING

Within the set of values added by the library, for the time being more postulated than implemented, there is also the issue of user communication training, which is nothing else but preparing people for the usage of transmitted messages and the reception of what they convey on multiple levels of proficiency: technical, intellectual and strategic. This concerns mostly the reception of printed and electronic materials.

Even though the role of the library is purely supplementary when compared to the knowledge acquired at school or through self-study, this role is still very important. Given that common literary and interpretative skills are at a low level, every attempt at ameliorating the situation represents a step in the right direction.

The offer of some libraries, mainly school libraries or public ones for children, includes projects focused on mastering or correcting the skills of reading (to a technical level of proficiency). The target objectives of such programmes are the development of fluency and

arriving at a speed-reading rate which surpasses the speed of individual speech. This task is actually being carried out by some libraries, although not at a widespread level.

What is a common practice in some countries is for public and school libraries to carry out basic computer training and Internet orientation (Estabrooke & Lankner, 2003, p. 258; Gorman, 2003a, p. 77; 2003b, p. 162; *New Libraries...*, 1997, p. 15; Walter, 2001, p. 79). The need for such training stems from the recognition of the fact that only some people can afford personal electronic devices, therefore those who either cannot or who are unable to master such skills at home or school.

Sadly, on the higher, intellectual level of communicative skills, the influence exerted by libraries is not so prominent.

As for written communication, the main goal of the library is to help to distinguish between literary and nonliterary messages, which is possible from the very beginning of literacy as the ability to distinguish reality from fiction starts at six years of age (Kołodziejczyk, 2003, p. 43). Another objective is to work out the metaphorical interpretation of literature and the selective or active approach to nonliterary texts. In online communication the main postulate is to present the methods of searching for information in varied configurations and arrangements, yet always in relation to the individual knowledge of the users (Block, 2003b, p. 2; Elkin et al., 2003, pp. 34-39; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2004, p. 258).

Training on a strategic level takes place in academic libraries and covers the introduction to the electronic information background within the domain of a given major. It focuses upon the identification of appropriate electronic databases and websites. This approach is principally practiced by libraries (Gorman, 2003b, p. 162; Heery & Morgan, 1996, p. 12; Onwuegbuzie et al., 2004, p. 270). Despite the fact that this sort of training is mechanical to a large extent, the necessary specialized knowledge can be continuously updated.

Finally, it remains to say that the general dimension of the library's added value is vast and extremely important as it offers a range of benefits to society and provides an undoubted rationale for the library's continued existence.

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RESEARCH LIBRARIES IN POLAND IN SEARCH OF IDENTITY

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KEYWORDS: Research libraries. Scientific libraries. Poland. International library organisations. Library acts.

ABSTRACT: This essay will assess the following: the term “research library” pertaining to world and Polish terminology, as well as to international library organisations; the role and significance of research libraries in Poland, consolidated by library acts; the difficulties in defining research work in libraries; the excessive obligation of executing research works in Polish libraries, distracting librarians from fundamental objectives of their work; the superficial “scientific nature” of some tasks; and the necessity for changing the definition of research libraries in Poland and the scope of research tasks.

The thesis of this article is as follows: the fundamental division of libraries in Polish librarianship into research libraries and public libraries is a curiosity which makes us stand out in terms of both European and world librarianship. In particular, library acts on the “scientific nature” of a particular category of libraries have resulted in imposing upon them the duty of scientific research, which the libraries – and therefore their workers – cannot fulfil for one very simple reason, namely because they have been appointed, like all libraries, for the purpose of carrying out library processes and user services, as opposed to scientific research. Let us say in advance that it is an unrealistic demand. Consequently, it is worth tracing the occur-

rence of the term “research libraries” in world and Polish terminologies, as well as investigating the ways in which it has infiltrated our librarianship.

The term is connected with the general divisions of libraries and their typology, which may be investigated taking into account:

1. Standards and recommendations as well as other similar documents (e.g. information languages).
2. The practice of the divisions of libraries in international library organisations.
3. Practical divisions in world and Polish librarianship.

STANDARDS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The terminology we are interested in appears in two groups of standards: statistical and terminological. The necessity for a clear division of libraries into particular types is conditioned by obvious reasons, most often by the requirements of international library statistics. UNESCO insisted on the standardization of this division and nomenclature, and after many years of striving, it managed to enact the document *Recommendation Concerning the International Standardization of Library Statistics Adopted by General Conference at its Sixteenth Session. Paris 13 November 1970* (Morsztynkiewiczowa, 1972, pp. 199-205).

Within the above-mentioned *Recommendation*, the following types of libraries were distinguished¹:

- national libraries,
- libraries of institutions of higher education,
- other major non-specialized libraries,
- school libraries,
- special libraries,
- public libraries.

The *Recommendation* did not mention the type of “research libraries”.

¹ We only provide terms included in the *Recommendation*, omitting the characterization of particular library types.

Barbara Sordylowa, having presented the contents of the *Recommendation* in one of the chapters of her book *Z problematyki bibliotek i informacji naukowej* [Issues of Library and Scientific Information], clearly attempts to belittle the fundamental discrepancies of its classification by making recourse to traditional Polish nomenclature of libraries, and such a fundamental differentiation only serves to reflect the lack of research library categories that is to be found in the *Recommendation*. Consequently, she claims that this lack results from

the criterion for using the collections [...] by specified groups of recipients (e.g. scholars and students, teachers and pupils, residents of a given town) (Sordylowa, 1997, p. 15),

which UNESCO regarded as foundational. If we attempt to interpret the author's way of thinking, then, in her opinion, UNESCO divided libraries according to the categories of their users. And so, scholars and students use academic libraries, whereas teachers and pupils use school libraries, etc. Sordylowa is convinced that

the character of research libraries is undoubtedly ascribed to libraries that are specified as universal (e.g. university libraries) and special, maintained by institutions, scientific associations and other organisations (Sordylowa, 1997, p. 15).

Obviously, nobody will deny that university libraries, for instance, are research libraries, because they cannot be anything else as they collect documents for research purposes at universities as well as literature which is essential for the didactic work of universities. The question which the author posed and did not answer was different – namely, why didn't they call such libraries "research libraries"? It pertains to other libraries as well, above all the special ones, which also cater to fields of science. Since the term "research library" is not mentioned in the *Recommendation*, one should ask what made our librarianship adopt it and endow it with such esteem. Sordylowa replies that "our" classifications assume the criterion of "the character of collections and library tasks". Those "tasks", however, are simply the satisfaction of the needs of particular circles (scholars, students etc.), which is the fundamental criterion of division in the *Recommendation*.

Adopted in 1970, the UNESCO typology found its reflection in international and national standards, which slightly modified the initial settlements of the UNESCO *Recommendation*. In those standards, obviously, the category of “research libraries” did not appear².

At the ISO forum, the problem of library typology emerged once again in the terminological standard ISO 5127 *Information and Documentation – Vocabulary*, which had been established in 2001. The said standard, was translated and approved by the Polish Committee for Standardization on December 14th, 2004 [PN-ISO 5127: 2005 Informacja i dokumentacja – Terminologia]. As it is the latest ISO standard, we shall discuss it in detail. In point 3.2 of the standard, they provided the definitions of 22 library types. So significant a number proves much bigger than those usually distinguished and characterised in similar documents, for the standard singles out libraries distinguished not only according to classic criteria, such as public or national libraries, but also pursuant to library tasks in particular configurations. As a result, the standard mentions, for instance, “central library”, which attends other libraries in the region, or of another organisation, and it also provides the definition of such a central library as one “where the central administrative resources and usually its largest and most important holdings are located”. Central libraries are completed with “branch libraries: the part of a library other than the central library”.

From among the multitude of library types presented in the above-mentioned terminological standard, it is possible to distinguish the following types, which correspond with the convention of already indicated standards in the field of statistics: national, special, public, academic and administrative libraries as well as research and art libraries.

Thus, in the said standard the category of “research libraries” turned up (with its French equivalent *bibliothèque de recherche*), defined as “libraries where exhaustive investigation in particular subject field can be carried out”.

² These were consecutively: the ISO 2789 standard (*International Library Statistics*) from 1991 which was created in close co-operation with UNESCO; the EN ISO 2789 from 1994 which constituted a mechanical takeover of the aforementioned standard as a European standard; PN-EN ISO 2789 from 1998 – the translation of the European standard into Polish. The new, significantly expanded version of the EN ISO 2789 standard of 2003 was approved by the Polish Committee for Standardization on 2nd December, 2004, and it will come out without the translation into Polish.

Therefore, according to this standard, the task of a research library is the organisation of workspace for researchers. In the understanding of the standard, research libraries may also serve as national, academic, special or administrative ones. Let us provide one of the Polish examples. The libraries of the institutions of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) are typical libraries which create workspaces for the scholars of particular institutes, and so they are research libraries in the understanding of the standard. Yet, at the same time, they are special libraries since they specialise in sometimes very narrow scientific fields of study. Thus, they meet the definition of a “special library” given in the standard as a library “covering one discipline or particular subject field”. The mentioned Polish Academy of Sciences libraries are, then, “special research libraries” in the understanding of the standard.

That is it as far as international recommendations and standards are concerned. The ISO standards are currently being adapted in Poland by the correspondent team (Technical Committee no. 242 Information and Documentation of the Polish Committee for Standardization), as the era of establishing “native” standards by the Polish Committee for Standardization, Measures and Quality Control³ has come to an end. One of the latest standards of this kind, essential to our subject matter, was the Polish standard PN-91/N-01226 *Bibliotekarstwo i bibliografia. Rodzaje i działalność bibliotek. Terminologia* [Librarianship and Bibliography. Types and Activities of Libraries. Terminology] developed at the National Library (BN) of Poland (i.e. at the then Centre for Bibliographic Standardization of the Bibliographic Institute) and approved in 1991. It also included the typology of libraries (the sequence I provide here is different from the one in the text of the standard, where the alphabetical order is applied): general, special, national, public, research and special libraries.

A couple of terms are of key importance here: “general” and “special”, taking into consideration the scope of collections, and “research library” is defined as “a general or special library whose collections and activities serve scientific needs above all”.

It seems possible to take the liberty of judging that our “native” standard – which has been withdrawn by PN-ISO 5127:2005 – managed to escape intricacy better than those international standards.

³ Used up to 1994, the Polish Committee for Standardization, Measures and Quality Control is the former official name of the Polish Committee for Standardization.

THE DIVISIONS USED IN INTERNATIONAL LIBRARY ORGANISATIONS

The standards and recommendations reflect the actual divisions of libraries only to a certain degree, for their provisions largely reflect the viewpoints of the authors of such regulations, who wish to name and define these libraries according to the concepts they consider equitable. And so, the already mentioned “other universal libraries”, or “prominent universal libraries”, are introduced as a separate type of libraries or not; “research libraries” were introduced in the translated standard PN-ISO 5127 and in the original Polish standard PN-91/N-01226, so only in terminological standards, not in statistical ones.

We might ask, then, how the system of recommendations and standards refers to the actual, contemporary divisions in librarianship. The answer to this question is provided, among others, by the practice applied by IFLA. It distinguished several types of libraries, which were grouped into three Divisions:

1. General research libraries.
2. Special libraries.
3. Libraries serving the general public.

There are three sections that function within Division I:

1. National libraries.
2. University libraries and other general research libraries.
3. Library and research services for parliaments.

The following sections function within Division II:

1. Government libraries.
2. Social sciences libraries.
3. Geography and maps libraries.
4. Sciences and technology libraries.

Consequently, research libraries were classified into two divisions. Within Division I, IFLA includes national libraries, university libraries and other general research libraries as well as libraries for parliaments as general research libraries. None of the libraries in Division II is called a “research” library, although all of them undoubtedly serve science to a great extent and seem to crave for the term “special research libraries”. In passing, another question arises concerning the choice of such special libraries, for there are no sections of medical and biological sciences libraries or church libraries. Such a choice is probably determined by practical reasons: IFLA does not arbitrarily introduce library categories it wishes to occupy itself with, and within its sections there are representatives of those library types, which express their will to unite and work together on common problems in a specific section. We may only presume that these were the motives for creating such sections.

The analysis of the division conducted by IFLA shows that practical divisions of libraries, which to a considerable degree influence IFLA divisions and terminology, differ significantly from the majority of standards and recommendations. Even more harshly do theoretical concepts verify divisions in world librarianship and in particular countries. Enjoying deserved esteem and popularity, Saur’s *World Guide to Libraries* classifies libraries, within particular countries, according to nine types:

- national libraries,
- general research libraries,
- university, college libraries,
- school libraries (including libraries of certain higher education schools),
- government libraries (including libraries of parliaments, ministries, armed forces etc.),
- ecclesiastical libraries (including monastery libraries),
- corporate and business libraries,
- special libraries maintained by other institutions,
- public libraries.

Thus, in Saur’s *Guide*, there is no separate category of “research libraries” which would encompass both general and special research libraries. As far as general research libraries are concerned, the analysis of the *World Guide...* shows what libraries are included in this cate-

gory. There are not many of them, in France only one such library was identified: the Library of the Arsenal in Paris, whereas in Poland there are six of them: the Library of the Ossoliński National Institute, the Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences, the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences (PAN) and the Polish Academy of Arts and Sciences (PAU) in Cracow, the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Warsaw, the Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences in Gdańsk as well as the Silesian Library in Katowice. We presume that the majority of research libraries in the Polish understanding of this term are included in the type of university libraries, which encompasses all academic libraries, including those of medical academies and vocational schools with the status of an academy, and then in the category of “special libraries maintained by other institutions”.

LIBRARY TYPES IN GERMAN LIBRARIANSHIP

In Polish literature there is a prevailing viewpoint that we adopted German patterns in library classification because the divisions into research and public libraries are embedded in the tradition and contemporariness of German librarianship. This division is indeed present in German librarianship, and it began forming in the first half of the 19th century. The term “division” is not accurate in this case, though. At that time, a network of public libraries was being created, accompanying research libraries which had sometimes existed for hundreds of years. The initiator for creating and distinguishing those libraries was a Saxon, Karl Benjamin Preusker (1786-1871). A practitioner and theorist, Preusker justified the necessity for developing educational librarianship (*das öffentlichen Bibliothekswesen*) with the aim of educating all social classes, especially the newly created class of industrial workers⁴. Preusker was active in the 1830s and that is when his concepts were adopted by other German countries, such as Prussia. On his initiative, a network of educational libraries was created as being complementary to research libraries, and this division prevailed in the 19th and the 20th centuries. In GDR, for instance, the Methodical Centre of Research Libraries functioned in the Ministry of Higher and Vocational Education, which research libraries were subordinate to. For educational libraries, subordinate to the Ministry of People’s Education, the Central Institute of Librarianship was created in Berlin, which occupied itself with theoretical

⁴ Trying to translate the term *öffentliche Bibliothek*, we encounter another difficulty, which we will not settle here since the subject of this article is different. *Öffentliche* is unhesitatingly translated in Poland as “public”, whereas they can be called “common” or “educational” – such terminology was used in Poland during the inter-war period.

guidance for educational libraries. The above-mentioned division raised certain doubts for a number of reasons, so the GDR authorities decided to level the said division, citing the ideological motivation.

The scientific and technological progress – it was explained – just as the socialist culture revolution, set high expectations for all types of libraries, and all areas of social life should be regulated in a scientific way (quote after: Thauer & Vodosek, 1978, p. 150),

preferably within the framework of a uniform library system. The legal limits, which delineate this system, were created by the *Regulation of the Cabinet on the Tasks of the Library System in Forming a Developed System of Civil Socialism in the German Democratic Republic*. The authors of the book, Western German librarians, who cited these facts and quotations, write about this fact with a certain appreciation:

For the first time in the history of German libraries, legal foundations were laid, which made it possible to create a state library system (Thauer & Vodosek, 1978, p. 150).

In West Germany, after the Second World War, despite the efforts of theoreticians and activists, “the dualism in German librarianship was preserved” (Thauer & Vodosek, 1978, p. 141). The differentiation between research and educational libraries was clear in both parts of the divided Germany, but at some point they started being questioned in terms of their different aspects. Doubts were aroused in lexicons:

In the past, in Germany there was a clear demarcation between research libraries and other types of libraries, especially educational libraries. Such a demarcation does not appear in other countries to such an extent, e.g. in the field of English language, because the educational libraries there also carry out research and educational tasks (Kunze, ed., 1975, p. 677).

For a change, the entry “educational libraries” in another lexicon included the following remark:

The features ‘public’ and ‘research’ should not be ascribed to only one type of library. Nowadays, a lot of public libraries collect scientific literature, and research libraries are ‘public’ as long as they are financed by public institutions (an association, a country or a city) and their collections are publicly available (even if, contrary to public libraries, with certain limitations) (Rehm, 1991, p. 206).

In the dissertations of German theorists, we may encounter even more diversified standpoints, which in no way simplify the issues discussed in this article. In 1983, Bernhard Fabian, the guru of German librarianship, wrote a book entitled meaningfully *Buch, Bibliothek und geisteswissenschaftliche Forschung* [Book, Library and Humanistic Research]⁵. Fabian is mostly interested in great German university libraries, defining them as “exploratory libraries” (*Forschungsbibliotheken*), and rarely does he introduce the term “research library”.

Fabian wrote his book protesting against the decline of university libraries as the centres of research on books and bibliological processes. In his opinion, the aforementioned decline commenced after the First World War, and escalated after the Second World War as universities placed greater emphasis on increasing the number of students and on their education, following the example of USA. These functions are assumed by institute libraries, connected with the decline of the significance of main libraries, as it diminishes their competences. This state of affairs has not changed in spite of many individual achievements on the part of certain individuals. That is because librarians as a group, although well educated, have stopped being scientifically active.

Temporarily disregarding Fabian’s standpoint, let us ponder the usefulness of the term *Forschungsbibliotheken* (i.e. “exploratory libraries”) he uses, for it is the exact translation of the English term “research libraries” (by the way, Fabian was a graduate of English studies). Exploratory, and therefore those which constitute a workspace for researchers, but also do research on their own. Doesn’t the Polish misunderstanding result from the fact that we translate the English term “research library” as “scientific library” (Pol. *biblioteka naukowa*), whereas “research” means exploration, investigation or search, but not a “science” (Pol. *nauka*)⁶. It is beyond doubt that we translate it that way because we possess evidence in the form of Polish translations of international standards. Obviously, finding an adequate equivalent term, just as Fabian did, would be difficult, but it is worth noting that our “scientific libraries” (Pol. *biblioteki naukowe*) are not the equivalent to “research libraries”.

⁵ This publication was noticed and reviewed by Zbigniew Żmigrodzki in *Przegląd Biblioteczny* [Library Review] 1987, no. 1, pp. 86-89.

⁶ An obvious misunderstanding is the term “scientific libraries” used as the English name of the type of “research libraries” in *Rocznik Statystyczny* [Statistical Yearbook].

To test the aforementioned hypothesis, let us refer to Anglo-Saxon terminology. This is not an easy task as the issue of research libraries has not been widely discussed in this regard. In the latest international encyclopaedia of librarianship, which I am acquainted with, a concise entry “Research libraries” was dedicated to this issue, whose author is Kenneth E. Carpenter of Harvard University (Feather & Sturges, eds., 2003). The contents of the entry are surprising, beginning with the general definition of research libraries which diverges from the thorough German definitions. And so, according to the *Encyclopaedia*, these are libraries

[...] Which provide materials and facilities for research usually in the humanities, The words ‘research’ and ‘library’ have become tightly linked in a commonly used phrase only since the formation of the Association of Research Libraries in 1932. The goal of that organisation was to provide a framework for co-operation among large libraries [emphasis: A.M.] that were seen as being similar even though sources of support – university, municipality or nation – differed.

And so, according to the *International Encyclopaedia of Information and Library Science*, research libraries are, above all, large humanistic libraries, whereas the very term – ‘an umbrella term of practical utility rather as a concept’ – arose then out of practical needs, when they decided upon the cooperation of libraries of different types in a specified area.

In other words, research libraries which are defined in this way constitute only a certain subgroup of Polish *biblioteki naukowe* or of German *wissenschaftlichen Bibliotheken*.

The author does not leave any doubts that smaller libraries do not deserve this name and is very categorical about this:

College libraries, as well as specialized but small libraries [emphasis: A.M.], are, of course, used by researchers, but here the scholar cannot carry out the type of investigations that merit use of the term “research library”.

Furthermore, the author of the entry did not find libraries named with that term in Great Britain, the only exception occurring in the nomenclature of Swedish libraries, whereas in Germany the term itself appears in the names of two libraries only. Nonetheless, in Europe, he encountered this term in the name of Consortium of European Research Libraries, created for the purpose of developing an union catalogue of early printed (database) of pre-1830 printed books, which meant an association which had been brought into being, as Carpenter

claims, for the practical purposes similar to those of the Association of College and Research Libraries.

In his article, Carpenter refers to B. Fabian, unconditionally supporting his understanding of the essence of research libraries, basically consistent with his own aforementioned definition, although I am unsure if he understood Fabian completely. He presents Fabian's view as follows:

The research library is the humanist's laboratory, a place where the scholar, beginning with a thesis or with a question, can pursue it wherever it leads among both primary and secondary materials. At the same time that the humanist's laboratory allows the researcher to follow – with efficiency – an idea that spontaneously arises. It also supports accidental discovery, as, for instance, through exploring a large body of material in search of the relevant item (Feather & Sturges, 2003, pp. 556-557).

Both authors are unanimous: for Fabian, research libraries are humanistic libraries, whereas for Carpenter they are “mostly humanistic” libraries. In this way, they exclude from research libraries an enormous part of librarianship, i.e. special libraries in the field of mathematical, natural, technical and medical sciences. Nevertheless, it is consistent with the authors' assumptions since in the aforementioned disciplines (e.g. biology) relevant research is carried out in laboratories, not in libraries. Only humanistic research is done in libraries. Fabian, however, which Carpenter did not notice, deplored the disappearance of research conducted by librarians **themselves** and advocated the return of librarians to their traditional work tasks, and, therefore, to the traditions of the great 19th-century German university libraries.

Despite the fact that the traditional division of libraries into research and educational began raising doubts in Germany a long time ago, and although, for instance, B. Fabian is interested in different subject matters, this division has not disappeared completely. In 2003 the German librarian Claudia Lux published in “IFLA Journal” an article about German librarianship *The German Library System: structure and new developments* (Lux, 2003, pp. 113-128). In the introduction she provided some figures: in Germany, consisting of 16,200 communities, there are over 12,000 public libraries, as well as about 2,000 general and special research libraries. A riddle for the reader, because it is not one for the author, is the question as to how she man-

aged to single out those research libraries as she did not provide any sources⁷. Having briefly presented, and failing to comment on, this general division of German libraries, the author goes on to present a division of German libraries according to a peculiar criterion, namely the “levels of service provision”. She distinguished four levels, ranked according to the rising scale of information requirements and specializations. At each level there are libraries of different kinds. The first level, satisfying basic needs, is attended by small and medium public libraries in the countryside and in towns along with their branches, also including library buses. The percentage of research libraries increases at subsequent levels. At the fourth level, where only “highly specialized needs” are attended, the information is collaboratively provided by special research libraries, university libraries along with their special collections and national libraries (*Staatsbibliotheken*).

This “sophisticated” division of German libraries, assuming their collections and information possibilities as the bases of differentiation, emphasises the dominant role of research libraries. It is they that, most often, generate and provide specialized information in various fields. It cannot be denied, then, that in German librarianship research libraries exist, or even prevail, in the library consciousness but they are not singled out as a separate type.

The list of libraries in German-speaking European countries, *Handbuch der Bibliotheken: Deutschland, Österreich, Schweiz* (K.G. Saur München, 12. Ausg. 2006), distinguishes thirteen types of libraries, appearing in Germany, Austria and Switzerland. One of them, as it can be expected, is “public libraries”, but there is no common entry concerning the type of “research libraries”. However, though never called “research libraries”, they are scattered in various types of libraries: “central university libraries, their faculty libraries” or “libraries in extra-university research institutes, museums and archives, academies and scientific associations, economic associations, industrial and commercial chambers, foreign cultural institutions, and also in medical institutions in hospitals”.

⁷ *Jahrbuch der Deutschen Bibliotheken* (Bd 57, 1997/1998, pp. 19-338) provided names and characteristics of 703 research libraries in Germany. The difference with regard to the data provided by C. Lux is therefore significant. The Editorial Staff of *Jahrbuch* makes a stipulation that in their specification they took into account only those libraries which had at least 50,000 books, and in the case of university libraries – 100,000 books. The collections also have to “possess special scientific contents”. The specification disregarded libraries about which the Editorial Staff had received no information.

RESEARCH LIBRARIES IN POLAND

The divisions of libraries, adopted in Polish practice, differ significantly from the above-mentioned world divisions, and also from those used in Germany. The division into research libraries and public libraries is codified here and results in specific consequences. *Rocznik Statystyczny* [Statistical Yearbook] provides basic data concerning these libraries in a separate table, “Research Libraries”. At the end of 2003, it demonstrated 1,276 libraries (*Rocznik Statystyczny*, 2004, p. 335). It may be added that this relatively high number (comparable with the state of German librarianship – 2,000 research libraries) has appeared in the *Rocznik Statystyczny* [Statistical Yearbook] since 1992. Formerly, for many years, we were convinced that in Poland there were about 200 research libraries operating (218 in 1989). Since 1992, the statistics have also included faculty, institute and branch libraries of particular universities, which has increased the number noted in the statistics by about 900.

The second category distinguished in the *Rocznik Statystyczny* [Statistical Yearbook] is public libraries. At the end of 2003 there were 8724 public libraries (*Rocznik Statystyczny*, 2004, p. 310).

The term “research libraries” functioned over a period of twenty years between the First and the Second World War, though this category appeared rather exceptionally in the official statistics. Jadwiga Bornsteinowa used it in her article published in 1928 (Bornsteinowa, 1928, pp. 283-299), in which she singled out 451 research libraries, recognized as such as long as they included “works from the scope of theoretical or applied sciences, or from the field of fine arts”. Therefore, the author considered this sort of a book collection to be the “research” criterion, whilst completely disregarding its functions. She also regarded as research libraries those whose collections consisted only partially of scientific literature, and that is why the number of research libraries in her study was so substantial⁸. It may be surprising to know that as many as 37.3% research libraries were founded and maintained by associations of different kinds, whereas the second place belonged to ecclesiastical libraries (29.9%). However, the basis of research librarianship constituted state libraries, whose

⁸ Bornsteinowa’s article and its weaknesses were discussed in: Z. Gaca-Dąbrowska, *Bibliotekarstwo II Rzeczypospolitej. Zarys problemów organizacyjnych i badawczych* [Librarianship in the Second Polish Republic. An outline of organizational and research problems]. Wrocław 1983, p. 23.

collections and functions were the most important: the National Library of Poland and six university libraries.

Another argument which proves that research libraries constituted important elements of interwar librarianship could also be library categories shown in the balance of war losses, made just after the Second World War. Józef Grycz, who secured and revindicated library collections on behalf of the Ministry of Education, announced in 1946 the numbers of books lost during the war in six categories: libraries of primary, secondary and vocational schools, universal local governmental libraries, universal communal libraries and research libraries (Grycz, 1946, pp. 4-24; Mężyński, ed., 1994, p. 51). Józef Grycz, one of the co-founders of interwar librarianship, must obviously have known the divisions of libraries used before the war. Grycz, as a co-author of *Dekret o bibliotekach...* [Decree on Libraries] dated April 17th, 1946, also influenced a special article devoted to research libraries (art. 12), which had some influence on the contents of similar articles in two acts on libraries: from 1968 and 1997.

Article 12 of the *Decree* specified the functions of research libraries as follows: “Research libraries (general and special ones) serve above all scientific and research purposes, formation and expansion of knowledge, general and vocational higher education [...]. Research libraries can be at the same time special institutions, doing research connected with books as well as carrying out bibliographical work”. The *Decree* goes on to recommend dividing the specialisations of literature and doing any possible interchanges of collections among libraries.

Ustawa o bibliotekach [Library Act] dated April 9th, 1968, provided the following definition of research libraries:

Research libraries serve the development and needs of science and education by means of research and services [...]. They carry out didactic, information and popularising works, whose objective is to disseminate knowledge and cultural development in society (Chapter 4).

What is striking about this definition is that the fundamental role of research libraries, i.e. “serving development and science”, is equivalent to, and perhaps even a bit overshadowed by, the library’s own works wherein the library “does research and carries out didactic, information and popularising works”. It basically changes the sense of the provisions of the *Decree*, which aptly pointed to the essence of the tasks of these libraries, which were supposed

to “serve above all scientific and research purposes, formation and the expansion of knowledge”. The *Decree* says: they serve science; the *Act* says: they serve by means of doing research. The differences, then, are fundamental.

The new library act, dated June 27th, 1997, devoted chapter 6 to research libraries. Their tasks were specified as follows (paragraph 1, point 1 and 2):

[...] they serve the needs of science and education, ensuring access to library materials and information sources necessary to carry out works in research and science and including research results, they also do research in library science and related fields, as well as relating to the disciplines they attend.

Subsequently, the *Act* specified which libraries were to be ranked as research libraries: the National Library of Poland, higher education school libraries, libraries of the Polish Academy of Sciences, research and development units libraries as well as others, a list of which is created by the Ministry of Culture and Art.

The tasks and functions of research libraries in the *Decree* and the 1997 *Act* were determined in a way which does not require any polemics. Let us draw a curtain over the 1968 *Act*. Both acts decided that the task of these libraries was serving science, i.e. creating the workspace for research and education. This workspace, we may add, includes book collections and other library materials as well as the user service system. The essence of the functioning of a research library is the scientific character of its collections as well as its reader – be it the scholar, student or any other user searching for scientific information.

Fundamental questions appear while interpreting the sentence about the tasks of research libraries as “special institutions, doing research connected with books as well as carrying out bibliographical work” – as specified by the *Decree*. What does this desideratum actually mean and, what is more, is it an obligation (or an order) for libraries to do such research? Let us remember that the *Rocznik Statystyczny* [Statistical Yearbook] estimates the number of research libraries as amounting to 1,225, so do they all have to be engaged in research connected with books and, consequently, their history, bibliological processes, former and contemporary readership, etc.? As the majority of special research libraries concentrate on the subject matter of disciplines they attend to (e.g. mathematical and biology sciences),

it is difficult to imagine the management of correspondent research units allowing library workers to do research which would not be connected with the designated activity of these units. The 1997 *Act* seems to be even more categorical than the *Decree*. Whereas in the *Decree* it is said that research libraries

[...] can be at the same time special institutions [...].

the *Act* is resolute:

[...] research libraries do [emphasis: A.M.] research in the library science and related fields, as well as relating to the disciplines they attend.

Research libraries have no choice, then, but fortunately they can choose from a vast range of options. As a result, they may do library science, which entails investigating and establishing the conditions and rules of efficient library work, including all structural elements which a library consists of as an institution: collections, readers, workers, organizational systems and material base. Related library science fields include bibliology, scientific information, bibliography and social communication. Let us assume that while satisfying the conditions, which we shall discuss below, such tasks can be done by librarians – mostly library science graduates and certified librarians. However, the stipulation expressed in the second part of the sentence pointing to the research tasks of libraries, which “do research relating to the disciplines they attend to”, proves difficult to be satisfied. The intention of the authors of the *Act* was to enable research work to those librarians whose education coincides with the scientific specialization of the library. In practice, however, librarians are humanists and only in such libraries can they activate themselves scientifically.

Librarians (libraries) are then obliged by legislation to do research but not only by these acts. The magic of the term “research library” is powerful. In the Statut Uniwersytetu Warszawskiego [Statute of the University of Warsaw] of 1997, in paragraph 25 point 1, the tasks of the University of Warsaw Library (BUW) were specified as follows:

BUW is a general academic organizational unit with research and didactic tasks.

The University authorities remember about this entry and once in a while they summon the BUW managing director to report on research in BUW, causing some trouble in that way.

ATTEMPTS AT DEFINING RESEARCH WORK IN POLISH LIBRARIES WITH ATTENDANT EXAMPLES

In the light of the doubts raised above, we have to ask and attempt to establish what research, or scientific, work in a library actually is. The answer is connected with the answer to the general question of what science is, and consequently it leads to complicated deliberations on its essence, for which there is no space here, even for the simple reason that definitions of science are different. The authors of the chapter on research works in libraries, inserted in an academic handbook of librarianship *Bibliotekarstwo* [Librarianship] (Gębołyś & Ratajewski, 1998, pp. 328-333), tried to answer those questions. According to them, research work in a library “may practically concern all fields of library work”, and research methods applied should be “clear and comprehensible, unambiguous, goal-oriented, effective, fruitful and economical”. Then, the authors described the order of research procedure stages. The fundamental issue is, according to them, posing the problem, i.e. a scientific question: “why this or that subject is like that”.

All these remarks are theoretically reasonable but the authors suspended them in a space which is completely devoid of examples, which does not help to understand the essence of research works in libraries. In particular, how is it possible for the directive which in the course of research assumes examining a research object from the point of view of its “genetic properties, or how and in what conditions a given object was created”, to refer to e.g. actions connected with the subject cataloguing of documents, a skill which the authors consider to be research work in libraries. Subject cataloguing is, according to them, doing science since it has the character of “independent conceptual work which requires in-depth knowledge of mutual relations between particular disciplines and of the methodology of information languages”. Fair enough, but what “genetic properties” of a catalogued book influence the fact that its study is a research work? There is probably no sense in posing such a difficult question for no one is seriously interested in the answer, but we formulate this in order to prove that the use of the paradigm which tests the “scientificity” of particular library functions, suspected of being “scientific”, brings doubtful results. If we want to prove that libraries do carry

out research, we should clearly indicate the “scientific” features of particular works and attempt to specify and motivate the **borderline** between other library functions, which cannot be scientific in any sense. If the subject cataloguing bears the hallmarks of scientificity, as some authors want it to, then why doesn’t descriptive cataloguing bear these same hallmarks also? Or maybe it does? There are also some ambitious cataloguers who want their work to be considered scientific. What kind of doctrine is that? Where are the parameters of “scientificity”?

Let us specify, then, in what areas library works lawfully have, or may have, a scientific character. What fields can it concern and what kind of libraries can it be connected with? It is beyond doubt that it is probably about research libraries only. These, in turn, have to be divided into two categories: libraries storing historical (special) collections and libraries with new collections, whose scientific work is oriented toward issues connected with the widely understood field of library management. It does not exclude the situation when libraries with historical collections, getting modernized, develop research trends connected with their contemporary situation: automation and co-operation between libraries (union catalogues). A good example is the work of the University of Warsaw Library, which, being in possession of valuable special collections, does relevant research in their subject matter, organizing at the same time the NUKAT – an union catalogue of Polish research and academic libraries and preparing a series of handbooks indispensable for proper cooperation of participating libraries, published by the Stowarzyszenie Bibliotekarzy Polskich (SBP) [Polish Librarians’ Association].

The collections of historical libraries have necessitated the undertaking of special works. Their crucial tasks have been to study and publish (also electronically) the catalogues of special collections. It is known that no Polish library has completely mastered its special collections in terms of so-called “research catalogues”. Works on catalogues are, then, a fundamental task of these libraries, and readers’ or even superiors’ appeals are justified here. The compilation of these catalogues creates various degrees of difficulty, the most difficult being the cataloguing of medieval manuscripts. Their authors have to demonstrate their knowledge of history, medieval Latin, palaeography, sphragistics and many other auxiliary

historical sciences⁹. An exceptional example in this scope in Poland is the monumental catalogue of manuscript codes of the Jagiellonian Library (*Catalogus...*, 1980-).

The first question which arises is whether the compilation of such a catalogue can be considered as research work. It would be a heresy if I decidedly claimed that it is, in fact, a catalogue, which provides and describes the contents of particular codes, specifying their formal characteristics, the author's surname, title, place and year of creating the manuscript. It is not so in this case, since the cataloguer has to set himself two research tasks: description and explication, and this requires using methods concerning the identification of authors, specification of places and circumstances of the code's creation, analysis of provenance entries allowing for the supervision of the dissemination of the manuscript and its readership.

By granting the status of research work to the cataloguing of medieval manuscripts, we are falling into a certain trap. The catalogues of manuscripts are created also for objects from the 16th to the 21st centuries. As we approach the modern era, the scale of difficulties in describing and the scope of posed questions become even easier. The catalogues of the latest manuscripts sometimes describe copies which are simply legible typescripts, with all data specified on title pages. Creating such a description does not present any research difficulty, and so is such an activity deserving of the classification of research work? Obviously, they are not, but it is a matter of methodology and prestige. From what moment, then, or from what epoch, do manuscript descriptions stop being the effect of research work but rather the result of routine library work? The 16th-18th centuries (the Old Polish manuscripts) – yes, but the 19th century – not? How about the difficult foreign manuscripts from the 19th century? Maybe yes, after all?

Similarly, we may consider works on other categories of special collections. The highest qualifications, also research ones, are required to catalogue incunabula. However, we may sceptically add, this problem does not actually exist in Polish libraries anymore since there are union catalogues of both Polish and world incunabula, so the cataloguer's principle task

⁹ The authors of the above-mentioned article in *Bibliotekarstwo* [Librarianship] believe that while compiling "valuable and rare" collections, it is necessary to know "scientific methods and techniques" (p. 329). True, they are useful but the basis for this work is the in-depth knowledge of the subject, i.e. historical erudition and the ability to use auxiliary historical sciences (sphragistics, palaeography etc.).

it to identify the copy. Nonetheless, there are also the spheres of their provenance and displacement to be investigated, if the latter happened during and after the Second World War.

What about work on the other catalogues of old prints? We know examples of superb catalogues, such as the catalogue of 16th century *Polonica* held in the Kórnik Library, and compiled by Kazimierz Piekarski (Piekarski, 1929). Here Piekarski used the so-called typographical method, marking out the direction of research in old books in Poland. Arriving at such a concept undoubtedly constituted an act of creation, and although partially adapting German researchers' experiences, it marked out an exemplary model for cataloguing old prints. Still, Piekarski's successors, the authors of numerous catalogues of 16th century old prints, have simply continued to catalogue old prints in accordance with his steps. Such catalogues can be enriched, of course, with valuable elements of description.

Research into the provenance of copies and entire collections became the speciality of the University of Warsaw Library. The initiator of this course of research was Maria Sipayłło (1905-1990), working in BUW between 1957 and 1990, who organized research workspace, ran suitable trainings, and established the method of practical research in provenience. She also collected and worked out most of the proveniences placed in the published two volumes of the catalogue of the 15th and 16th centuries prints in BUW (*Katalog druków...*, 1994, 1998).

The research in provenience in old prints, as well as in manuscripts and other special collections, bears the marks, or even satisfy the requirements, of a research work. Apart from such skills as the ability to decipher handwriting (very often some illegible initials) or to identify people or seals, it requires knowledge of the epoch and the institutions functioning within it, in other words – thorough historical erudition.

To sum up, the high standard catalogues of special collections characterized above (also those of cartographic, graphic and musical collections) “exhaust the grades” of research work. The catalogued “object” is a perceptive challenge for the compiler if he chooses to accept it, both its description and all its related explications. Where do the doubts come from then, those that are raised and those which I have raised myself? Some of them have been mentioned above, it is mainly about the diverse level of this challenge and, consequently, about the differing scales of difficulty. cataloguing a contemporary manuscript, or – on the other hand – an incu-

nabulum already described authoritatively in reliable union catalogues does not constitute a scientific task. We cannot state, then, that “the catalogues of special collections are research works” because if they are, then not all of them attain this status. And here another problem emerges: where is the borderline and who should demarcate it?

The compilation of catalogues is an evident duty of the departments of special collections. Rich source materials also tempt to undertake editorial and historical work, which is evidently considered research. Exactly, whom do they tempt? The preparation of an edition is not connected with the routine work of these departments and some really favourable conditions have to occur in order to facilitate such work. A good example is the Kórnik Library. In the 19th century, it issued several multi-volume source publications, some of which were not completed, whereas some of them require re-editing as the level of contemporary knowledge has outstripped 19th-century editorial achievements. In the 1980s, a three-person team was formed to work on the edition and publication of *Lites*¹⁰. Their activity was short and came to an end after a few years. The reasons were prosaic: the coordinator of the team *Lites*, Professor Helena. Chłopocka has retired.

Such a situation is, unfortunately, typical of such library initiatives and, sadly, understandable. Librarians themselves have neither the time nor the expertise to manage the edition of medieval or 16th-century texts. Creating special units for such works requires extremely complicated procedures: acquiring qualified employees, funds, and premises. The lack of a single factor decides upon the failure. In BUW, no further conceptual research on the provenance of old prints has been undertaken out of personal reasons. In Kórnik, in turn, for the same reasons they cannot complete two noteworthy publishing initiatives which began in the second half of the 19th century.

This does not mean that some impressive publishing initiatives were not successful, which relied on materials from particular libraries and were conducted by workers within the framework of the works of particular sections. For instance, the workers of the Manuscript Department at the National Library of Poland, Bogumił Kupść and Krystyna Muszyńska, published

¹⁰ Documents concerning the trials between Poles and the Knights of the Cross from the 14th and the 15th century came out in 1855-1856 on Tytus Działyński's initiative, entitled *Lites ac res gestae inter Polonos Ordinemque Cruciferorum*. The edition was continued in the 19th century but it was not terminated. In the 1980s the Kórnik Library decided to publish the whole documentation properly and to finish the publication. The first volume of the third edition of *Lites* came out in 1970; it was edited by H. Chłopocka.

Józef Andrzej Załuski's correspondence from 1724-1736 (Wrocław 1967) – a volume which impresses with its size and erudite annotations. The BUW Section of Graphics publishes perfectly prepared and graphically impressive albums of its collections (Kossecka, 2000; Talbierska, 2001), and there are obviously more of such examples. Still, they will not change the basic fact that it is not a rule but a fortunate coincidence. Such accomplishments appear where they manage to form an appropriate team, or train or acquire a gifted specialist librarian, and the management creates suitable work conditions and guarantees that the publication will be issued.

Let us now ponder the possible areas of research activity in libraries which have nothing in common with traditional special collections and let us discuss two of them. A responsible task of every large library is to set out the rules of collection policy, enshrined in a suitable document specifying those rules. To properly specify the acquisition policy of a given library, there has to be a substantial team effort¹¹. The library has to define its mission, analyze the tasks resulting from its statute or other similar legislative statement, study users' needs, and then specify how many and what documents it will be gathering within the framework of a given field. Techniques used in such work should be varied, starting with bibliometric research (establishing in a statistical way e.g. the most popular scientific journals which fall within the scope of activity of a given library), through sociological methods (studying users' needs) and, finally, to bibliographical ones, allowing for the adequate choice of literature.

Wishing to specify this type of work, we find ourselves in a similar dialogue to that of the cataloguing of special collections, namely: does the formulation of collection policy rules while using some (e.g. bibliometric) research methods automatically prejudge a scientific act of creation? The standpoints will be different here but if we admit that it is so, then we have to add with regret that our libraries do not undertake such work as a rule. The only written and published principles of collection building in the National Library that I am acquainted with came out in 1974, whereas some university libraries prepared such guidelines in a provisional form, but no Polish library has specified the rules of their acquisition policy reliably or thoroughly enough so as to create a document, described in E. Grala's article.

¹¹ Such works are undertaken in the USA, where they codified methods constituting the basis of the construction of acquisition policy statement in the document called *Conspectus* (Grala, 1996).

Nowadays, the crucial task of Polish libraries is the choice, implementation and launch of automated integrated library systems. Libraries has accepted this challenge since the early 1990s and, on the whole, successfully accomplished it. Carrying out the automation of a library requires a series of intellectual skills and high qualifications. These actions are usually preceded with the system analysis of the library, connected as a rule with the reconstruction of its structure. The choice and purchase of the system requires the knowledge of particular systems; it is necessary to understand the IT essentials of the system in order to establish a dialogue with IT experts implementing the system, and it is crucial to master the rules of the bibliographic and subject description in computer environment.

This impressive set of library and IT skills, which are necessary to implement, maintain and improve the automated systems in libraries, obviously provoke us to decree that we have to do with research activity. However, there are some doubts arising. All actions listed above are, to a great extent, managerial actions and require the knowledge of numerous issues, but they do not lead to “posing a problem or a scientific question”, which is considered to be a fundamental condition to do research, stipulated by the above mentioned authors (Gębołyś & Ratajewski, 1998, p. 331). However, we could wonder if the creation of an integrated library system is not a research effort. Yet, such systems used to be created not in libraries but in large companies, and formats of records are most often adopted from the USA, bibliographic standards (adopted from relevant international regulations) are simply acquired and used, so where is this research contribution of particular libraries?

Similar examples can be multiplied. The work on bibliographies in some libraries is traditional, enjoying respect and automatically considered to be research work. However, again, we come across the same question: what determines the “scientificity” of this work? The very compilation and selection of items and their correct description in the accepted order? Rather not. But in terms of the elaboration of the concept of some bibliography – then we may say, rather yes.

We gradually approach the question that bothers us. There are fields of library activity which we will preferably call research work, whereas of others we will speak with doubt, and some will be denied this status (e.g. descriptive cataloguing). The preparation of action programmes, creation of theoretical grounds and methodology of work get closer to research activity but their implementation does not. All decisions can be, and are, arguable, and they may

even arouse vehement emotions and protests. But the question is, who needs these discussions and decisions? Libraries work independently of how the authorities evaluate their research status, and the users of research libraries are only interested in adequately selected collections and service efficiency. They do not care about librarians' scientific activity if it does not lead to the improvement of information services.

Authorities' pressures go right past fundamental library challenges but they concern individual or team research work. These pressures are frustrating for librarians, who usually cannot satisfy these requirements. Authorities' requirements are rarely accompanied by organizational steps, which could enable such work. In 1964, sections of research work were introduced into the structures of university libraries. They did not fulfil their role so they were consecutively liquidated. At present, as far as I know, only the Poznań University Library (UAM) has the Section of Research, Publishing and Didactic Work, which is focused on organizational activities, carried out by Research Secretariats (or research secretaries) in some larger libraries. Therefore, if we want to assign research tasks to libraries, we should create structures obliged to their execution (just as the Books and Readers Institute of the National Library of Poland) but we should not force librarians into working on research within the framework of hitherto office duties.

The conclusions from the analyses presented above can be formulated as follows. The term "research libraries" (Pol. *biblioteki naukowe*) is embedded in Polish library typology, although it is difficult to find a country where it is of such importance. In the Anglo-Saxon area "research libraries" are understood as simply humanistic libraries, constituting workspace for researchers.

Our divisions of libraries into research and public ones undoubtedly derive from the tradition of German librarianship, although in Germany those divisions begin to fade away and the term "research library" describes the characteristic of a library rather than its type.

The Polish persistent use of the term "research libraries" as the name of the type has been consolidated by legislative acts. The acts imposed on libraries the duty of carrying out their own research work, which often leads to inconvenient, almost amoral situations, since in their reports libraries describe actions which have nothing in common with science. We may won-

der whether all these problems are necessary and whether they are not caused to a great extent by the ambition factor. After all, a “research library” has a certain ring to it that sounds proud.

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OLD AND NEW PATHS OF LITERACY

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KEYWORDS: Literacy. School. Literary canon. General reading. Elite reading. Scope of the book. Cultural distance. Television. Internet

ABSTRACT: General reading retains both a close and distant social environment, which influences quantitative and qualitative dimensions. From 1989 in Poland readers gained accesses to new kinds of writing and authors. This choice ultimately changed reader interests, which had previously focused on a canon literature that had been fixed the school curriculum. However, family traditions and school set texts are not the only indicators of reading practices. New, and little-recognized reader groups, often of an elite character, have a diversified the traditional reading community, often-times supported by cyberspace.

TRADITION

Man – Antoni Kępiński wrote – nurtures biological and social legacies which transmit determined material and spiritual values. The formulation of speech, letters, messages about world, moral, artistic values, technical devices and the like, are handed down from the moment of birth. If man was deprived of this legacy, he would always have to start anew and the development of culture would be impossible (Kępiński, 1992, p. 30). In the light of this statement, everything seems bright, wherein this legacy begins with the first words that a child articulates within the bosom of its family.

A teacher may state that involvement in culture starts when a child forms words. School facilitates this acquisition within the collective, but mastery is an individual matter. School is the first institution of the collective to help overcome illiteracy and forge a path towards literacy. Indeed, the next generations come along after all the work has been done in terms of tradition, language, customs, and system of values. The form in which this introduction takes place is one of the oldest forms leading to literacy, albeit the process itself continues to provoke contentious debate.

Computerization and the Internet support the illusion that it is possible to simplify this path or to replace it with something that involves less effort. This is not a cause of concern for everybody. The poor quality of teaching at primary and gymnasia schools generate headlines but not serious public debate. International research conducted some years ago by PISA on Polish fifteen-year-olds, revealed some worrying trends and results. Even though newspapers published these results, general commentary jumped to the defense of the Polish education system, describing the research methodology as flawed, and praising young people for their patriotism and knowledge of social affairs.

In 2007, results published by the Central Examination Board definitively burst the bubble. Out of almost half a million sixth-graders, 23.5% achieved less than 20 out of the available 40 marks. This indicated that 27.1% of pupils from the countryside, and 18.1% of pupils from major cities were unable to cope with further learning. Gifted pupils (with 34+ points in the test) in the countryside constituted 18.4%, whereas in the major cities this figure totalled

29.3%. Traditionally boys performed poorly (on average 2 points fewer than girls). Amongst boys 28.4% had bad results, as compared to 18.5% of girls (Pezda, 2007).

There are two principle reasons for making a distinction between the performance of boys and girls, the first being the continuity of traditional education within the family. In the 1970s and 80s, boys often chose to attend vocational school, which prepared them for a specific and often well-paid profession. Literature, prose and poetry were regarded as being the domains of women. Vocational school curricula offered a limited humanist outlook. Girls with little technical aptitude attended secondary schools which prepared them for administrative work. These girls often chose, in turn, to marry young and start families. These days, vocational schools are not considered as an attractive option, and higher education is seen as guaranteeing a better life. But having said this, humanist subjects continue to be sorely neglected.

The general observations of provincial librarians are confirming nationwide findings which show that boys are abandoning literature at the end of primary school. Their reading interests move towards fantasy and computer-related interests. Librarians also observe that that boys are choosing to avail of abbreviated copies of set texts.

Schools have traditionally supported the cause of literacy, followed closely by libraries. In as much as schools focus on reading and writing, the library looks to reinforce and develop this process. Both apply different work methods, and constantly refine them in order to adapt to given social conditions. Popular observation is delivering evidence that the modernization of schools and libraries is not keeping pace with social change, wherein the Internet and Television are replacing traditional reading habits. Even more worryingly, this comes at a time when parents have no time, or are simply ceasing, to read to their children, thus severing a core valve of literary acquisition. In many countries including Poland public libraries are organising classes for ever-younger children. Through supervised play, these children enrich their vocabulary and learn to verbalize their thoughts. It is filling the cultural gap, which for many reasons has arisen in modern-day families.

The ability of people to read, write and comprehend texts is a base measure of culture and civilization. Since the introduction of compulsory attendance at school (in Poland this law was introduced only after the regaining independence in 1918), not only teachers, librarians,

educationalists, but also politicians, economists, representatives of the world of science and cultures have taken an interest in literacy. In an ever-changing world of intensifying social structures, emigration and migration, globalization, computer technology and all that is related to the cyber world, issues associated with literacy have become more and more become complex.

LANGUAGE

We do not choose the language we speak. We describe it as our mother tongue. In English “mother tongue” signifies the language which a mother speaks and hands down to her children. It is possible to stop here, but people today are being confronted with the need to acquire a second language, enabling them to study, work, and participate in the local community of an adopted country.

Acquiring a second language is conditioned by adaptation and is becoming an economic issue in the contemporary world to the same extent as political and cultural considerations. The Educational Research Centre of St. Patrick's College of the University in Dublin in 2007 in a seminar entitled “Learning a Second Language and Teacher Education In Reading/Literacy” forms part of the research findings of the International Reading Association, findings which have been presented at numerous national and international conferences. The choice of topic for the seminar in Ireland was not accidental, and is related to both the historical events and current politics of the country. Ireland is trying to revive its Irish language. With a population of 4 million people, the popularization of the Irish language has progressed slowly. 80% of Irish people speak English at home, mainly because this language has consolidated traditions, is the language of communication for the majority, and most importantly, is a window onto the world in terms of science, business, banking, and so forth. Schools have played a key role in restoring the Irish language to its rightful place in terms of cultural and social life. A government initiative introduced in 1970 was aimed at supporting the language, and a similar initiative in 1996 established an Irish-language TV channel and radio stations.

However, results have been less than impressive, even though recent findings show that 22% of Irish people can communicate in their mother tongue. On an everyday basis, however,

(in shops, on the street, in public places) only 5% of Irish citizens make recourse to the Irish language. Until recently, approximately half a million Irish people understood nothing of their native language.

Similarly, only much earlier, the restoration of a mother tongue took place in the second half the 19th century in the Czech Republic. For Czechs this campaign was intended to support their efforts at achieving autonomy, and in 1918 for full sovereignty. After World War II in Czechoslovakia numerous commissions were established which restored or created new Czech vocabulary. Czechs are exceptionally sensitive about the nativeness of their language, and resist the adoption of foreign names and terms.

Lithuanians are also making efforts to rid Lithuanian of Polish and Belarussian influences (Venclowa, 2006, pp. 18-19). However, both in Vilnius and the Lithuanian provinces people are communicating in a language which makes frequent use of Polish, Lithuanian and Belarussian words.

Ukraine has seen different processes, although the situation is changing. In the early 1990s Ukrainian members of parliament began to speak Slavic *volapik* in parliament: which combines Ukrainian, Polish and Russian words. Ukrainians are restoring their tongue, starting in kindergarden and are beginning to enjoy a measure of success.

Other protracted language issues are to be found in Georgia. During the Soviet era Georgian and Russian were taught in schools. Russian was the language of communication and opened the doors to further education and a professional career. Today half of primary teachers working in primary schools cannot speak Georgian well. Some are choosing to speak in an Azerbaijani dialect. Regional and ethnic conflict is hampering attempts at popularizing the Georgian language. Those who consider themselves to be Georgians and who speak in a Georgian manner live in the highlands. Establishing primary schools these areas and employing teachers who speak the language has proven difficult.

Latvia and Estonia are contending with similar issues. The languages which their citizens speak can be put down to not only ethnic divisions but also political and social. The policy of the former Soviet Union aimed at settling Russians in both of these countries and establish-

ing Russian as a dominant language in the spheres of business, culture and politics. In 2006 Russians accounted for 40% of the Latvian population. Wanting to obtain citizenship of the country, these same Russians had to learn Latvian and pass an exam. In schools where Russian is the principle language, Latvian occupies a close second.

Coming to Estonia, in the second half of the twentieth century the Soviet authorities systematically attempted to reduce usage of the Estonian language, by limiting the publication of books and magazines in Latvian in favour of Russian. This policy also obtained for the language of collections in public libraries. In schools, Russian language, history, literature and values were taught. Since 1989 however, Estonians have managed to redeem much of their cultural identity Estonians by emphasizing folkloric, musical and literary traditions.

In both Estonia and Latvia, universities are playing a central role in reviving their respective native languages. Of course, this process has not been without its conflicts. Russians have found it difficult to reconcile themselves to the loss of linguistic dominance, and to add insult to injury they resent being forced to learn Estonian or Latvian.

An example of a language becoming the focus of politics can be seen in Croatia. Prior to its regaining of independence schools conducted lessons with parallel texts in the Cyrillic and Latin alphabets. However, in the mid – 1990s the Cyrillic alphabet was effectively dropped. Children were glad, but some philologists claim that it has deprived younger generations of their shared heritage with Serbia.

A similar fate befell Yiddish in Israel, where today only a narrow circle of specialists in literature and cultural studies have retained an interest in the language. Young Israelis are no longer familiar with the literary and spoken traditions which developed on Polish lands in the 19th and 20th centuries, or of the social and political thought to be found in Yiddish books and prints. Indeed, it is a ironic twist that research centres in Yiddish are flourishing in Germany.

And so, in this brief conspectus we have seen how a second language can become embroiled in politics, wherein it is difficult to reconcile conflicting national, ethnic or social interests.

Every year the people of Iceland celebrate the Icelandic language. People national flags, and radio and television stations broadcast related programmes. Reading is widespread, in political discourse a native artistic creativity is preferred. In terms of mass media, especially television, there are many programmes related to literature and reading. Although books are expensive, each Icelandic child receives on average a dozen or so titles every Christmas.

Poland is monolingualistic. National minorities which speak their native languages are relatively few. In the Second Republic there were no conflicts whether cultural, political and economic. In the interwar years Polish citizens spoke Yiddish, Ukrainian, Lithuanian, Belarussian and German. These minorities looked after their own educational needs and school curricula. They also published books and magazines and established libraries, although not all cultural enterprises met with success.

Polish society was diverse, and certain groups were greatly divergent in cultural and economic terms. Prior to World War I in the Polish countryside the notion of leisure time didn't exist as people were forced to work from dawn to dusk. Even children had their chores to carry out.

In 1918 with the introduction of compulsory teaching at primary school enabled peasant children to find time to do homework and read, although such measures did not narrow the gap between city and countryside. However, the new situation did little to alleviate the lot of peasant families, who were still faced with a heavy day's work.

Poles spoke two languages. One, often determined as literary, was the language of the educated and professional cosmopolitan classes. The second language was composed of various regional local and peasant dialects, such as the highland dialect, Kashubian, and Silesian). Illiteracy was common amongst these groups. This division has preserved until today.

Research carried out in recent times related to reading has established that times people from the city read more than those from the countryside. Indeed, reading is a permanent fixture amongst educated and young people, albeit this is a fact that cannot be extended to older generations or those solely in possession of a primary education.

The changes which took place after 1945 involved industrialisation and migrations from the countryside to the cities. In turn, primary and professional education programmes flourished. The absorption of surpluses of the rural population by the productive sectors of the economy, was mirrored by the intensification of the careers of women, in mainly education, trade, the health services and libraries. This should have been a glorious age, which laid the roots for the flourishing of our language. This failed to happen, however.

Today you would have to be deaf not to hear the kind of language that pupils, students, politicians, journalists and representatives of the different professions are choosing to make recourse to. In terms of accent, the melody of the sentence, and grammar, everything is far from the way it should be correctness. Clearly vocabulary and the store of ideas is becoming endangered, drowned out by superlatives such as “cool” and “super”. Politicians from the front pages of newspapers have trouble with the correct building of a sentence. They start with the centre, confuse subject with object, and use bizarre phrases or inappropriate Latinisms, not actually understanding what it is they mean. Correct articulation is a rarity.

SCHOOL, LIBRARY AND HOME COLLECTION

In the 19th century, it was said of someone who could read and write that they possessed the art of reading, and those who could write was regarded as being literary. Indeed, in the inter-war period there was a column to be found on forms with headings “literate” or the “illiterate”. Being able to sign your name was a privilege of the literate. Mastering the ability to write determined advancement in learning and participation in the public life.

These privileged people have also been traditionally associated with institutions facilitating access to books, newspapers, magazines and other materials. According to Grażyna Straus and Katarzyna Wolff, these institutions are a) libraries of different kinds, b) home libraries, c) individual purchases, and d) family-social circles (Straus & Wolff, 2006, p. 56). Determining the scope of library reading is not a simple task. According to findings on the scope of the book, in 2004 45% of Polish citizens read books, of which 33% used public libraries, 15% school libraries, and 9% scientific and special, trade union and parish (Straus & Wolff, 2006, p. 56).

Published by the National Library of Poland, the 2005 annual *Biblioteki Publiczne w liczbach* [Public Libraries in Figures], showed that 19.2% of the Polish population availed of libraries. Beginning from 1999, this indicator remained stable at 19-19.2%. In 2005 a fall in the number of readers was noted totalling 171,234 (*Biblioteki...*, 2006, pp. 29-30). It was almost as if cities of average size had ceased to be interested in books. It is possible of course to take consolation in the fact that this figure only totalled 2.3% and that the reading population attending public libraries amounted to over 7 million persons. This drop in numbers could be put down to the wanton elimination of libraries, especially in the countryside, where in the very nature of things access to the book is more difficult than in the city. Since 1989 the network of libraries, which at the time boasted the figure of 10,313, fell by 1,722, which represented a 16.7% reduction. In the years 2001-2005 the pace of closures slowed somewhat with just sixty libraries disappearing year on year from the cultural map of the country. Provincial librarians declared that library closures had led to a significant drop in the number of readers. Experience has shown that people may travel 5 kilometres for a loaf of bread but no further than 3 kilometres for a book. Indeed, it is worth noting that the Finnish Libraries Act from 1999 provides that readers should travel no further than 2 kilometres to the nearest library. As a result 80% of Finns use public libraries, and the young people of Finland lead the rankings in terms of reading, writing and comprehension (*Najlepsze wzorce...*, 2005). It is a similar situation in other Scandinavian countries. In Denmark over one third of the population attends the library at least once a month, and over 80% are pleased with their library services. In Sweden and Norway 80% of young people use public libraries. In Great Britain 60% of people have a library card, a figure comparable to the United States, where 62% of the population has a library card. What is more, 66% avail of public libraries at least once a year. Of those who used a library in the past year, 67% borrowed a book, 47% sought the advice of a librarian, 47% referenced dictionaries or encyclopedias, read the 31% newspapers or magazines, and 26% made use of available Internet access. In turn, 25% borrowed CDs or videos, and 14% took part in some event held by the library.

Library documentation constitutes important source of information relating to library use. In many countries this information is used for determining readership numbers. Research conducted by the Institute of the Book and Readings of the National Library of Poland and the National Széchenyi Library in Budapest have proven rather exceptional in this. They have

examined the tradition, methodologies and research histories relating to reading in both Poland and Hungary.

Determining the extent of the purchases of books and magazines is more difficult. This is because reader declarations are often very general and impossible to verify. Of course it is possible to compare them with book sales, but it doesn't guarantee an accurate picture of active reading. According to research on the scope of the book in 2006, 33% of Polish people aged 15 years and older declared that they buy at least one book a year.

In terms of volume of purchases, one in five Polish people bought no more than 4 titles. One in ten bought between 5 and 11 titles, but only a 3% of those polled had bought 12 titles or more. Amongst country dwellers only 22% had actually bought a book, whereas amongst residents of cities this figure totalled 39%. Those up to the age of 60 with a higher education and purchasing power bought books more often. And so individual purchases do not account for wide-spread literacy. For those living in small villages and towns public libraries remain the primary source of access to books.

Reading books borrowed from relatives and friends is an important aspect of Polish reading. In 2006, 36% of respondents declared as such. Determining the size of home libraries is not a simple task. When asked, people generally exaggerate the size of their home libraries. For many, admitting to owning only a small number of books is a source of embarrassment. Even if we assume, following Przemysław Czapliński, that the figure of 2.4 billion books in home libraries is exaggerated, the fact remains that reading is still a central part of home life.

Those who grew up amongst books, listened to fairy tales read by their parents, saw people reading and talking about books, listened to how their parents and their acquaintances discussed books or recommended them to each other, will read, buy and borrow books. Perhaps not every adult who reads took this pleasure from home, however if an adult does not read, then they were most likely reared in an environment deprived of books (Czapliński, 2007, p. 81).

Traditions of home reading were always an integral part of family life amongst the Polish intelligentsia, and research on reading in the city and countryside indicates that this tradition is continuing. Here public libraries have played a key role by inviting older readers to read

to small children or to relate stories from the past, by which the histories and traditions of towns and villages are passed on to the younger generations.

ELECTRONIC MEDIA

The clash of print and cyber worlds is visible not only in individual observation, but is borne out by national and international statistics.

According to the findings of the American company NOP-World, in 2004-2005 the average resident of Earth watched TV for 16.6 hrs a week, worked on the computer for 8.9 hrs, listened to the radio for 6.5 hrs, and devoted 6.5 hrs devoted to reading. Polish mores are located in this world average, although Indians and Thais are more active readers, 10.7 hrs and 9.4 hrs respectively. Czechs, Russians, Swedes, French and Hungarians also polled high in terms of reading hours.

Following research on the scope of the book in Poland (2006), the popular view was debunked that Internet users were not interested in books. 69% of Internet users declared an interest in reading, whilst amongst those who did not use the Internet only 37% of respondents declared an interest in books. Books are now being sourced in digital libraries, whether virtual or electronic. The Internet now serves as a source of information for the printed book, and browsers can find information on the latest publications, reviews, and recommendations. Purchasing over the Internet has also become a common practice.

Amongst politicians and sociologists the view dominates that the Internet is integral to civilizational development. Representatives of parliament, political parties and numerous foundations are also looking to equip schools with computers with access to the Internet.

Young people are proficient with computers, but librarians can see that and older readers are proving just as adept. Of course, no one can doubt the significance of the cyber world for everything from learning, business, communication and medicine, to military and banking. However, evidence that the Internet is a guarantee of future educational success has yet to be presented.

Librarians are observing that young children are beginning to regard text messages as reading materials, but what is perhaps of greater concern is the fact that teachers and pupils are making recourse to the same internet materials, which are often of dubitable provenance. A good teacher needs to emphasize the value of books. And a good minister for education should withdraw computers from schools. However, nobody will ever do so. Because progress is development (Finkielkraut, 2007).

We are being pressurized by global institutions producing new cyber technologies, having at their disposal unimaginable financial resources for marketing and having achieved absolute dominance over the publishing world. This can be put down to the fact that, as Stanisław Siekierski, writes,

The attractiveness of reading in comparison to other pastimes is systematically decreasing and it seems that this is an unavoidable process. Working for the benefit of other media is the entire machine of mass culture: economic mechanisms are playing a role of no small importance. Implementing new techniques of transmission is generating huge revenues for rich producers... Increasingly, reading in one's leisure time will depend on people's psychological predispositions. It will arise from a conscious choice of lifestyle, from the psychological needs of individuals, and people's aspirations toward independent thought (Siekierski, 2000, p. 182).

The proverb says: "to the clever don't speak, with the rich don't sit down". Television and radio have parted company with the printed word, especially with literature. In order to cross the boundary of their locality, people need only look at a television or computer screen. It is a much simpler option to reading. However, television in Poland enjoys a shared history with Polish theatre. Poland's Theatre Television has made celebrated productions of Polish literary greats: Juliusz Słowacki, Stanisław Wyspiański, Cyprian Kamil Norwid, and Witkacy, to mention but a few. What is more, writers such as Zbigniew Herbert, Ireneusz Iredyński, Stanisław Grochowiak, Jerzy Krzysztoń, and Władysław Terlecki have written plays especially for radio. In the past Polish television and radio have also showcased famous literary works of literature, and in doing so have laid foundations for European cultural integration.

It was George Washington who said that all those who participate in public life must demonstrate a minimum level of intellectual ability, and particularly in the area of reading and writing. He and America's founding fathers knew that literacy and books formed the foundations

for the organisation of communities, but also allowed people to engage in the national project. And so, we may ask again, whether text messages address the lofty expectations that nations hold for their peoples.

THE LITERARY TRADITION AND FREEDOMS OF CHOICE

The organizational changes taking place in institutions providing access to the book are of a dynamic character, and are informed by educational structures, library and bookshop networks and storage facilities. Distribution methods have changed, and the same obtains for the publishing market. The interests of the reading public have also undergone a revolution of sorts. Up until 1998 readership tastes had a uniform character. These tastes had been principally formed by the school curricula which had selected literary texts. The said choice of texts was intended to link past and present and forge a path to the future.

In the Polish People's Republic, even though it may seem as having been contradictory to the governing ideology, contrary to ideological establishments of the ruling party, publishing and educational policies supported the idea of nurturing the country's historical and literary traditions. Indeed, generations of Poles obtained a vision of their history through 19th-century works of literature. However, literature by its very nature presents a simplified or skewed version of history, and many would argue that writers like Henryk Sienkiewicz succeeded in creating a fictional past. This same issue has been mirrored in the cinematic adaptation of Poland's canonical works. Today young people are more familiar with the cinematic versions of these classics, and as a result they see the history of Poland from a two-dimensional perspective, with no appreciation of nuance or symbol. This lack of historical knowledge on the part of young people is compounded by the fact that school texts encourage rote learning. As soon as pupils leave school they are only too happy to forget everything they've learnt.

For half a century, centralized publishing, school curricula, and print distribution were subject to censorship and strict media control. Independent circulation was of course important, particularly after 1981, but its scope was principally limited to the bigger cities. In many provincial libraries underground books and magazines of all forms were well known to select read-

ers and librarians, albeit this same fact did not betray a systematic knowledge in terms of social, political or cultural issues.

After 1990, this entire system collapsed and there emerged a free market for books and the press. Not only did countless publishing companies spring up, but the new era saw a lifting of national censorship, amendments to school curricula, and a marked increase in the choice of textbooks. Public libraries were also free to take ownership of their collections.

The choice of books, newspapers and magazines widened and revealed new interests amongst readers. People happily read translations of western literature, principally American. And the Harlequin series in particular benefit from people's thirst for romantic novels. Less popular genres were crime, horror, and literature, DIY, specialist and religious books.

Amongst the most widely-read books in 2004, Harlequin novels collectively fared the best, followed by Harry Potter, Henryk Sienkiewicz's *Trilogy* [Trylogia], *The Teutonic Knights* [Krzyżacy], and *Quo Vadis*, Adam Mickiewicz's *Master Tadeusz* [Pan Tadeusz], J.R.R. Tolkien's *Lord of the Rings*, Katarzyna Grochola's *Never Ever* [Nigdy w życiu], and Umberto Eco's *The Name of the Rose* (Straus & Wolff, 2006, p. 48). From this brief conspectus one can already see, that school curriculum titles and fiction titles together composed a significant commercial market.

With the creation of a free market, much of the literary output of the Polish People's Republic was destined to be forgotten even amongst students of the library science. Authors such Jarosław Iwaszkiewicz, and a handful of others still enjoy a modest readership, and their works are still to be found on library shelves. However this entire group of writers paid a price for having being so engaged with the communist regime.

THE DECENTRALIZATION OF READERSHIP INTERESTS

Similarly to the production of the book, reading has splintered into several, currents, of which we know little. Elite reading has always been the purview of narrow intellectual groups. Differences in readerships repertoires are obvious. That said, the distance between general and elite reading is expanding. It is not just a question of reading preferences, wherein some peo-

ple prefer light reads over more exiguous material, but in the way that people see and assess culture. Gustaw Holoubek so writes,

I am in favour of the deep humanization of education on all levels of the teaching [...] with a need to shape Poland's entire system of education. If I have attempted to arrive at a title for this proposal, I would call it The Great Return and Continuation. A return to the most enlightened examples of the past, which links us to the culture of the Mediterranean, the cradle of our European values. For continuity, I would look to progress in science and culture and to the new ways of acquiring knowledge (Holoubek, 2004).

His is not a solitary voice. Professor Tadeusz Gadacz and Professor Barbara Skarga advocate the reintroduction of philosophy to secondary schools. Zygmunt Kubiak believes we should read the works of ancient Greece. Of course, the voices of the cyber era may regard such exhortations as fanciful, and perhaps they have a point. After all, the country needs managers, computer specialists, designers, brokers, and not experts on ancient writings. But in the long-term dissociating ourselves from our cultural roots will have terrible consequences, including the impoverishment of the language, the loss of collective identity, and other unforeseeable consequences.

With such a short-sighted view of elite culture, doubts have been voiced about the accumulation and conservation of library collections, the creation of bibliographical sources and the entire IT system of information relating to manuscripts, old prints, musicale and the like. However, librarians trust that future generations will enjoy the fruits of their efforts, provided, of course, that the coming generations are appropriately educated. This life-long formation should begin with the family, and continue on through nursery school, primary and secondary school, university, and adult learning.

It is fitting to mention that fantasy and sci-fi literature enjoy a broad and passionate readership, which has established many cyber forums and organised conventions. It is without doubt a cultural elite, which boasts members from the highest echelons of scientific and professional accomplishment (Sułkowska, 2006). The story of poetry in Poland is more colourful. Apart from those poets who are required reading in schools, most other poets are largely unknown. In the years 2001-03, 709 publishers located in 227 centres throughout the country published 1,445 books of poetry. Much poetic activity is centred around public libraries and community

cultural centres, where poets, young and old, come together to participate in poetry readings and competitions. They also publish their poems in local newspapers and magazines. It is not possible for all aspiring young poets to publish in established poetry revues. However, the very participation of young people represents a great contribution to collective cultural enterprise.

What is happening in libraries has also its own historical reference. In a local public library the past is something tangible. Cultural evenings organised by libraries revive the memories of local events which took place in the distant or recent past. Such activities place young people in a familiar space, and increases their own sense of place within their local environs.

Versions of history are taken on trust, people who record and relate history bear witness to the past. They hold the cherished memories of family, community and nation. This is the world which librarians will continue to facilitate and nurture.

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ON THE CONTEMPORARY RESEARCH STATUS OF BOOK, LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCES

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KEYWORDS: Book Science. Library Science. Information Science. Discipline evolution. Multilingual discipline nomenclature. Contemporary tendencies. Bibliography. Bibliology. Historical bibliography. Functional bibliography. Library science. Information and communication models of bibliography. The culture of the book. Research categories.

ABSTRACT: The facts and processes concerning the world of books, libraries and librarianship, as well as written information and communication, have gradually become the subject matter of academic discussion, gaining autonomy in distinct disciplines with the passing of time. The multitude and variability of these disciplines, their constant evolution as well as their character and problems, varying in different countries, make it difficult to present one consistent image of the research status quo. Ever progressing in different forms and intensity, the processes of integration, autonomization and specialization in the field of research on books, libraries and information have transformed and created new constructions, in terms of both theory and methodology as well as research practice. The situation is not helped by the confusion in the nomenclature of disciplines, specialities and research trends, magnified by semantic differences in multilingual literature and carelessness in the usage of concepts and terms. Contemporary research in book, library and information sciences is determined and characterized above all by the following phenomena: (1) The multitude and diversity of research problems prevent their location in one “all-embracing” discipline – be it bibliography, library science or information science. These sciences, then, have undergone autonomization, which at the same time does not rule out connections or cooperation; (2) Each of the disciplines, clearly shaped in this field in the last few decades, has a specifically independent status in the world of science owing to its own specific research subject matter, its characteristic concept apparatus and suitable research methods, unique character of relations with other sciences, as well as owing to cognitive and practical aims; (3) Bibliology, library and information problems are of interest to other sciences, especially humanities and social sciences. They constitute an important element of their research efforts and are of great importance to the theory and practice of book, library and information sciences. A special role is to be performed by (heterogeneous and “polymorphous”) sciences on culture, (social) communication and means of communication (“media science”); (4) In sciences dealing with books, libraries and information, there is a clear division between historical and contemporary problems. Strongly developed, historical bibliography studies the book as a creation and tool of human civilization, a product of material and spiritual culture and an instrument of social communication in the history of humankind; (5) The increase in the knowledge of facts in book, library and information sciences is not yet accompanied by appropriately developed theoretical and methodological afterthoughts, which could allow intensifying research and elevating the importance of the aforementioned sciences.

Taking up the problem of the present-day condition of book, library and information sciences, we have to begin with a brief flashback. The facts and processes concerning the world of books, libraries and library science as well as written information and communication have gradually become the subject matter of academic consideration, gaining autonomy in distinct disciplines, specialities and research trends as time went by. In the follow-

ing stages of science development, they appeared under different names, were singled out according to various criteria and pursued with variable intensity. Many of them remained merely at the level of theoretical or terminological proposals. It is assumed that bibliography was the first, yet not entirely shaped, form of the (future) book, library and information sciences and that they entered the age of maturity in the 19th century as library science. Such a shortcut does not reflect the whole variety of historical events and theoretical concepts, which created these disciplines, their particular specialities and research trends.

The multitude and variability of these disciplines, their constant evolution, as well as their character and problems, varying in different countries, make it difficult to present one consistent image of the research status quo. Constantly progressing in different forms and intensity, the processes of integration, autonomization and specialization in the field of research on books, libraries and information have changed the hitherto state of affairs and created new constructions, on the grounds of both theory and methodology as well as research practice.

The description of the situation is not facilitated by the confusion in the nomenclature of disciplines, specialities and research trends, magnified by semantic differences in multilingual literature and carelessness in using concepts and terms. Although it might seem that it was a long time ago when everything that related to the book was encompassed by the term “bibliography, it can still denote the total knowledge of the world of books. It is characteristic of literature in the English language where bibliography, especially along with the adjective “historical” or “theoretical”, denotes exactly the general knowledge of books, whereas “bibliographic(al) studies” should be understood as bibliographic(al) research (Pol. badania księgoznawcze). Also in the case of other authors writing in different languages, the meaning of the word “bibliography” is close to the term “bibliology”. There is also a tradition of placing bibliological issues under the name of library science; it was consolidated by the institutionalization of library science as a faculty at universities. As a result, in literature (as well as in catalogues and databases, which generates already serious trouble in searching practice!) purely bibliological problems that have nothing in common with libraries can be found in the entries “library science” and “librarianship” (Fr. bibliothéconomie, Rus. библиотековедение, etc). The names, which are given to issues belonging to bibliology as well as library and information sci-

ences within the limits of other scientific disciplines, in turn, usually have an occasional character, and their inaccuracy and variety make it impossible to find any clearer tendencies here. The term “book market” may sometimes come in handy to a sociologist who is writing about the book, even when his description encompasses also publishing, library and readership issues; a cultural historian uses the term “circulation of the book” to name all bibliological problems of the epoch he is interested in; a literary historian will mention at times “the reception of literature” when he touches upon other bibliological issues (works of art as books – published, censored, purchased, collected and, finally, read).

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Contemporary research in book, library and information sciences is determined and characterized above all, as it seems, by the following phenomena:

1. The multitude and diversity of research problems prevent their location in one “all-embracing” discipline – be it bibliography, library science or (scientific) information science. For the past few years in particular, these sciences have undergone autonomization, which at the same time does not rule out connections or cooperation. The formation process of separate disciplines resulted from the need to clearly specify their characteristic research problems and it most often meant looking for the most important, central research paradigm.
2. Each of these disciplines, clearly shaped in the field of book, library and information sciences, has had a specifically independent status in the world of science over the past few decades, owing to their own specific research subject matter, characteristic concept apparatus and suitable research methods, unique character of connections with other sciences as well as owing to cognitive and practical aims. It also has its own experts and institutions.
3. Bibliology, library and information problems are of interest to other sciences as well, especially humanities and social sciences. They also constitute an important element of their research efforts and are of great importance to the theory and practice of book, library and information sciences. A special role is to be performed by (heterogeneous and “polymorphous”) historical sciences,

sciences on culture, (social) communication and means of communication (“media science”).

4. In sciences concerned with books, libraries and information, there is a clear methodological and institutional division into historical and contemporary problems. At the same time, we can notice global tendencies to integrate historical and contemporary problems. This is taking place owing to university curricula, team research programmes, the activity of academic associations and the integrative role of periodicals. The significance of the history of libraries and librarianship as an inseparable element of current librarianship aspects, or the importance of the history of the book in educating printing and “book industry” workers are only some of the examples.
5. The increase in the knowledge of facts in book, library and information sciences is not yet accompanied by appropriately developed theoretical and methodological afterthoughts, which could allow for the intensifying of research and the elevating of the aforementioned sciences. The abundance of multilingual publications does not go hand in hand with their academic value. Suffice to compare them with the character and standard of writing in other humanities and social sciences (e.g. the theory of the book in view of the theory of literature, or a study in readership processes from the viewpoint of bibliology and library science in comparison with the psychological or sociological perspective). Over the past few years or decades, however, some significant positive changes have taken place in several countries.
6. Book, library and information sciences, as disciplines which deal with important cultural products and tools, are faced with a number of tasks. They prove necessary to other sciences and social practice since they enrich the knowledge of the world of man’s creations and participate in the organization of communication processes in society. Once unimaginable, the new possibilities are available to these sciences by means of the computerization of the world of books, libraries and information.

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The perceived tendencies mentioned above visibly take place in the field of bibliological research. Contemporary book science (or “bibliology proper”, as older authors would say)

was formed owing to the takeover of the discipline's hitherto theoretical and methodological output, which led to the creation of new research paradigms. Since the book is a historical phenomenon and bibliography was born as a historical science, its most developed part today, which is also equipped with suitable methods and cognitively attractive, is historical bibliography (the history of the book) with all its specialized detailed disciplines whose subject matter is the phenomenon of the book in the history of humankind. In contemporary bibliography, the historical trend is closely connected with the philological trend, where the world of books is important as it consolidates and transfers language and literature. It is in the research on the text and on the circulation of literature that the great potential of bibliological studies is particularly revealed.

At the same time, the book is a social fact so cognitive categories such as "the book in society", "the book and society" or "the social function of the book" turned out useful in bibliography. One of the most influential concepts in the past few decades, the so called functional bibliography concept, derives from the sociological trend. It tends to treat the book (and "the universe of books" in general) not only as a historical and social fact but also as the actual and potential realization of its roles. The functional perspective constitutes a useful key to the explication of the genesis and evolution of the book ("the universe of books" in general) and to the description of roles that books perform. It also explains, assesses and generalizes the mechanisms of individual and collective life appearing in bibliological phenomena.

The development of information and communication sciences taking place in the last few decades told bibliologists to pay attention to the potential and properties of the book as a tool for consolidating information and means of communication and it resulted in the appearance of information and communication bibliography models. Again, it extended the scope of the research subject matter beyond the traditional book (e.g. Paul Otlet considered as such any document, Robert Estivals – *écrit*, i.e. the written, whereas numerous English, American and German writers – printed media, printed records, *Printmedien*) and concentrated research efforts principally on the issues of transfer and reception. Although the informative and communicative perspective led to an enhancing of the arsenal of bibliological terms it also resulted in excellent outcomes in not only historical but also

theoretical and contemporary works. In turn, it could not be absolutized as a central or (especially) unique research attitude.

As time went by, it turned out that this viewpoint, recognized as the “final target” in search of the central research category subject of bibliological research by certain academic circles, could not explain all curiosities and properties of the book – this special product and tool of human culture which has various connections with man and the world of man’s creations. Again, then, they paid attention to the value of the cultural perspective for bibliological research. We say this again because for at least one hundred years books, printing, libraries and readership have been connected with the word “culture” in the literature of humanities in many countries. The compound “book and culture” has gradually become the central concept in book studies and, although it expresses diverse concepts and realizations, at a certain level of generalization it is based on fairly homogeneous theoretical considerations.

The usefulness of the term “the culture of the book” for specifying the subject and character of bibliology arises from the fact that it can encompass and concentrate all material and spiritual aspects of the book and the world of books. It defines a single book and collections of books (the whole edition, publishing repertoire, bookshop assortment, “the universe of books” in general) as creations of material, technical and spiritual culture since, as Karol Głombiowski observed, “only when related to the whole material and spiritual culture will the role of book be revealed entirely as a tool facilitating the maintenance, integration and historical continuity of society with the aid of its characteristic means” (Głombiowski, 1970, p. 24). The matter is also perceived in this way by the German literature historian and bibliologist Paul Raabe, for whom *Buchkultur* is “historically shaped, encompassing a substantial part of cultural life, related to the intensely interacting totality and presence of the world of books, [...] whereas the production, dissemination and functioning of books constitute the centre of book culture” (Raabe, 2001, p. 27).

“The culture of the book”, becoming the central research subject matter in bibliology, affords us a full and in-depth description of the phenomenon of the book as a creation and tool of culture, and of including the whole world book heritage in its various manifestations and functions. Placed among other cultural phenomena, it corroborates its signifi-

cance in the development of civilization, which is not perceived in all its scope today. The search for religious, political, economic and other cultural determinants is accompanied by a discovery of the significance of books in many spheres of individual and communal life: for the purpose of the development and codification of languages, the standardization of law and liturgy, the dissemination of philosophical, political and religious ideas, the popularization of education. The specificity of different forms of the culture of the book is revealed along with their tradition, continuity or episodic character, their attractiveness for other cultures, expansion or disappearance.

“The culture of the book” may be a central concept for different interpretations:

- theoretical (the theory of the book as a subject, tool and function in culture),
- historical (the history of the book culture in different epochs),
- spatial (the culture of the book as in cities, regions, countries, nations, etc.),
- individual (man’s culture of the book, from his childhood till the “third age”),
- collective and social (the culture of the book of social classes, occupational and religious groups etc.),
- prognostic.

The usefulness of the term “the culture of the book” as a subject and main research category is confirmed by numerous derivatives emerging in the international literature on humanities. Consequently, we come across such terms as “the culture of handwriting” and “writing culture” (Ger. *Schriftkultur*), most frequently in medieval studies and socio-linguistics, “print culture” and “typographical culture” (Ger. *typographische Kultur*), “editorial culture”, “bibliographical culture” (e.g. in the historiography of literature), “library culture” and “readership culture” (the two last terms can be most frequently encountered in the history of culture, but also in bibliology, sociology or literature science).

The contemporary bibliology is often situated in a broader scope of problems concerning the “written word” (Fr. *écrit*) as well as its creation and reception, which consequently results in the emergence of such research categories as “written communication” (Fr. *communication écrite*), “script and society”, “the power of the written word”. It also entailed the intensification of multidirectional research on the history of readership.

Subsequently, the issues of the “revolution” in the world of books draw our attention especially when it comes to the transition from the handwritten book to the printed one (typographical revolution) as well as from the printed book to its electronic version (electronic revolution). New research categories have appeared in the history of printing and printed books: “printing press as an agent of change”, “printing as a catalyst of cultural transformations” (Ger. *Buchdruck als Katalysator kulturellen Wandels*), “typographical culture as a diversified information system” (Ger. *typographische Kultur als differenziertes Informationssystem*). A new concept of “material culture of the text” derives from the long established Anglo-American tradition of historical bibliography; in Italian literature, “the philology of printed texts” (*filologia dei testi a stampa*) appeared alongside the former “bibliography of the text” (*bibliografia testuale*), etc. Responding to the needs of humanities and the interests of the public (which by the way have not been explicitly expressed), for the last few years bibliography has elaborated many other, once unknown, research categories, e.g. “the book as a visual space”, “the word and image in the book”, “the book as an (information) system”, “the book as the national (and world) heritage”, “the book as the memory of/for the future”, “the typology of books”. There is also a tendency to specify and improve such research categories as “political bibliography”, “bibliolinguistics”, “multilingualism in the world of books”, “the ethnic book”, “the ecology of the book”, “the role of the book in international relations”, “the book as a globalization factor”, “the extermination of the book” (*bibliocide, libricide*). The realization of research programmes falling into these entries requires the incorporation of completely new tools into the bibliologist’s workshop which come from the field of many sciences, and not only humanities or social sciences. Further expansion and improvement of the historiography of the book, and bibliography as a certain whole, are possible owing to the newly revealed and interpreted sources and, especially, new questions that address them. For problems and research areas, such as typology of the book, book policy, the ethnic book, the book in communication processes, the book as an element of the national and world heritage or the book and other media, are of importance not only for learning the history of the book (culture) but also for the organization of the contemporary book system.

The dynamic development of new research trends in bibliography and also of the elaboration of studies in traditional fields of its interests has resulted in an enormous increase in literature. A special role in the discipline, also as its “flagship” outside, is performed by great collections such as historical syntheses like *Histoire de l'édition française* (Paris 1982-1986, vol. 1-4) or *The Cambridge History of the Book in Britain* (Cambridge 1999-2002, vol. 3-4), encyclopaedias – let us just mention *Lexikon des gesamten Buchwesens* (the 2nd edition, Stuttgart 1987; so far 7 volumes up to “U”) and *Dictionnaire encyclopédique du livre* (Paris 2002; so far 2 volumes up to “M”), bibliographies, terminological dictionaries and book series.

Self-awareness of the discipline is increasing, which is visible not only in the studies in its theory and methodology but also in discovering and rereading old writers. The new editions of fundamental bibliographical works by Mikołaj Rubakin, Paul Otlet, Mikołaj Kufajew and others allow the new incorporation of important texts, constituting the building materials of contemporary bibliography, into academic circulation.

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THE POTENTIAL OF ONLINE LIBRARY CATALOGUES FOR SUPPORTING OPPORTUNISTIC ACQUISITION OF INFORMATION PERTAINING SCHOLARLY LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT: The article includes a description and analysis of empirical research, which by comparative means looked to determine the potential of various solutions for academic libraries in configuring the interfaces of online catalogues in support of opportunistic acquisition of information pertaining to scholarly literature. The research consisted of experiments using 22 different search instructions and an analysis of the results of other encountered sources. The research was carried out from May to July 2007 in 33 Polish libraries based on 8 different computer systems. The research allowed for the establishing of links between applied solutions in OPAC, the form of search instruction and the chances of discovering publications which are not able to satisfy the needs of an intentional and deliberate search, but can satisfy or even inspire other information needs of library users.

INFORMATION ACQUIRED ACCIDENTALLY AND INTENTIONALLY – A THEORETICAL OVERVIEW

Opportunistic encountering of information has already been the subject of various research papers, both as an independent concept, as well as part of an elaboration of other theories pertaining to library and information science. Here we may recall the so-called everyday information behaviour, the concept of information territories or personal information management (Erdelez, 2005). There isn't place here for a deeper analysis of the tangential issues of opportunistic acquisition of information, but at least a few words should be said on the most important differences between accidental and intentional acquisition of information.

Within the theory of information behaviour, the informed, deliberate, intentional and active seeking of information is in the centre of attention. In consequence, tools for searching, or indeed entire information systems, are usually evaluated in respect of active searching conducted by their users, particularly in categories of ability to satisfy consciously defined information requirements or provide relevant replies to information enquiries or search instructions. Such behaviours are not the only way of obtaining information and even researchers not dealing directly with the issue of opportunistic acquisition of information have noted the importance of passive encountering (Wilson, 1999, p. 257).

Since however the very phenomenon of opportunistic acquisition of information is not uniform, the research required a definitive and interpretive basis. To this end, I made recourse to few theoretical models of information behaviour which, generally speaking, take into account such a form of information acquisition (Foster, 2005; McKenzie, 2002). Simultaneously, on account of the conjecture that there is very little chance of finding information about scholarly literature when not searching for it at all (such information, as a rule, is distributed via dedicated channels, which are usually used only purposely), I sought to narrow my understanding of opportunistic acquisition of information to a situation wherein the finding of specific sources is an additional result or alternate aim. The most inspiring model was that proposed by Sanda Erdelez (2004, pp. 1015-1016), where opportunistic acquisition is treated as an adjunct to information search, the diverging aim being the purpose of the search.

PURPOSE AND METHODS OF RESEARCH

The research was empirical and comparative, determining the potential of various solutions applied in the configuration of the interfaces of online library catalogues in the scope of supporting opportunistic acquisition of information pertaining to scholarly literature. In other words, the focus of interest was the possibility of retrieving unsought information **while** deliberately searching for well defined information about scholarly literature in library catalogues. Here we looked to assess the extent to which applied solutions in OPAC facilitate such discoveries. However, what this research did not look at is the actual role of discoveries of this type in the cognitive process of the user: noticing and absorbing such information and the influence of the size, scope and reach of catalogue databases on the number and character of accidentally retrieved titles (limited to an analysis of the consequence of not finding relevant documents). These findings would undoubtedly be essential to building a more complete picture of the accidental retrieval of scholarly literature in library online catalogues, but would in turn require separate research and the application of different methodology.

Conducted were a sequence of experiments relating to information retrieval pertaining to scholarly literature in selected catalogues of academic libraries (as those most involved in providing access to information about scholarly literature) using different search configurations. The achieved results were subjected to interpretation in terms of their potential value for opportunistic acquisition of information. This research was conducted in the period from May to July 2007, and involved two stages. In the first phase an in-depth review was carried out on occurrences at the point of search in the OPACs of five Polish academic libraries based on different computer systems:

- OPAC of the Jagiellonian Library (The Computer Catalogue of the Jagiellonian University Libraries Collections): <http://www.bj.uj.edu.pl/uj/katalog> – Virtua system (henceforth BJ),
- OPAC of the Poznań University Library (Online Catalogue of the Poznań University Library): <http://150.254.35.111/webpac-1.2-buamPL/wgbroker.exe?new+-access+top> – WebPAC/Horizon system (henceforth BUP),
- OPAC of the Main Library and Scientific Information Centre, Wrocław University of Technology (Main Catalog): <http://aleph.bg.pwr.wroc.pl> – Aleph system (henceforth BPWr),
- OPAC of the Library of Rzeszów University (module: Books): <http://opac.univ.rzeszow.pl> – Prolib system (henceforth BUL),

- OPAC of the Main Library of Opole University (Catalogue of Books of the Main Library): <http://www.bg.uni.opole.pl/sowa> – Sowa system (henceforth BUO).

This allowed for the re-drawing of search queries applied in experiments (see Appendix 1) and the positing of hypotheses which were then verified in the second phase of the research, where 28 further library catalogues were tested (see Appendix 3).

The selection of catalogues was guided above all by a desire to carry out an analysis based on the different interfaces and configurations offered by different computer systems applied at Polish academic libraries. The idea was to compare the chances that these various solutions create for opportunistic acquisition of information, rather than simply comparing or evaluating alone OPACs, their stores or their ability to satisfy specific user needs.

In spite of the obvious similarities of the solutions applied in the interfaces of catalogues built on the same computer systems, I decided to look at 5 interfaces of different catalogues in the case of systems widely used in academic libraries (Virtua, Horizon, Aleph, Prolib) and 2 that are to be found in those more rarely used (Sowa, Mak, Mol, Tinlib). The adoption of this solution proved its correctness: it allowed for the detection of differences, albeit small in number, but heavy in meaning. Furthermore, it made it possible to identify various informational situations offering new potential for opportunistic acquisition of information.

Since in principle each OPAC featured in this study offered various possibilities for formulating a search query, the actual number of performed experiments was much larger – they were all repeated in configurations of available modes and search options which generate other replies or show the same replies, albeit in a different way. However, separate experiments were not performed for those configurations which differed only in a graphic form, and as such, did not affect the search results. Observation was narrowed to the direct response of the systems to a given enquiry. I did not look at consequences arising from the possibility of further interactions. In other words, the results and conclusions presented here refer to the informational situation arising from the systems' first reply.

Each set consisted of 18 standard search queries (including 2 alternative ones, applied in the case of unavailability of a given book in the catalogue being searched for) and 4 additional queries tested only in those OPACs which facilitated simultaneous search in a number of indexes. Search queries

were formulated with reference to three hypothetical situations, where the deliberate aim of the search was:

- publications of the chosen author,
- publications with the specific title,
- publications on a specific subject.

The comprehensive list of search queries used in the experiments together with essential explanations are to be found in Appendix 1. In the first phase of the research 15 basic search sets were carried out in the various interface configurations of library catalogues listed above (see Appendix 2).

RELEVANCE AND PERTINENCE

A precise determination of the way of differentiation between intended search results as opposed to “unsolicited” or unexpected ones, constituted immediate object of research and analysis. And so, it was necessary to make recourse to the issue of information needs. The point of departure was the conviction that the specificity of a given opportunity to meet information needs could cause both a lowering of the level of the need, which at that particular moment is impossible to satisfy, and an increase in the level of this one which could be met in a given situation (Próchnicka, 1991, pp. 30-31).

Erdelez, when formulating a theory relating to encountering information, based this on the assumption that the searching person has many information requirements, but on account of their inability to narrow their focus to a specific purpose, these other needs remain dormant. The accidental discovery of information associated with some of these needs may cause rotation, which involves moving needs to a new centre of interest (Erdelez, 2004, pp. 1015-1016). The consequence of accepting such a point of view is the division of searched information into three basic groups dependent on their ability to satisfy different information requirements:

1. Information capable of meeting requirements being the main reason for an intentional and deliberate search.
2. Information capable of meeting other information needs.
3. Information inadequate to any information needs of an information seeker.

On account of the purpose of this research, I excluded the first category, as referring to information intentionally retrieved, rather than by chance. However, the precise presentation of the two remaining categories requires terminological remarks, peculiarly referring to the notions of relevance and pertinence.

The term “relevant” is used in literature so often and in such different contexts, that it is hard to talk about its explicit meaning. Indeed, it is often defined in a general and ambiguous way, (e.g. ASIS&T Thesaurus, 2005, p. 111). The discrepancy in its definition principally relates to its point of reference – for some authors relevantness means compliance with the search query, while for others it pertains to information requirements. In *Słownik encyklopedyczny informacji, języków i systemów informacyjno-wyszukiwawczych* [Encyclopedic Lexicon of Information and Information Retrieval Languages and Systems], 4 kinds of relevance were distinguished: technical, semantic, pragmatic and logical (Bojar, ed., 2002, pp. 229-231).

For the purposes of this research “relevant” will be understood in the category of technical relevance, “that is of relations, which in the information set [...] of a given information retrieval system selects a subset of information, in which for each piece of information a condition of no lesser accordance (similarity) with the search query than that established for the given system is fulfilled” (Bojar, ed., 2002, p. 231). I adopted, in turn, the principle of full syntactic conformity of a search query with the content of bibliographical descriptions. And so, all replies (index terms, bibliographical descriptions) shown by online catalogues which did not contain words or phrases used in the search queries will be named as irrelevant in further deliberations.

However “pertinent” will be understood in categories of pragmatic relevance, i.e. the relation “arising between information retrieved by the system [...] and the user of information, and particularly his information needs” (Bojar, ed., 2002, p. 230). It will be used here for naming this retrieved information (be it relevant or not) which can contribute to the direct satisfaction of the information need being the direct purpose of a given search.

Accepting such an understanding of pertinence meant the need to solve one more terminological dilemma: namely how to label information which is able to satisfy information requirements dormant at that particular moment, not being the direct purpose of a search. Below, in order to differentiate from pertinent and non-pertinent information, I will use the term “quasi-pertinent”.

The assessment of pertinence (and quasi-pertinence) requires a closer definition of the informational situation of the searcher. Even in the case of a relatively straightforward search for the publications of an author, it may happen that the publications of two different authors with the same surnames and names and on the same subject (or a few publications of one author but representing different areas of his/her interests – e.g. scientific and poetry) will be found. And so, here I will understand quasi-pertinent as information which simultaneously:

- is not appropriate in relation to the need, for which satisfaction constitutes the basic aim of the search,
- concerns scholarly literature in one chosen discipline (here of library and information science) – so it means, that can potentially satisfy other information needs of the searcher which are connected with scholarly literature.

From the perspective of opportunistic acquisition of information, the completely non-pertinent results (that is, those which do not satisfy the need being the direct reason of the search, or indeed the other information needs pertaining to scholarly interest), cannot be treated as completely unwanted by-products of the search. Adopting a reverse outlook is necessary – results of this type may not immediately interest the searcher, but can prove to be inspiring and give rise to new information requirements. Endowing them with a potentially positive role in the process of obtaining information about scholarly literature as opposed to “completely non-pertinent”, they may be labelled as being “potentially inspiring”. To sum up, information accidentally retrieved (that is “opportunistic”, “unsolicited”) fulfils any of the 4 following conditions:

- I. Relevant and potentially inspiring.
- II. Relevant and quasi-pertinent.
- III. Irrelevant and potentially inspiring.
- IV. Irrelevant and quasi-pertinent.

It should be emphasized here that findings and conclusions presented in the following parts of this paper concern exclusively this kind of opportunistic acquisition of information and refer only to search situations defined in this way. One should not, without verification, stretch them to all possible situations associated with retrieval information about scholarly literature. One must also remember that this research was aimed at defining conditions for opportunistic acquisition of information about publications in selected configurations of the interfaces of library online cata-

logues, and not at understanding the scale and mode of the factual use of this potential by scholars or the subjective value of various accidentally encountered information. Researching the potential of search tools, I looked at the chances for opportunistic acquisition of information, not at the phenomenon itself.

RESEARCH FINDINGS

The first general conclusion relates to all analysed situations in all 33 researched catalogues. Irrespective of the content of search queries and the chosen configuration of modes and options of searching, the interfaces of these catalogues show no information about literature independently of a currently conducted search. And so, there are not links, advertisements or references to the latest publications, other books offered etc., typical for search engines or internet bookstore services. The obvious conclusion entails limiting the scope of the information returns by the catalogues exclusively to the specific effects of the direct search (aside from information relating to using the system), and thus narrows the chances for opportunistic acquisition of information. What is more, traditional card catalogues functioned in a specific environment, which in respect of its space could be used whether consciously or not for the stimulation of information encountering. Notices or exhibitions of recent publications and events could happily be located in catalogue rooms or, in turn, the catalogues could stand by shelves in reading rooms, or in a system of free access. A relatively small computer screen simply does not provide such possibilities – in effect the environment for OPAC users is not a library space, but a real world surrounding a monitor, which provides stimuli rather not controlled by catalogue providers. Although one could regard the virtual environment (library websites, WWW as the whole...) as the natural surrounding of any OPACs, but such an environment is different to that of the real world – catalogues and their virtual environment can not be seen at the same time!

The situation is rather like looking through a keyhole – it is necessary to open the door in order to see more. Possible stimuli derived from virtual environment will not reach the recipient without his conscious decision: without clicking on the chosen link or navigational button (not counting, of course, the different forms of so-called spam). They cannot, therefore, be treated as factors affecting the potential of online catalogues for fostering opportunistic acquisition of information.

The next general conclusion pertains to presentations of search results. The available configurations of modes and search options in the researched catalogues can be divided into two groups: those

which lead to a showing of the answer in the so-called intermediate screens (the relevant excerpts of indexes), and those whose search results are presented in the direct showing of abbreviated bibliographical descriptions. The majority of the catalogues offer configurations using both solutions. Out of the 28 interfaces tested in the second phase of the research, as many as 27 ones facilitated the choice of the configuration of modes and search options which led to a showing of appropriate index fragments. These are usually search options conducted separately in different indexes. As many as 26 tested interfaces allowed for the selection of modes and options leading to the direct showing of found bibliographical records. As a rule these are different forms of simultaneous searches in a number of indexes, at least for example in catalogues built on the Aleph system. Here bibliographical descriptions are shown when searching separately in certain indexes (modes: "Simple", "Simple searching") (see Appendix 3). Whether index fragments or bibliographical descriptions appear depends on the choice of the configuration of modes and search options. Only in one case (the Central Catalogue of Warsaw University of Technology, mode "Simple search", indexes: words in the title, author, keywords) was there a dependence on the mode of result sets. In the event of finding relevant documents, the system presents bibliographical descriptions, and in the case of not finding such documents, the relevant excerpts of a given index are retrieved.

This distinguishing is important in terms of the research findings. As a rule the adoption of one of these solutions accompanies other solutions directly affecting the ability of systems to "draw up" for users the information that hasn't been searched for, which can be quasi-pertinent or potentially inspiring. Of course, it is also essential from the perspective of differences in the direct perception of index entries and entire bibliographical descriptions, coupled with their ability to directly inspire the user. Indeed, it was also seen that the chances for encountering unsolicited information also depended on whether the given system found relevant documents in its sources, or not.

The research and OPAC interface analysis distinguished a few essential search situations relating to potentially supporting opportunistic acquisition of information, which may come to the fore depending on the entanglement of these two factors (table 1).

Table 1. The occurrence of different situations of various potential for opportunistic acquisition of information depended on the mode of presenting results and the availability of relevant information in catalogues (typical solutions in bold)

Modes of presentation of results Search results	Intermediate screens (index fragments)	Bibliographic description
Lack of relevant results	P1. Lack of information P2. Fragment of index without relevant search words	B1. Lack of information B2. Bibliographic descriptions related to the index entries closest to the relevant one in the given index.
Retrieval of relevant results	P3. Only relevant index entries P4. Index fragment including a relevant entry	B3. Only relevant bibliographical descriptions B4. Relevant bibliographical descriptions as well as descriptions related to the closest entries in the index.

Here we are dealing with a high degree of regularity. Indeed, solutions differing from the norm were exceptional. The situations assigned with symbols P1 and P3 were observed only in 5 researched configurations, and those marked with symbols B2 and B4 were stated exclusively in BUO for the option “the closest alphabetically” (see Appendix 2). Such a solution is unavailable in the two other researched catalogues based on the SOWA system (see Appendix 3). On this level of deliberation, it can be stated that the configurations applied in the catalogues leading to immediately-shown bibliographical descriptions are certainly disadvantageous in respect of opportunistic acquisition of information, because they fail to provide “unsolicited” information. On the other hand, configurations leading to the presentation of index fragments offer great potential for opportunistic acquisition of information – in the vast majority of cases, apart from or instead of relevant entries, they suggest other headings.

RELEVANT AND IRRELEVANT RESULTS

Out of the mentioned situations, the first two (table 1, situations P1 and B1) may be eliminated from our deliberations as being of no value in terms of opportunistic acquisition of information. These represent doubly disadvantageous situations for the user – not only not finding the object of the search but with no prospect for opportunistic acquisition of information. It is worth noting, that these unfavourable situations obtains also for configurations which lead to the direct showing of bibliographical descriptions (such as in BUWr or BUO for the option “with fixed beginning”), as well as those which show the user intermediate screens (as in some searches in BUR). However,

the first case is the standard (in all cases researched in the second phase – see Appendix 3), and the second one is rather exceptional (5 cases out of the 28 examined). In other words, if the system directly shows bibliographical descriptions, one can be almost sure that in the event of not finding relevant descriptions it will show an empty screen or, as in the case of the majority of researched here catalogues based on the Aleph system, there will be no response at all, leaving the user in uncertainty about the search results. And inversely, if it is configured to show intermediate screens, it most often shows the closest fragment of the appropriate index (table. 1, situation P2) – the closest means that in which the relevant entry would be if it were in the index at all.

This doesn't mean, however, that the configuration of any interfaces leading directly to the showing of bibliographical descriptions entirely undoes the possibility of applying favourable solutions for opportunistic acquisition of information (also for situations, where there are no relevant results). Applying the additional search option proposed in BUO “the closest alphabetically” brings about in this case the showing of bibliographical descriptions associated with the closest relevant entries in the given index (table. 1, B2 situation). In this situation searching for the title *Architektura informacji w serwisach internetowych* [Information Architecture for the World Wide Web] (unavailable in the catalogue) does not lead to the showing of an empty screen, but to the showing of book descriptions whose titles begin with the word “architektura” [architecture] (e.g. *Architektura klasztorów cysterskich na Śląsku* [The Architecture of Cistercian Monasteries in Silesia], *Architektura komputerów* [The Architecture of Computers] etc.). Admittedly, in this particular case, the retrieved documents may only be potentially inspiring, because none of them have anything in common with either online services or information science. But by searching for the subject heading (index: “Headings”) “methodology of information science”, all found books (on visual information and on classified information), can be treated as quasi-pertinent, even though none were relevant. And so, it is a valuable solution for opportunistic acquisition of information. The question remains whether the user will use this option if the default one “with fixed beginning” is established, leading in the earlier cases to the direct showing of empty screens. By configuring the interface in this way, the potential of such library catalogues for opportunistic acquisition of information becomes hidden from their users. Taking advantage of this potential requires co-activity on the part of the user: serendipity is not purely accidental.

In turn, for configurations leading to the showing of fragments of appropriate indexes, the lack of a given entry represents an opportunity for noticing quasi-relevant or potentially inspiring headings and for opening new “paths” to books not purposely searched for, but valuable for the user.

Searching for “methodology of information science” in the index “KABA Subject Headings” in BJ catalogue brings up ten irrelevant search results, which are of great potential for the user. Clicking on each of them may lead to quasi-pertinent, potentially inspiring, and in the case of search words “the methodology of sciences”, even pertinent information objects. On the other hand, there are also some exceptions. One of them is the BUR catalogue, which, in the case of a failure to find a relevant answer, shows an empty screen, and what is more, offers the additional option “precise”. It is accessible by searching in the index “Subject headings” and leads to an even narrower set of results, thus further limiting the chances of opportunistic finding of an interesting or inspiring book. Choosing this option leads to the showing of entries identical to the search query, also in the area of determiners. And so, if the user searches with the phrase “information science”, in the response he or she will see only one index entry, and will not see all the entries where the heading “information science” is followed by any determiners, e.g. “information science – examination – methods”, “information science – bibliography” etc. Similar solutions, unfavourable for opportunistic information acquisition, are applied in BUO in the configuration with the option “with fixed beginning” activated (searching in the index “Keyword” – in the case of not finding the sought-for keyword, an empty screen is shown).

Generally, where relevant positions are not found, configurations leading directly to the showing of bibliographical descriptions as a rule do not create conditions for opportunistic acquisition of information (empty screens). Conversely, configurations leading to the showing of intermediate screens potentially support such a form of recognition, suggesting information about books which have not been searched for. It is worth noting, however, that this potential becomes apparent in the event that either the stores of the system are too small in terms of the expectations of the user, or when the search query was badly formulated. And so, the researched potential is a consequence of negative occurrences and as such may compensate for the failure to find the precise material – this is a kind of a consolation prize.

In cases where systems find the relevant documents, we are once again dealing with similar converse potentials for supporting opportunistic acquisition of information in both groups of the configuration (see table 1). Even though, in each of them opportunistic acquisition of information is possible, the chances of the occurrence of this phenomenon are various. In both groups the significantly lesser potential is shown where the systems return exclusively relevant replies (descriptions or headings) (see table 1, situations P3 and B3). They are typical for configurations leading to the direct showing of bibliographical descriptions and are exceptional for those which

in response to the enquiry show intermediate screens. In such situations, the possibility of opportunistic acquisition of information pertaining to scholarly literature appears only in the case of an incorrectly or vaguely defined search query, because then relevant but and non-pertinent documents will be shown.

It can so happen that accidental recognition will be the result of a mistake (e.g. giving wrong surname of the author) or a lack of knowledge of the principles of formulating the appropriate queries in the given interface (choosing wrong indexes or options), or a typographical error. It can arise also from a lack of knowledge pertaining to the contents of the given index – for example, name indexes contain not just the surnames of the authors but also the surnames of the editors or translators. The user looking for books written by Maria Dembowska in the Online Catalogue of the University of Warsaw Library, and choosing the author index, typing the search query in the form of “Dembowska Maria”, will receive both information about the books of her authorship, as well as about those she contributed to in other roles (that are quasi-pertinent). A similar occurrence obtains also for when the user searches in the title index, where the index includes also series titles or where searching means not only searching for the beginnings of titles but for all the words from titles, and the user is not informed of the availability of appropriate options (e.g. in the Catalogue of the Library of the University of Białystok or the Central Catalogue of the Central Catalogue of the Main Library of the Medical University of Silesia). Accidentally retrieved information will once again represent here something of a consolation prize.

However, this can also be the consequence of a specific search strategy which involves a minimum of involvement or effort in hope that it may be enough to bring positive effects – a “bonus for lazy-bones”. Irrespective of whether such a strategy is successful or not, finding unsolicited information may constitute a fortuitous outcome. This would happen, for example, when looking for the work authored by Zofia Gaca-Dąbrowska, *Bibliotekarstwo II Rzeczypospolitej: zarys problemów organizacyjnych i badawczych* [Librarianship in the Second Polish Republic: Overview of Organizational and Research Issues] – wherein the search is conducted in title index with the help of only one word.

When using the word “bibliotekarstwo” [librarianship], most of the results (9 from 10 retrieved bibliographical descriptions in BUO and BPWr and headings in BJ and BUP) will be quasi-pertinent – albeit they will not be descriptions of the searched-for book, but of other books relating

to librarianship. Of course, if we use other words or phrases from the title, unrelated to librarianship (e.g. the “II Rzeczpospolita” [Second Polish Republic] or “zarys problemów” [overview of issues]), the records shown in the search result will be rather potentially inspiring than quasi-pertinent. What is more, the chances for opportunistic acquisition of information relating to scholarly literature will still be high.

Another example of the same phenomenon relates to searching “by words” (in a few indexes simultaneously) in BJ – greater are the chances of finding descriptions that have not been searched for when the search query has fewer words or is less precisely constructed. If searching for the book by Maria Dembowska *Nauka o informacji naukowej (informatologia): organizacja i problematyka badań w Polsce* [The Science of Information Science (Informatology): Organisation and Research Issues in Poland] we formulate the search query in the following form: “Dembowska Maria” (author index) and “nauka o informacji” [science of information] (title index), in response we get only one bibliographic description. However, if we limit the search instruction to “Dembowska” (author index) and “science” (title index), the system will additionally show the description of one quasi-pertinent book *Bibliotekarstwo polskie 1925-1951 w świetle korespondencji jego współtwórców* [Polish Librarianship 1925-1951 in the Light of the Correspondence of its Founders]. It is possible to observe the same phenomenon when comparing this with the search results in the author index for the query “Dembowska Maria” and “Dembowska”. Of course, the possibility of a “bonus for lazybones” depends to a large extent on the stores of a given catalogue and the specificity of the search query. If, for example, the only “Dembowska” in the catalogue is “Dembowska Maria”, such a strategy doesn’t increase chances for opportunistic acquisition of information.

In the majority of cases, the systems configured to show intermediate screens, present a certain, fixed number of index entries (most often 10 main headings plus cross references, or 10 entries including cross references, and in 2 cases 20 entries) irrespective of how many founded and presented entries are relevant. The exception in this regard obtains for the Catalogue of Books and Periodicals of the Main Library of the Technical-Humanistic Academy in Bielsko-Biała, whereby in the case of finding relevant entries the system presents all of them (regardless of their number). Such a solution (suggesting other entries in addition to the relevant ones) increases the chances for opportunistic acquisition of information (table 1, situation P4). In this case, different to situations where a given system shows only relevant descriptions or index entries (B3 and P3), opportunistic acquisition of information does not have to be the result of a lack of knowledge or ability, absent-mindedness or a minimalist approach towards formulating the search query. Indeed, it may accom-

pany correctly (from the perspective of information needs dominating at the given moment) formulated queries or even whole search strategies. In such a configuration of modes and search options, the accidental retrieval of information about the existence of any book can be seen as an additional benefit for the user, aside from the actual finding of what he or she deliberately searched for.

An interesting phenomenon can be observed here: because the number of entries presented at once is fixed, the fewer results are relevant, the more likely this solution is better for accidental retrieving of information than those described in situations P3 and B3. In the extreme scenario, if the number of relevant documents are equal or exceed the fixed number of shown entries – the situations P4 and P3 will support opportunistic acquisition of information to the same degree. For example, searching for the book *Informacja naukowa w Polsce: tradycja i współczesność* [Information Science in Poland: Past and Present] in the title index of the BJ catalogue, one will receive the searched-for entry and additionally 7 titles of other books pertaining to information science and two titles of books from other disciplines. The question remains whether a satisfied user will be as interested in other presented entries as another user who fails to find his searched-for book? However, this issue requires separate research and with the application of different methodology.

The solution, that is the showing of relevant and non-relevant descriptions beside one another, is as a rule not applied to those configurations which lead to the showing of bibliographical descriptions (table. 1, situation B4). As mentioned earlier, the possibility of the appearance of such a solution was stated only in BUO with the option of the “closest alphabetically”. A search in the author index for “Oleński Józef” led to the showing of 6 relevant descriptions of books under the authorship of Józef Oleński and of 4 completely non-relevant descriptions, and in no way related to Józef Oleński’s field of scholarly interest. Of course, even those relevant books are not necessarily pertinent ones and can enter the pool of quasi-pertinent and potentially inspiring (table 1, situation B3).

Generally it is justifiable to state that the chances for opportunistic acquisition of information in configurations of modes and search options leading to the showing of bibliographical descriptions are definitely smaller than those that lead directly to indirect screens. However, here it is not justifiable to conclude that this relationship is determinist or even one of cause-and-effect. On the contrary, the research proved that both configurations could be used both in support of and adverse to opportunistic acquisition of information. And so we should take ideas from both solutions, which may improve the chances of opportunistic acquisition of information pertaining to scholarly literature in online academic catalogues.

But if there is no cause-and-effect relationship between these features, it means that their frequent co-occurrence may have another shared cause. It seems that there are some set patterns of thinking characteristic for interface designers, holding true also for those who are responsible for the implementation and choice of a given configuration. According to one pattern, the overarching objective is that of precision and search efficiency, wherein the interface is supposed to take the user to the search target in an accurate manner and with minimum effort. And so this effectively entails the ambition to reduce the number of decisions that the user must make, measured by the number of “clicks” (this is probably why in some catalogues bibliographical descriptions are shown directly with omitting intermediate screens) and to eliminate from his or her perception any potentially distracting information (e.g. irrelevant information).

However, there is also a converse way of thinking. It does not assume that the user knows best what he or she really need and that he or she is able to express this in the form of a correct search query. It rather banks on dialogue, reflection and a holistic approach to the process of information retrieval. And this means that the interface should induce its users to think and make decisions while searching for information (this is why intermediate screens are presented). This also means that not always only directly relevant search results are desirable – also those derived from the environment and unsolicited could be of high value for the user. The adoption of such a concept in the construction of online catalogue interfaces supports opportunistic acquisition of information. Generally, it seems that breaking this dichotomy in thinking would be beneficial for designing more flexible interfaces.

NUMBER OF RESULTS

The next factor conditioning the ability of online library catalogues to “suggest” to the user a quasi-pertinent and potentially inspiring position is the number of results (index entries or bibliographical descriptions) that is shown apart from or instead of pertinent results.

The research has proved that interfaces configured to show directly bibliographical descriptions presents all the retrieved descriptions at once (of course, provided their number does not exceed the set limit which for example in BUW and BUO totals 1,000 descriptions). Conversely, as it was mentioned before, systems configured to present intermediate screens (fragments of indexes)

strictly limits the number of entries presented at once. In such systems relevancy itself does not limit the number of presented entries (as in the systems directly presenting bibliographic descriptions) and this is why some sort of quantitative restriction must be applied, otherwise it would be necessary to show all the entries available in a given index.

Based on research relating to the behaviour of users of Internet search engines, it is known that user interest is focused on web pages to be found at the beginning of the list of results (Ford and others, 2002, pp. 30-31). However, one essential feature differentiates typical library catalogues from search engines – in catalogues there are no ranking mechanisms, and as a rule the alphabet decides on the order of the information displayed. Here the library user cannot anticipate that every next item on the list of results will be less valuable. And so, the number of unsolicited results he or she can notice will depend on where a relevant description or index entry is placed on the list. As a rule, in catalogues tested here this was the first result on the list. Only when searching in the author index (and in BJ also in the remaining indexes) of catalogues built on the Virtua system it was the second position on the list of results. Such a solution increases search efficiency, but hampers opportunistic acquisition of information – the user can simply ignore the remaining (not strictly relevant) results.

AUTHOR OR TITLE?

It is not possible to limit the influence of the configuration of interfaces of library catalogues on the chances for opportunistic acquisition of information exclusively to issues of the showing of irrelevant documents or the number of results placed before the user. The potential of OPACs for opportunistic acquisition of information depends not only on their ability to find and show information that have not been directly searched for but also on the content of what has been found and presented to users within the fragment of index or the set of bibliographic descriptions.

In further deliberations, situations which prevent opportunistic acquisition of information will not be taken into account (table 1, P1 and B1 situations). The starting point for further analysis is the establishing of the scope of bibliographical descriptions shown in those configurations which lead directly to their showing (table 2). Altogether, in 28 researched catalogues, 26 such configurations were identified (see Appendix 3).

Table 2. The scope of bibliographical descriptions shown in response to searches carried out in selected catalogues in the second phase of research

Scope of bibliographical description	Number of catalogues
Author, title	1
Author, title, year of publication	9
Author, title, place and year of publication, publisher	8
Author, title, place and year of publication, publisher, series title	2
Author, title, place and year of publication, publisher, physical description	1
Author, title, place and year of publication, publisher, series title, physical description	3
Author, title, place and year of publication, publisher, series title, physical description, subject heading	2 (but only in selected cases)
Total	26

If as a result of searching in the author index a fragment of this index is shown, the user receives the list of surnames with first names. Sometimes they also contain cross references to appropriate forms of names. In terms of the opportunistic acquisition of quasi-pertinent information, this may only take place in the event when the user can recognize on this list any surname related to other (not searched for at the very moment) his/her information needs. This is almost improbable situation wherein surnames accidentally recognised and searched for would have to be very similar to each other in order to be placed together in 10 alphabetically-ordered entries from the index. It is difficult to see how such a list could inspire new needs for information, although we should not discount this altogether. After all, any surname placed on such a list may trigger a chain of associations. But if bibliographical descriptions appear in the place of index entries (see table. 2), apart from the surnames of authors, the user can also see titles, and sometimes the place and year of publication or, as in the Online Catalogue of the University of Warsaw Library and in the University Library Catalogue of the Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin, when searching in subject indexes – even subject headings. More information means a greater chance of matching some descriptions to dormant needs. There is also the potential for being inspired. Without additional research one may state that in the majority of cases the title and the subject description of the book interest the user more than the earlier unknown surname of its author. When it comes to searching in an author index, it seems to be an indisputable fact that solutions leading directly to the showing of bibliographical descriptions better support opportunistic acquisition of information.

The effects of searching in the title index do not allow for explicit judgement. Depending on the configuration of an interface, the user receives a list of titles in alphabetical order, along with information about the author (also editors, compilers etc. – for example in the catalogues based on the Virtua system and in the Catalogue of the Library of the University of Łódź based on the Horizon system) or shortened bibliographical descriptions. It is hard to judge whether additional information in bibliographical descriptions – e.g. the place and year of publication or publishing company – represent an increase in the capacity of OPACs to inspire new interests or awaken dormant informational needs. This may be such a subjective issue for which even user study may fail to provide objective assessment. It seems that a subject heading may have a significant influence, but its appearance as a description default is rare (see also table 2).

It is equally difficult to assess differences in support of opportunistic acquisition of information between subject heading lists and abbreviated bibliographical descriptions. Too many subjective factors may influence whether a subject heading is more or less inspiring than, for example, a book title.

CONCLUSIONS

The experiments and analyses which I conducted allowed for both an identification of various solutions applied in the construction of interfaces of online library catalogues and for a preliminary determination of the chances for opportunistic acquisition of information pertaining to scholarly literature. I also identified, in turn, where such situations may arise. I should emphasize that the conclusions concern only the conditions created for opportunistic acquisition of information by OPACs. The evaluation of these potentials from the perspective of use and the suitability of applied solutions pertaining to preference and the cognitive abilities of the user require further research. In order to arrive at a comprehensive overview of opportunistic acquisition of information pertaining to scholarly literature in library catalogues, one should also look to the role of various issues associated with the specificity of the given natural language and information-retrieval languages applied in different systems. Certain occurrences from this scope emerged in the course of this research, but generally these are distinct issues requiring also separately designed research.

Chances for opportunistic acquisition of information pertaining to scholarly literature in the online catalogues of academic libraries are generally small and are clearly marginalised by the tendency to improve the efficiency of systems and to concentrate on finding relevant documents. They arise as the result of negative occurrences from the perspective of the design of interfaces: of mistakes,

insufficient database stores, a failure to understand search apparatus or the minimalist strategies of search users. These have come to be seen as “consolation prizes”, “bonuses for lazybones” or, not so often, “additional awards” for a correctly carried out search. This places opportunistic acquisition of information in opposite proportionality to the quality of these catalogues which may be understood in categories of search completeness and precision. Although it is impossible to eliminate such a correlation (if somebody finds exclusively what they searched for, they will not discover anything else by chance, and conversely, if something was noticed by chance, namely the system showed something that the user hadn't searched for), it is possible to increase chances for the “consolation prize” (and its value) and, on the other hand, to extend the visual field of the user beyond relevant documents, and in this way to interrupt the fragmentariness of the entire process. This may be understood as reducing the adverse consequences of the “keyhole phenomenon” mentioned before.

The research highlighted many inappropriate solutions in terms of supporting opportunistic acquisition of information in the configurations leading directly to the showing of bibliographical descriptions. The adoption of certain solutions characteristic for the configurations leading to the showing of intermediate screens (indexes) could significantly raise the potential of these researched catalogues for opportunistic acquisition of information – it principally demands the avoidance of the showing of empty screens in the event of the failure to find relevant documents and not limiting the response to the presentation of exclusively relevant results in case of their finding.

The possibility of applying such solutions can be attested by the configurations which are small in number but functional. It seems that enriching bibliographical descriptions by adding subject headings would produce a positive outcome. On the other hand, the possible introduction of many solutions potentially supporting opportunistic acquisition of information could reduce the efficiency of searching for pertinent information in relation to information needs as being the fundamental reason for the search.

Such consequences, for example, could be produced by the moving of the relevant index entry or bibliographic description to a lower position on the list of results with the aim of forcing the user to notice preceding irrelevant entries or descriptions. This may also involve resigning from the presentation of any entries from author indexes in favour of the direct presentation of bibliographical descriptions.

It is hoped that the research will encourage deeper reflection on human information acquisition in general, as it closely relates to the information age in terms of its unpredictability, non-descriptiveness and multi-dimensional aspects. The question remains whether current search tools will not eventually hamper the process of obtaining information? The aspiration to search efficiency and precision in library catalogues should not hide from view other aspects of obtaining information. Perhaps it is worth also considering how solutions pertaining to information retrieval are applied elsewhere in the digital environment.

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Appendix 1. List of search queries used in the experiments

Searches in separate indexes		
Index	Search query	Intended purpose of the search (pertinent results – according to the definition of the term accepted in this paper)
Author index	Dembowska Maria	Publications authored by Maria Dembowska (such as <i>Nauka o informacji naukowej (informatologia): organizacja i problematyka badań w Polsce</i> [The Science of Information Science (Informatology): Organisation and Research Issues in Poland]. Warszawa: IINTE, 1991)
	Dembowska	As above
	Dębowska	As above – an example of mistaken surname
	Oleński Józef	Publications authored by Józef Oleński (such as <i>Ekonomika informacji</i> [The Economics of Information]. Warszawa: The Edward Lipiński Foundation for the Promotion of Development, 1988) – alternative to query “Dembowska Maria” for testing those systems, where no publications by Maria Dembowska were found.
	Oleński	As above – alternative to search query “Dembowska Maria” for testing those systems, where no publications by Maria Dembowska were found.
	jhjgdtkyh	Random entry of characters for testing those systems where relevant bibliographic descriptions were not found.
Title index	Nauka o informacji naukowej (informatologia): organizacja i problematyka badań w Polsce	Book description: Dembowska, Maria (1991). <i>Nauka o informacji naukowej (informatologia): organizacja i problematyka badań w Polsce</i> . Warszawa: IINTE.
	Nauka o informacji naukowej	As above – the beginning of the title

	Informacja naukowa	Book description: Ścibor, Eugeniusz, red. (1998). <i>Informacja naukowa w Polsce: tradycja i współczesność</i> . Olsztyn: Wydaw. WSP – short beginning of title
	Informatologia	Book description: Dembowska, Maria (1991). <i>Nauka o informacji naukowej (informatologia): organizacja i problematyka badań w Polsce</i> . Warszawa: IINTE. – a significant word from the title, but not the first one.
	Bibliotekarstwo	Book description: Gaca-Dąbrowska, Zofia (1983). <i>Bibliotekarstwo II Rzeczypospolitej: zarys problemów organizacyjnych i badawczych</i> . Wrocław: Wydaw. UWr. – first word from the title.
	Architektura informacji w serwisach internetowych [Information Architecture for the World Wide Web]	Book description: Rosenfeld, Louis; Morville, Peter (2003). <i>Architektura informacji w serwisach internetowych</i> . Gliwice: Wydaw. Helion – the most well-known meaning of the beginning of the title (“architektura” means “architecture”) takes us radically away from the topic of the searched book, which actually is on information architecture, not on buildings.
	jhjgdtkyh	Random entry of characters for testing those systems where relevant bibliographic descriptions were not found.
Subject index	informacja naukowa [information science]	Bibliographic descriptions of books on information science
	informacja [information]	Bibliographic descriptions of books on information science
	metodologia informacji naukowej [methodology of information science]	Bibliographic descriptions of books on the methodology of information science
	informacja naukowa metodologia [information science methodology]	Bibliographic descriptions of books on the methodology of information science
	jhjgdtkyh	Random entry of characters for testing those systems where relevant bibliographic descriptions were not found.

Searching in a number of indexes simultaneously	
Search query	Intended purpose of the search (pertinent results – according to the definition of the term accepted in this paper)
“Dembowska Maria” (author) and “nauka o informacji” [information science] (title)	Bibliographic description of one book: Dembowska, Maria (1991). <i>Nauka o informacji naukowej (informatologia): organizacja i problematyka badań w Polsce</i> . Warszawa: IINTE.
„Dembowska” (author) and „nauka” [science] (title)	As above
“Dembowska Maria” (author) and “informacja naukowa” [information science] (subject heading)	Bibliographic descriptions of books by Maria Dembowska on various aspects of information science (that is excluding bibliographic descriptions of any books by other authors with the same full name, but writing on other subjects)
“Dembowska Maria” (author) and “hydrologia” [hydrology] (title)	Descriptions of the books by Maria Dembowska on hydrology – for testing the systems where there are no relevant replies.

Appendix 2. List of all interface configurations for the library catalogues, which were included in the first phase of the research, tested with the use of all the search queries presented in Appendix 1

- BJ – mode “Separately in indexes” (standard questions, search carried out separately in a number of indexes: “Author”, “Title”, “KABA subject headings”)
- BJ – mode “By words” (allows for the linking of indexes, additional questions)
- BUP – mode “Separately in indexes” (standard questions, search carried out separately in a number of indexes: “Author”, “Title”, “Subject headings alphabetically”)
- BUP – mode “Multi-index” (additional questions – searching hampered on account of imperfections of the interface: all the time one index remains active on the page, even though it is not used in the process of formulating search parameters; formulating queries requires knowledge of specific grammar rules.
- BPWr – mode “Simple search” (standard questions, search carried out separately in a number of indexes: “Author”, “Title”, “Subject headings”) with an activated option “neighbouring words”
- BPWr – mode “Simple search” (standard questions, search carried out separately in a number of indexes: “Author”, “Title”, “Subject headings”) with deactivated option “neighbouring words”
- BPWr – mode “Searching in many fields” (allows for the linking of indexes, additional questions)
- BUR – mode “Simple search” (standard questions, search carried out separately in a number of indexes: “Person”, “Title”, “Subject headings”), option “from the beginning”
- BUR – mode “Simple search” (standard questions, search carried out separately in a number of indexes: “Person”, “Title”, “Subject headings”), option “words”
- BUR – mode “Simple search” – option “precise”, only available in the subject index
- BUO – no possibility of choosing a search mode (standard questions, search carried out separately in a number of indexes: “Author”, “Title”, “Keyword”), options: “with fixed beginning”, “search in the catalogue”

BUO – no possibility of choosing a search mode (standard questions, search carried out in the index “Keyword”), options: “with fixed beginning”, “search” and “search in the index”

BUO – no possibility of choosing a search mode (standard questions, search carried out separately in a number of indexes: “Author”, “Title”, “Keyword”), options: “the closest alphabetically”, “search in the catalogue”

BUO – no possibility of choosing a search mode (standard questions, search carried out in the index “Keyword”), options: “the closest alphabetically”, “search” and “search in the index”

BUO – mode “Indexes” (standard questions)

Appendix 3. List of 28 academic library catalogues included in the second phase of the research

System	Catalog	Shows intermediate screens	Directly shows bibliographical descriptions
Virtua	Online Catalogue, University of Warsaw Library (https://opac.buw.uw.edu.pl/)	mode “Simple search”	mode “Advanced Search”
	University Library Catalogue, Maria Curie-Skłodowska University in Lublin (http://katalog.umcs.lublin.pl)	mode “Indexes”	mode “Keywords”
	Computer Catalogue, Gdańsk University Library (http://katalog.bg.univ.gda.pl)	mode “Simple search”	mode “Advanced Search”
	Computer Catalogue, Wrocław University Library (http://www.bu.uni.wroc.pl/katalog/)	mode “Simple search”	mode “Advanced Search”
	Computer Catalogue, University Library of the John Paul II Catholic University of Lublin (http://www.bu.kul.pl/katalog)	mode “Simple search”	mode “Advanced Search”
Horizon	Catalogue, Library of the University of Łódź (http://212.191.71.3/)	mode for separate search in selected indexes: author alphabetically, title alphabetically and subject heading alphabetically	mode “Multi-indeks” as well as searching in indexes: words from surname, words from title, words from subject heading
	NCU Library Catalogue, University Library in Toruń (http://opac.bu.umk.pl/webpac-bin/B_horizonPL/wgbroker.exe?new+-access+top)	mode “Indexes”	mode “Keywords”

	Computer Catalogue, Library of Łódź University of Technology (http://webpac.biblioteki.lodz.pl/bgplpl/wgbroker.exe?new+-access+top)	mode for separate search in selected indexes: author, title and subject heading	mode "Multi-index" as well as searching in indexes: words from surname, words from title, words from subject heading
	Catalogue, Kazimierz the Great University Library in Bydgoszcz (http://82.146.234.3/webpac-bwsp/wgbroker.exe?new+-access+top)	mode for separate search in selected indexes: title, author, subject heading	mode "Multi-index" as well as searching in indexes: words from author's name, words from title, words from subject heading
	Online Catalogue, Poznań University of Technology Library (http://webpac.ml.put.poznan.pl/webpac-1.2-bppPL/wgbroker.exe?new+-access+top)	mode for separate search in selected indexes: author alphabetically, title alphabetically and subject heading alphabetically	mode "Multi-index" as well as searching in indexes: author-keywords, title-keywords and subject heading-keywords
Aleph	Catalogue, Library of the University of Białystok (http://212.33.72.5/ALEPH/)	mode "Indexes"	modes: "Simple" and "Many fields"
	Central Catalogue, Main Library of Warsaw University of Technology (http://gate.bg.pw.edu.pl/F/)	mode "Simple search" for the following options: words in title, author, keywords – in the event of not finding relevant records mode: "Indexes"	modes: "Simple search" for remaining cases and "Searching in many fields"
	Central Catalogue, Main Library of the Medical University of Silesia (http://aleph.slam.katowice.pl/ALEPH/)	mode "Indexes"	modes: "Simple" and "Many fields"
	Main Catalogue, Main Library of the Police Academy in Szczytno (https://aleph.wspol.edu.pl/ALEPH/)	mode "Browse"	modes: "Simple" and "Many fields"
	Main Catalogue, Main Library of the University of Physical Education in Wrocław (http://aleph.awf.wroc.pl)	mode "Browse"	modes: "Simple search" and "Searching in many fields"
Prolib	Online Catalogue, Main Library of the Silesian University of Technology (http://www.bibgl.polsl.gliwice.pl/opacwww)	mode "Simple search"	mode "Advanced search"
	Books Catalogue of the Central Medical Library (http://195.187.98.4/cgi-bin/wspd_cgi.sh/wo_log.w)	mode "Simple search"	mode "Advanced search"
	Online Catalogue, Toruń School of Banking Library (http://opac.wsb.torun.pl/)	mode "Simple search"	mode "Advanced search"

	Catalogue of Books and Periodicals, Main Library of the Technical-Humanistic Academy in Bielsko-Biala (http://www.bibl.ath.bielsko.pl/cgi-bin/wspd.cgi.sh/WService=wsbroker1/wo_lo_g.w)	mode "Simple search"	mode "Advanced search"
	Online Catalogue, Main Library of the Academy of Podlasie in Siedlce (http://opac.ap.siedlce.pl/cgi-bin/wspd.cgi.sh/WService=wsbroker1/wo_lo_g.w)	mode "Simple search"	mode "Advanced search"
Sowa	Main Catalogue, Main Library of the National Defence Academy in Warsaw – (http://biblioteka.aon.edu.pl/)	mode "Indexes"	available only as a complex mode
	Books of the Academy of Fine Arts in Warsaw (http://www.asp.waw.pl/sowa/ksiegozbior/)	mode "Indexes"	available only as a complex mode
MAK	Books, Main Library of the Christian Academy of Theology in Warsaw (http://chat.edu.pl/biblioteka/index.htm)	mode available only to allow for search in indexes separately	
	Catalogue, Library of Koszalin University of Technology (http://62.108.166.204/cgi-bin/makwww.exe?BM=1)	mode available only to allow for search in indexes separately	
MOL / Patron	Catalogue, Library of the University College of Social Sciences in Lublin (http://www.wsns.lublin.pl/biblioteka.php)	mode "Simple"	mode "Complex"
	Catalogue, Library of the Higher School of Business in Tarnów (http://217.117.134.114/scripts/opac.dll/)	mode "Simple"	mode "Complex"
TINLIB	Computer Catalogue, The Library of the Cracow University of Technology (http://www.biblos.pk.edu.pl/katalog_info)		modes "Simple search" (allows for searching in different indexes simultaneously!), "Complex search" (also allows for searching in different indexes simultaneously!), "Advanced search"
	Catalogue, Main Library of the Kielce University of Technology (http://katalog.tu.kielce.pl/WebOPAC/index.asp)	mode "Browsing"	modes: "Simple search" i "Super search"

THE USE OF OUTSOURCING IN POLISH HIGHER EDUCATION LIBRARIES IN THE LIGHT OF SURVEY RESEARCH

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KEYWORDS: Outsourcing. Strategic management. Management and organization. Libraries. Library organization. Library services. Library financing. Library staff.

ABSTRACT: The article presents the results of survey research conducted in Polish higher education libraries, was aimed at assessing the scale of outsourcing. What it analyzed was the current scope of outsourcing, how it can be implemented, the obstacles the interviewees perceive in the carrying out of these plans and the results they expect to achieve by making recourse to outsourcing. Research has shown that outsourcing is currently used in a limited and sporadic way in terms of solving individual problems or providing particular services, but not as an element of strategic management. What is striking is the lack of expectations on the part of library organizers in terms of searching for and applying for outsourcing solutions. The research indicates the necessity for further education in this field among both current library workers and the students of library science.

For the past decade or so, significant transformations have taken place in the perception of library management. Many terms and solutions have been introduced or attempted to be introduced into librarianship, including transferring solutions which were originally devised for manufacturing and commercial companies, including the banking sector. In Polish subject literature, we can find a considerable number of works dedicated to this subject matter (e.g. Głowacka, 2000; Huczek, 2003; Zybert, 2004; Sapa, 2005; Sidor, 2005; Wojciechowska, 2006). Against this background, the problem of outsourcing in libraries seems to be a remote issue. In the article *Outsourcing w biblio-*

tekach [Outsourcing in the Libraries] (Jazdon, 2006), I presented the principally positive outsourcing experiences of selected libraries throughout the world and called for the need to carry out survey research in Polish higher education libraries relating to all aspects of outsourcing. What proved interesting was the specification of the extent to which these libraries had already made recourse to outsourcing solutions or were planning to implement them. In turn, this work adjudged the extent to which library managers see the potential of outsourcing in key functioning scopes in terms of pros and cons. At the same time, the research was intended to indicate the extent to which this problem is simply recognizable and the extent to which the use of outsourcing is regarded as an important element of strategic management. That it is why the survey had been preceded only with a brief letter explaining the aim of the research. The terms or questions used in the questionnaire, however, had not been commented on. In the question concerning the scope of outsourcing, some practical aspects were deliberately omitted since they had been touched on in the questions relating to external commissions, thus enabling the research to assess the scope of commissions. Indeed, it had previously been assumed that outsourcing was only a new phenomenon in librarianship and that certain outsourcing operations were carried out without realizing that they fall into such a category. The results of the research seem to overwhelmingly confirm this assumption.

The electronic survey was sent to over 80 university libraries, and we received 31 answers. This unsatisfactory response can be put down to the said novelty of outsourcing. The survey was relatively detailed and perhaps the lack of knowledge about outsourcing did not allow respondents to choose or indicate appropriate answers.

The majority of questionnaire forms were sent back by university libraries (10), university of technology libraries (7), economics school libraries (4) and libraries at medical and physical education academies (each of them sent back 3 questionnaires). The remaining ones included single answers from agricultural schools, fine arts academies, a former pedagogical school and one private school of a “mixed” (technical and humanistic) nature.

The first question was intended to enable libraries to elaborate in written form on their operation strategy and mission, and verify if they included outsourcing (contract or capital) in their operational strategy. The research showed that only (or maybe as many as) 9 libraries possess a document outlining such a strategy, whereas 17 libraries have a mission set out in detail. The second indicator may be considered satisfactory, taking into account the fact that mission specification should consti-

tute a starting point for strategic elaboration and library management. However, only two out of all the libraries revealed that outsourcing was an integral part of their operational strategy. At the same time, the question did not concern outsourcing's inclusion in the above-mentioned document but rather the adoption of an assumption that it is or will be used in practice. It can be stated quite unambiguously, therefore, that at present outsourcing is rarely used as a method of strategic management and is rather treated only as an option which allows libraries to conduct certain detailed operational scopes (Gay & Essinger, 2002). As answers to further questions indicate, libraries frequently outsource aspect of their services or tasks. The interviewees, however, unanimously indicated the type of external commissions they use and are intending to use, for as many as 27 (with 4 votes against) chose commissioning independent external entities to carry out tasks, i.e. contract outsourcing, whereas only 2 chose capital outsourcing (commissioning services to the "daughter company" belonging to the library). We shall further assess the ramifications of these answers once we have analyzed the answers to questions about the expected benefits of outsourcing.

In the subsequent question, 29 allocated scopes of the possible and most probable use of outsourcing in library operations were presented. It asked the interviewees to indicate which of them were currently being conducted in the form of commissions and which were going to be conducted using external commissions, regularly or temporarily, as a system solution. It also created the possibility of adding other potential areas of its use, which was supposed to reveal the degree of familiarity with outsourcing and the awareness of its use in everyday operations. The analysis of answers provokes rather sombre afterthoughts since while indicating (in different scopes) the use of outsourcing in as many as 28 out of the 29 provided options, few libraries independently added scopes of its use which are so often encountered in practice, such as commissioning reprographic services (4 answers) or bookbinding services (2). The only way in which this can be interpreted is that in practice we use outsourcing without actually being aware that we are doing so. We do not think about this phenomenon in detail, nor do we analyze the possible benefits resulting from its implementation, which confirms in us the belief that outsourcing is not being used as an element of strategic management. Revealed in the final part of the questionnaire, it is thought that outsourcing can benefit the library. This leaves it up to library managers and the teachers of librarians to arrive at the correct recognition and efficient use of this solution.

It comes as no surprise that the most frequently used scope of its use was magazine subscription attendance (21) and, in addition, it was described as a regular operation as many as 16 times. The following scopes were indicated almost as often: computer device service (19), other technical

equipment service (18) and the conservation of collections (17). This group of task scopes should also include the protection of buildings (15). However, as far as administrative work is concerned, one may be surprised by the relatively rare use of outsourcing in terms of transport organization (9) and edifice cleaning and upkeep (6), which, in the case of other branches, constitutes a task which is frequently commissioned to external entities. Among other substantive works of interest is IT service as a group with an average number of indications (11); other commissions include: translations, publishing works and systematic staff training (9 each), digitalization (7), resource organization (collecting and conducting magazine subscription – 7) and microfilming (6). It is surprising that the organization of training was also included in this group. On the basis of everyday observation, it seems that we take advantage of trainings organized by other libraries but we do not look for external providers of training services, largely because of the significant costs entailed. It also probably results from the growing awareness on the part of library managers of the necessity to organize increasingly specialist trainings which include wider groups of workers than it used to be. At the same time, it is worth mentioning that this service was largely indicated as a regular commission, and not as a temporary one! Nevertheless, what is surprising is the less frequent indication of digitalization and microfilming, since these services are ideally suited to being commissioned to specialized external entities. Still, contrary to the previous case, we can note here that the majority of respondents perceive their commission only as a temporary service. With regard to digitalization, it can also be pointed out that a further 8 libraries declared that they intend to solve this problem in the form of external commissions, which results from the development of this form of activity. Within the last group of tasks with the smallest number of indications we may find as follows: database creation (5), website administration (4), information update in the databases (4), external means acquisition (4), other IT services commissioning (3), formal cataloguing, literature classification, promotional activity, surveying user needs, simple technical works and tender organization (all of them – 2 indications each). With regard to formal cataloguing or literature classification, we may wonder to what extent we are unaware of the fact that cooperation within the framework of NUKAT with OCLC, CERL and other associations of the kind, bears all the hallmarks of outsourcing. We can find a few indications of these operational areas in the research. Obviously, we continue to use chargeable access to the above-mentioned foreign databases in a limited way. However, our cooperation with NUKAT, in the case of most libraries, assumes the specific form of so-called cosourcing, wherein an element of authentic cooperation occurs between equivalent partners, whereas the success of appointing parties depends on their ability to maintain good mutual relations and understand their goals and needs, as well as pertaining to their willingness to cooperate. Each party gains something from the activity of other parties, at the same time provid-

ing them with some part of work they have done. A certain group of libraries collect descriptions only and fail to create any records on their own. Nevertheless, we can put this fact down to outsourcing in both cases.

It is typical, however, that apart from the above-mentioned aspects (subscription, collection conservation, staff training and edifice protection), the current or anticipated use of outsourcing is limited to temporary commissions in other scopes. Chronologically, we have been making recourse to outsourcing since the late 1990s. There are also libraries which have a much longer experience in this area. Rejecting the unspecified answers such as “for always” (conservation, editorial work, translations), it can be pointed out that the following tasks were carried out in accordance with the following timeline: bookbinding and technical device servicing (late 1940s and 1950s), collection conservation and publishing work commission (1970s), magazine subscription attendance, one library – in the field of formal cataloguing and classification (since the beginning of the 1980s), building conservation (1980s), information service, computer devices service and database creation (1990s).

The results of the research can be compared (taking into account the detail level and character of the questions) to those carried out in French libraries (Martin et al., 2003). Their results show that 87% of libraries outsource on a regular basis and in many scopes of activity. The most frequently commissioned task, which has also been applied for the longest period of time and – as it is stressed – deeply rooted in practice, is the management of collections, understood as their purchase, creation of descriptions, other related issues, used by almost 46% of those libraries surveyed. About 20% of libraries commission the current supervision of documents, i.e. binding and digitalization, whereas about 12 –13% of them are involved in press reviews, information search and archive management. The tasks which are considered crucial, such as completing databases, collecting and compiling documents and information synthesis on that basis, were largely carried out independently (only about 10% of indications as outsourcing tasks). Similarly, running the website (11%), document classification (7%), microfilming, surveying user satisfaction and the least frequent translation commissioning (0.6%) also belong to independently conducted tasks. In the summary, they stressed the noticeable trend of commissioning tasks of a smaller value as well as those functions which libraries can seldom carry out with their own means. Historically, services which have been commissioned for the longest period of time include binding, magazine subscription attendance and microfilming, press reviewing, searching materials in a given subject matter, and document synthesis. Those tasks which are systematically commissioned include those connected with subscription

attendance, press reviews, binding and digitalization, whereas the remaining ones are commissioned on an occasional basis.

It can be stated, therefore, that in certain scopes we can observe a similarity of behaviour, whereas in others a significant distinctiveness. To summarise research presented in the 1999 ALA report, it was stated that outsourcing was routinely used in response to specific needs, such as: joint purchase within the framework of consortia, bookbinding, maintenance services, cataloguing (e.g. of maps, collections in foreign languages, atypical materials) or collecting (only in terms of instant collection creation). As a result, we can see a slightly different emphasis of distribution.

Another crucial issue was supposed to provide an answer to the question about the potential benefits of outsourcing. In this case, they suggested a list of 25 typical indications, leaving space also for the respondents' own ideas concerning expected results. However, this possibility was not taken up. From the catalogue of suggested answers, respondents most often chose such similar options as acquiring external specialists for the purpose of cooperation as well as complementing their own activity in the case of a lack of competent staff (26 indications each). Two other options were chosen almost as frequently (referring to the last one from the abovementioned ones), i.e. complementing their own activity in the case of a lack of equipment (24) and suitable sources (22), the dismissal of unwanted services and functions which are of low value or rarely done (23) and making it possible to concentrate on their basic activity (22). These, the most frequent answers, do not have to be commented on. When there is no staff, no equipment or other resources, we look for an external contractor. Equally so, we commission tasks which are difficult, unrewarding or of minor importance. It should be noted, however, that we want to do it in order to concentrate on the hitherto basic activity. It obviously has an advantage, but it is a pity that to a lesser extent we want to use external commissions for the purpose of undertaking new forms of work or expanding the scope of activity. In particular, we should comment on the last choice in this group. The specification of the library's scope of basic activity constitutes a basis for making decisions on the use of outsourcing. It assumes that tasks belonging to this scope are not to be ceded to external entities but carried out independently. Clearly, we have in mind such operational areas as resource formation or user service but not such basic areas as formal cataloguing.

In this way, we come to the important issue of determining what are key activities. It seems that we have considered all operations connected with user service. How crucial, then, are issues connected with areas such as resource organization (collecting, access organization, compiling)? We

traditionally regard them as very important. However, they do not have to be considered as key functions. The research results (e.g. the indicated magazine delivery) as well as the experiences of German (Griebel & Peters, 1998) or American libraries (Lüdke, 1999) show that in the sample operational area of resource organization it is worth pursuing external commissions.

The benefits, which were pointed out by respondents with a slightly lesser frequency, included: the access to new technologies (18), staff reduction (17), the improvement of library services (16), the popularisation of economic thinking and activity (16), the undertaking of new tasks (14) specialising in the field of conducted services and functions (14) as well as the development of organizational culture of the library (14). Within the last group, with the smallest number (7-12) of indicators, we can find both an increase in attractiveness for users (12) and the reduction of direct and indirect costs, management flexibility, changes in organizational structures by means of flattening, as well as unit reduction. Further on, we come across the following: arriving at methods of cost control, objectification of costs, providing services for the benefit of other libraries (also for a fee) and increasing the scale of activity in the field of a hitherto area of activity (e.g. acquiring new user categories), limiting risk while undertaking and carrying out new services, increasing the degree of team motivation and the possibility of obtaining a higher mark from the organizers. Still, it was most often anticipated that outsourcing would not influence the structure (13), staff numbers (8) or the library's attractiveness for users (8).

Analyzing the above-mentioned layout of answers, we may note certain expectations which condition current and future perceptions. We expect that outsourcing will benefit in the case of staff shortages. Acquiring external experts, we expect that they will bring specialist equipment, tools or access to sources and resources, which explains the frequently indicated commissions of magazine subscription attendance or collection conservation (here it is more about specialist knowledge). On the other hand, however, we would reap similar benefits (even more substantial ones in the case of the necessity to purchase the equipment) by commissioning microfilming, digitalization and certain IT services. This occurs rarely however, arising from the fact that resource organization (access to foreign magazines), belonging to the basic tasks of a library, is subject to strict user control, especially on the part of the academic staff. It is also connected with cost (we are looking for ways to reduce such costs). What is more, it requires contacts and software (databases) which we do not possess. We may ask if in this case a certain importance should not be attached to the activity of companies which offer us a wide variety of such services. This was a particularly prominent phenomenon at the beginning of the 1990s. And at this point we may draw

a number of conclusions: 1) perhaps we ourselves are not active enough when it comes to searching for these types of solutions in other scopes of activity; 2) there is no well-developed market of service users in Poland. However, if we associate these facts with the noted dependence (subscription service – yes, since users see and demand it) and with the answers with the smallest number of positive indications and the highest number of negative responses, then we have to formulate another conclusion, namely that familiarity with these issues – the possibilities and potential benefits – is at a low level amongst librarians and management. As a consequence they fail to formulate specified expectations and seek appropriate solutions. That is how we should also explain our weak stance on outsourcing as a tool for cost reductions, economic cost objectification, and structural changes. Indeed, no one expects librarians to adopt such modes of thought. This “relieves” us of the economic perception of these issues connected with cost calculation and of the search for optimal solutions which would be optimal from this point of view.

It is good that we want to use the external potential of people, equipment, etc., but let us stress one more time that we, meaning the entire library staff, do not anticipate having to extend the library’s scope of activity or having to undertake new forms of services. In this context, we should reconsider the question concerning staff issues. Indeed, we have quite discordant answers among those enumerating potential benefits and drawbacks. Indeed, they are to be found in groups with the largest number of indications. Having applied outsourcing, almost 55% of interviewees expect benefits in the form of staff reductions, whereas 25% of them are of a divergent opinion. Experiences (not only those of libraries) show that outsourcing is most often feared by workers. We have to realize, however, that libraries are non-profit organizations, in which the economic aspect, such as staff reductions, is not directly correlated. In an in-depth analysis of the results of the previously mentioned French research (Martin et al., 2004), we can read that library research results align with research conducted in other areas of production and services when it comes to outsourcing and the evaluation of their merits and drawbacks. Having said this, they differ fundamentally in terms of their economic approach. Although the reduction of costs was generally regarded as one of the basic elements, the library survey did not bear this out. This, in fact, would allow analysts to advance a thesis that such an attitude was not and would not be the basic perception in library circles. It is obvious that service commissioning can be presented as a rational alternative to generating “hidden costs”. Indeed, when we take into account only the purely economic criteria of costs, it is often more profitable to commission tasks than to carry them out independently. On the other hand, it is often stressed, however, that an obstacle may arise in the calculating of outsourcing costs. The work done by many library sections, often of a mediocre value,

is noticeable only in the long run, whereas the accomplishment of a fixed goal entails certain indirect, subjective or remotely-sourced expenses. Nonetheless, realizing that we will not escape financial imperatives in library practice, we should, according to the authors, approach the problem of costs not only in terms of reduction but also in the correct calculation of costs and “profits” and, at the same time, in the evaluation of a given activity.

From our perspective, when we are aware that libraries have to undertake new scopes and forms of services and we accept the paucity of vacancies, outsourcing should constitute an opportunity for retraining. As a consequence, solutions based on outsourcing should be a priority. The analysis of this part of the survey shows yet again that we are not thinking about outsourcing as a strategic operation or an operation which forms the strategy of a library. Its possible use is expected to solve individual problems, narrow areas of functioning, and more frequently in a temporary as opposed to a systematic, way. Unfortunately, it should also be related to the relatively small number of indications relating to benefits in the field of “economic thinking about management”, costs, their calculation – not temporary (to fit in the granted budget) but strategic – and holistic recognition in the long run, beyond a timeframe of two years. It seems that it is a field which we should particularly study at universities and in libraries.

In this context, perhaps it would be worth referring to American libraries once again. The author, setting out their 10-year experience in this field (Lesky, 2003), classified as benefits the following factors:

1. Ensuring better user service by means of concentrating on operations which constitute the core of activity and the commissioning of other tasks to external companies.
2. Acquiring services requiring expert knowledge, which results in diminishing the risk of mistakes and mediocre results.
3. The possibility of undertaking tasks of a strategic nature, developing strategies for the library by means of ensuring efficient high quality service in order to satisfy user needs.
4. The favourable perception of the library by its users, owing to its provision of quality services.
5. Flexibility of action, as not only can adjust the library offer to user expectations, but also making flexibly use of financial resources.

6. Recognition of the efficient use of outsourcing and the accomplishment of the above-mentioned benefits testify to recognized competences and efficiencies on the part of principals and organizers.

In Poland, we can observe a certain difference in perceiving the benefits connected with the use of outsourcing, which probably results from our lack of experience. In principle, C. Lesky's two first statements are convergent with the analyzed results. Nevertheless, the last point attracts our attention, by way of the fact that it touches upon the question of managerial assessment. We shall refer to this below, analyzing answers relating to this fundamental issue.

The respondents were asked to indicate the factors which may adversely affect the functioning of the library. In the catalogue of answers, 17 options were provided with the possibility of adding remarks. In first place, just as in the results of research carried out elsewhere, we can find a fear of becoming dependent on contracting parties (18), and then the necessity to introduce additional controls of their work (17). It probably arises from the fact that we do not fully realize what work should be done in advance of outsourcing a task. It is suggested that we construct outsourcing contracts to secure our business (Wędrowski, 1999) so that there are fewer operations connected with current controls. We also seem not to realize such commissions requires work on the part of the library so that their inappropriate preparation does not constitute a factor which would adversely affect the use and performance of outsourcing (Cierznia et al., 2006). As an aside, it would also ease fears relating to staff reductions arising from outsourcing, for if the library chooses this solution, it necessitates the creation of a team which would be responsible for service commissioning, the already mentioned quality control of their provision and the costs we actually bear. Indicated 14 times, serious fears included those of service instability (which should be commented on in the same way as the previous point) as well as bearing additional costs. It has to be stressed that outsourcing does not only entail cutting expenses as it generates new costs. The process has to be based on the efficient preparation of finances, predicting to possible financial gains and costs. Indeed, libraries need no convincing that new projects and challenges will always involve a cost base.

Respondents expressed their anxiety concerning budget cuts (15 indications) and scepticism on the part of library directors towards the efficacy of outsourcing (11 indications). Consequently, we return to outsourced projects which may backfire. No one is going to praise libraries for potential saving initiatives, when they lead to budgetary cuts and staff reductions. However, we should add that

the staff fears received few indications (6) whereas when these same fears were considered not to constitute a factor discouraging libraries from making recourse to outsourcing, they were ranked highly (14 indications). In the subsequent group, we can find answers which consider an as an obstacle the lack of “custom-made” commissions, i.e. appropriate to the contractor’s abilities, relating to their correct and trouble-free execution (12); the lack of a contractor market (10); and the lack of offers on the part of those operating on the market (11). Let us add that the above-mentioned “custom-made” commissions should be prepared by libraries. If we assume that there are no contractors in the market, then we should actively prepare the groundwork for such activity. This potential “vicious circle” is hindered by the lack of regulations (3), and the lack of evaluation methods of efficiency in the use of outsourcing (8).

Further obstacles included a lack of experience on the part of libraries (9) and the negative experience of others (5). These two questions also received the most answers in the column “I don’t know”. It is worth noting that in all the questions concerning the current group and the previously discussed one, the scale of answers “I don’t know” was relatively substantial, which seems to corroborate remarks made concerning the insufficient knowledge relating to the theoretical and practical aspects of outsourcing solutions within the group of our surveyed libraries.

It is striking, however, that in the analysed group of questions concerning the factors discouraging us from making recourse to outsourcing, the least frequently indicated (1-2) were: the loss of competences, the impoverishment of a said activity and a decrease in attractiveness from the user perspective. At the same time, the same factors were most frequently indicated as those which do not constitute the negative aspects of outsourcing and which do not raise doubts with regard to its use (15-18 indications). It can be stated, then, that library managers are not afraid of outsourcing, as is confirmed by answers to the question posed in the conclusion. Among the interviewees, 13 respondents decided that outsourcing was going to be commonly used in libraries and would positively influence their functioning, 6 of them decided that it was not going to be applicable, 10 did not have an opinion whereas 2 evaded answering this question. Nonetheless, no one stated that it would unfavourably affect the organization and work of the library.

As promised, we will return to one of the initial questions concerning the use of contract outsourcing and capital outsourcing. The majority of interviewees opted for the former, which entails transferring specified fields of activity out of the library to independent external organizational units. However, this burdens the library with additional administrative work. We do not even care,

as we note in the research, about the possibility of chargeable expert services in favour of entities including libraries, which is offered by outsourcing. It is puzzling for a number of reasons. For example, an attempt at creating a bookbinding laboratory in the library, with the assumption of providing a chargeable service, would create the possibility of achieving a higher revenue by those employed in the project.

Libraries experienced in the implementation of outsourced projects were asked if they had investigated the financial, organizational and personal results of its use, as well as those connected with the acceleration of library procedures, quality improvement and user satisfaction. Surprisingly, as many as 13 and 12 libraries respectively indicated the two first areas. The remaining ones were indicated 5 times. The prevailing answers (15-18 indications) showed that there had been no research carried out by the libraries themselves. What is particularly important, however, is that in the question concerning financial and organizational issues, 12 and 11 people respectively pointed out that research results were satisfactory, 4 people responded “yes” with reference to surveying user satisfaction. In turn, 3 respondents expressed their appreciation of procedure acceleration. In the remaining two aspects, all interviewees pointed at the satisfactory research result. Still, no one claimed that the research had had an unsatisfactory result in any of the cases. It should convince everybody of the practical and beneficial nature of outsourcing for libraries.

To see the whole picture, we should also add that as many as 20 times, the respondents declared that the organization of outsourcing (including the selection and supervision of the contracting parties) should be overseen by firstly the library director, followed by the library administration (6), the manager of the relevant library organizational unit (5), and finally an appointed organizational unit.

Few respondents gave voice to their own opinions and reflections on the analysed subject matter. They can be summarized by the following. Library managers are aware of the economic benefits of outsourcing, but they are equally aware of the costs. The interviewees agreed that, in the future, outsourcing would be widely applicable in libraries, positively influencing the efficiency of their management. One of the respondents expressed an opinion that, “unfortunately”, outsourcing would be applicable in libraries in the future, failing to fully justify his point of view. One other respondent answered she/he did not have time to think about introducing such solutions because the library... had too many things to do!

I would not like to list arguments for and against outsourcing, as they have been presented in detail in a previous article written by the author of this work (Jazdon, 2006). The conducted survey research was the first attempt of its kind, albeit the range of received answers did not allow us to make any far-reaching generalizations. This issue is relatively new to non-profit institutions and theoretical knowledge of its subject matter is generally insufficient. Finally, the scale outsourcing solutions not only in libraries but also in other institutions of culture and science (including higher education) is at a low level, which undoubtedly hinders any further discussion or exchange of experience. It seems, however, that library managers who are somewhat experienced in this scope can see both benefits and limitations of such an option. For the moment, outsourcing is most often used on a temporary basis and for insignificant projects, and is not being considered in relation to the long-term restructuring of the library network and its services. We do not perceive it simply as an element of strategic management nor do we relate its use to the operational strategy in progress or the long-term outlook. It requires both further research and consideration of the possibilities of its use as well as entailing the training and teaching of both the students of library science and current library staff, who need to be better informed of the potential solutions that outsourcing offers.

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**PHOTOGRAPHS IN THE DIGITAL COLLECTION
ISSUES WITH THE DESCRIPTIVE AND SUBJECT CATALOGUING
ON THE BASIS OF THE DIGITAL LIBRARY OF THE WARSAW UNI-
VERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY**

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KEYWORDS: Iconographic documents. Electronic documents. Archival material. Photographs. Documentary photographs. Special collections. Metadata. Cataloguing. Computer catalogues. Subject cataloguing. Subject analysis of documents. Bibliographical description. Formats. Data structures. Digitization. Digital libraries. Internet. Semantic network. Keywords.

ABSTRACT: In terms of digitization and the growing significance of photography from the perspective of cultural heritage, many efforts have been made in recent years to arrive at uniform standards for the description of documents of this type, which are collected by libraries, archives and museums and made available in digital libraries. Based on their experience working with the Digital Library of the Warsaw University of Technology, the authors of this article discuss issues associated with descriptive and subject cataloguing, resulting from the specificity of iconographic documents (where there is no text data for creating a description as well as the lack of Polish norms and rules). They lay emphasis on the new challenges which the creators of digital libraries are having to contend with when it comes to new technologies and ideas, and transformations in current working practices.

PHOTOGRAPHS AND CULTURAL HERITAGE

Iconographic materials, in particular photographs, have not always been regarded as valuable in terms of national legacy. However, they constitute an important means of documenting historical events. Photographs, describing the image of some place, the daily lives of people, a moment in time, allow us to not only understand the past better, but mark changes in our immediate surroundings and the wider world. They facilitate individual interpretation and contextualize history from different perspectives. The content of photographic collections is varied, illustrating such subjects as: events, architecture, means of transport, fashion, social and family associations, competition, trade, cultural objects, and the widely understood notion of lifestyles of a given age.

Until recently, photographic collections were taken for granted. Photographs were catalogued collectively, and were either left without a description or provided with a perfunctory description such as “container box with photographs showing...” (Klijn, 2005). In archives they were stored together with paper documents, and even in the 1980s these were not given the status of archival records. A change in the evaluation of photographs took place when photography became a popular field of art. Today, photographs are seen as valuable documents, worthy of examination, proper storage, and editorial commentary. What is important here is the idea of cultural legacy, popularized by the European Commission and the European Council, as well as the development of computer technologies. Conclusions published in the document “i2010: Digital Libraries” so stated: “Information technologies are creating the possibility of other «discoveries» of European cultural and scholarly heritage and making it available for diverse current and future applications. This task requires a joint effort on the part member states, whose efforts in digitization and digital conservation lack cohesion. Effective responses to the new challenges may be enhanced by the process of digitization, facilitating access to information, and ensuring the long-term preservation of digital stores” (Communique, 2005).

Notions of national or cultural legacy are constantly evolving. Photographic documents, sometimes from private, niche collections, can prove to be a unique testament to cultural heritage, on a local or regional level, and important resource. As a result, institutions of national memory (archives, libraries, museums) have changed their approach towards the photograph – particularly visual collections, which have been made available to the wider public by way of creating digitized collections and making them accessible online on the Internet.

MODELS FOR THE DESCRIPTION OF PHOTOGRAPHS

In 1994 the European Commission on Preservation and Access (ECPA) was established, which aimed to facilitate wider access to European archive or library collections. In 2004-2008 the ECPA initiated the TAPE project, relating to audio-visual archives in Europe, financed by the Culture 2000 program. In previous years, much of the Committee's work had been taken up with SEPIA (Safeguarding European Photographic Image for Access), concerning photographic collections. This project had allowed for the recognition of many "niche" photographic collections, stored in institutions of cultural memory. The task of the SEPIA program was to complete activities related to the conservation and digitization of collections of historical photographs, as well as defining the role of new technologies for the management of these collections. It is possible to find more information about this program on the site <http://www.knaw.nl/ecpa/sepia>.

Within the framework of SEPIA, the Working Groups for Model Description, drew up a model for the description of a SEPIADES photograph. The group was made up of 5 partners (The Municipal Museum in Stockholm, The Norwegian Offices for Archives, Libraries and Museums, the National Library of Spain, The Finnish Museum of Photography, and The European Committee on Preservation and Access). SEPIADES is a multi-level model similar to IAAD(G), (ISAD, 1999), which derives from the collection, through groups to the single unit. They decided on such a resolution, assuming that in the case of photography, a separate description of every entity is almost impossible, and not always necessary (De Lusenet, 2005).

Apart from 21 basic elements, SEPIADES contains over 400 suggested data elements for describing photographs, with references to literary sources online and elsewhere. In the final report, the Working Group working on the SEPIADES model, exchanging the fundamental properties of the model, recommended the use of the Dublin Core standard. This standard was perceived as being particularly useful for the exchange of metadata amongst various institutions. The SEPIADES model is based

on the format XML, in which all records are written, which facilitates browsing in any editor, and the export of records to Dublin Core XML files. The model uses the protocol OAI-PMH, in accordance with the Open Access initiative which facilitates access to collections held in other institutions. It provides also a tool for full-text search.

The main task of the SEPIADES model, similarly to other standards for cataloguing photographs, is to arrive at a professional, complete description of the photograph. A good description of a photograph enables its search potential, thus making it visible to scientists, librarians, archivists, as well as casual users. The description contains not only information about the author and the contents of the photograph, but also information about the photographed object, about the mode of acquiring the photograph, its physical properties, its physical characteristics and condition, ownership rights, such as limited access, and so on. Only when provided with a full description, to include additional information, can the photograph become an object that can be searched for and interpreted.

The quality of the description increases if certain norms are observed. In practice various other standards are used for cataloguing photographs, such as ISAD (G), ISBD, AACR (Anglo-American, 2006), and sometimes principles are drawn up for a given purpose and not based on any standard. In a number of European countries solutions which aim at the synchronization of cataloguing photographs have been developed. In Norway, in museums and cultural-historical institutions, a system was implemented by the name of “Feltkatalogen”. Dutch institutions apply the FOTIOS system, developed by the Dutch Photographic Association, whereas Swedish institutions of memory use the “Dataelementkatalogen” system.

In Poland the richest photograph collection is owned by the Archive of Mechanical Documentation in Warsaw, which from February 2008 has been renamed as the National Digital Archive (NAC). This institution is carrying out the ZoSIA project (www.nac.gov.pl), (integrated archival information system) as based on open standards – ISAD(G), EAD (Encoded, b.d.). In the NAC a Polish version of the International Standard of the Notation of Information Archival Stores – EAD_PL. NAC has placed approximately 80 thousand photographs online. These are principally photographs from the period of the Second Polish Republic and photographs of the Polish Section of Radio Free Europe. Data given in the description is: call number of the photograph (reflecting the name of the archival team), the place and description of the event commemorated in a photo, date when taken, surnames of visible persons in the photo (in the case of group photographs – the surnames of the foregrounded per-

sons) and the surname of the photographer, place names technical aspects concerning the original (negative, positive, sizes, colour etc.). A broadening of the description of the photograph is planned, pertaining to additional data concerning persons featured (profession, function, position, academic title, military rank, pseudonym etc.), keywords, status of the image (original, reproduction), information about the copyright, remarks (e.g. concerning the technical condition of the original) (Pątek, 2006).

Library circles principally use the MARC standard, whereas archives use the ISAD standard, which is applied for the description of archival collections (fitted to the file containing records). For the description of archival photographs, the EAD standard is used, supported by the Library of the Congress in the USA. There is also another alternative for the standardized description of the photograph, which isn't associated with a need for the implementation of some system or package. This solution arose with the development of digital photography at the beginning of the 21st century, coupled with mass use by news agencies. The already existing standards were at odds with the need to rapidly describe photographs. MARC was too complicated, whereas ISAD necessitated the indicating of a given collection to which the photograph belonged.

From 2001 Adobe Acrobat and Adobe Photoshop (also and in other graphics programs) have offered the possibility of saving metadata directly in files in the XMP standard. Description of the contents of the file in accordance with XMP may be encoded in the PDF file, as well as in graphic formats such as JPEG, GIF or TIFF. The description can be made in any standard, as well as in Dublin Core or MARC. However this kind of solution is not appropriate neither for libraries nor archives, where linking the description directly with the graphic file allows the user to obtain information about the contents of the file. Limits on the description only to the "internal" description following the loss of such a file means that the information as to what was lost is lost also.

The establishment of a unified standard for the description of photographs for all institutions of memory is not a simple matter and may not be an appropriate solution. "The Team for Digitization", established in 2006 by the Minister for Culture and National Heritage initially looked to a "branch" solution: MARC for libraries and EAD (encrypted ISAD) for archives, and Dublin Core as an acceptable standard for organising information pertaining to the compiling of collections created as a result of the digitization process.

Making recourse to the same norm does not mean that all descriptions created by various institutions will be the same, because the same norm will always be subject to interpretation. A key issue

is the interpretation of these rules. Attitudes to cataloguing photographs depends on the role that an institution in possession of collections actually fills. It is also dependent on the demands of users, or more pointedly those whom these said institutions perceive their recipients to be.

Photographs are documents which are particularly difficult to describe on account of the problem with obtaining contextual information. In many cases an expert must be able assess the technical aspects of the photograph, whereas the cataloguer must also possess a scholarly knowledge needed for a correct interpretation. All photographs and iconographic materials in general must be analyzed on an individual basis and then catalogued and described in a way that provides recipients with all possible retrievable information. The description of the same object can be different depending on what aspect of the photograph the cataloguer chose to focus on. Problems arise (irrespective of the accepted standard, whether it will be Core Dublin or EAD), when it comes to an interpretation of the basic attributes such as “date” and “photographer”.

SEPIA

Safeguarding European Photographic Images for Access

Date?

- Date visual image: 1658
- Date physical image: date of exposure: 1980
- Date physical image: publishing date: 1981

Creator?

- Vermeer, J., person, painter
- Jones, M., person, photographer
- Smith, R., person, scan operator



About SEPIADES--> A long and winding road...

Fig. 1. Variants of description of photograph of the painting “The Milkmaid”: J. Vermeer (Klijn, 2003)

Problems with the interpretation of fields was well illustrated by Edwin Klijn (ECPA) at a seminar dedicated to the SEPIA project (Klijn, 2003). The object of description is a photograph of the famous painting by Johannes Vermeer “The Milkmaid” (fig. 1).

The questions which arise here are: What is the date of the recreated object: 1658 – what year was the photographic image made, 1980 – developed (copies made), 1981 – when was the photograph published? Who is the creator of the described object: the painter of the image, the photographer

who took the photograph, or perhaps the operator of the scanner who digitalized the photograph of the object?

PHOTOGRAPH COLLECTIONS IN THE MAIN LIBRARY OF THE WARSAW UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND CATALOGUING THEM FOR THE DIGITAL LIBRARY OF WARSAW UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY

Similar problems to those indicated in the earlier part of this article are to be found also in the Digital Library of the Warsaw University of Technology (DL WUT), operating within the dLibra system (created and developed by the Poznan Supercomputing and Networking Center).

The Main Library of the Warsaw University of Technology (WUT) decided to make its photographic collections available to a wider group of users. And so, in 2008 it began digitizing its photographic collections. The collection is composed of, among others, photographic materials, including 40 thousand positives (from the end the 19th the century to 1976) – mainly black and white, as well as 18 thousand diapositives from the end of the 1950s to 1976 (many of which are in colour). No inventories or catalogues remain extant,- In the case of diapositives, card indices have survived – alphabetical and subject.

The digitization of photographic collections in the Main Library of the WUT has two purposes: the archival protection of photographic collections and the safe availability of documents. It was decided that photographic collections located in the Main Library, hitherto little used, would be presented to potential users, and that those photographs with adjudged legal status, would be published in the DL WUT (<http://bcpw.bg.pw.edu.pl>). The remaining photographs would be scanned and made available locally, in the workroom of the National Library Heritage Collection The selection of parameters for scanning (resolution, file format) depends on the allocation of the digital document.

Photographs for the archival store are digitalized with resolution 600 dpi in the uncompressed TIFF file format. Photographs to be made available in the digital library are being converted to the JPEG format for resolutions 300 dpi, which gives files a much lower size but with a sufficient quality for the image. Photographs for the archive are not subject to any doctoring, however the photographs presented in the digital library are sometimes retouched slightly when it comes to sharpening, or evening out tones and levels. Scanning of photographs was performed in greyscale with 8 bit/px – 256 levels of grey.

For photographs which were rather blurry, in a number of cases we applied a sharpening mask, not-

exceeding 100% (a ray of sharpening not exceeding 1.3 pixels). In several cases photographs were brightened. Miniatures are added to the photograph descriptions, constituting approximately 10% of the size of the picture. On photographs a watermark is added – an imprint basically – in the right bottom, with contents “© Copyright year, the DL WUT”, small enough to not spoil the integrity of the photograph itself. Such measures will not fully prevent these photographs from being put to further unauthorized use, but may they discourage their misuse on the Internet.

Collection “Iconography”, presenting photograph, graphics, postcards, maps from the collection of the Main Library of the WUT, was established in July 2008. The first photographic documents were photographs which were museum exhibit items presented at the exhibition “Not only a Technical Book”, organised by both the Main Library and the Museum of the WUT in 2008. Attempts at describing the objects with metadata, due to an absence of norms and standards, were generally intuitive and based on experience taken from the cataloguing of other types of documents.

All exhibited items constituting the property of the Museum of the WUT are catalogued in the traditional way. Describing such a document (a photograph of the museum object) in the digital library *_was_* simpler than describing a haphazard photograph. If the object was to be exhibited in other exhibitions, it was given a name which was used and confirmed in many primary catalogues. Among the objects were medals, written documents such as student record books, congratulatory addresses, or payroll lists of the Polytechnic Institute. One photograph for example is that of student uniforms between the years 1896-1915. Exhibit items, where the original was a print, were at first catalogued in the NUKAT catalogue in the MARC 21 format. For creating the bibliographical description, guidelines typical for different types of documents were used, such as for prints and electronic documents (Lenartowicz, ed., 2003; Sanetra, 2003). Presented below are two examples of catalogued museum exhibits in the DL WUT:

Example 1

TITLE – Indeks studenta Politechniki Warszawskiej Jana Strzeszewskiego przyjętego na Wydział Architektury [The student record book of Jan Strzeszewski, accepted into the Architecture Department of Warsaw University of Technology].

CREATOR – Politechnika Warszawska. Wydział Architektury [Warsaw University of Technology. Architecture Department].

SUBJECT – eksponat muzealny; historia Politechniki Warszawskiej; indeksy studentów; Politechnika Warszawska [museum exhibit; history of the Warsaw University of Technology; student record books; the Warsaw University of Technology].

DESCRIPTION – origin of title: Title non-authentic as well as information: it includes 2 pages of index.

PUBLISHER – Warsaw: the Warsaw University of Technology.

DATE – 1917.

RELATION – Object from the Museum of WUT (information of subcollection, related to exhibits from the exhibition).

SOURCE – http://gate.bg.pw.edu.pl/F?func=direct&l_base=wtu01&doc_number=000165237 (link to original source, from which the described document derives in the digital library). In other words to the bibliographic description in the local catalogue ALEPH BGPW; the description is a faithful copy of records from the NUKAT catalogue; in this field information pertaining the holding place of the original is located: The original is located in the Warsaw University of Technology Museum.

RIGHTS – <http://bcpw.bg.pw.edu.pl/dlibra/docmetadata?id=574&from=&dirids=1> (fields contain information about legal ownership of original. Sometimes aside from the Main Library of the Warsaw University of Technology legal title may also be claimed by a descendant or institution. Legal title to the source of the object is owned by the Museum of WUT).

Example 2

TITLE – Fotografia daru dla cara Mikołaja II za wyrażenie zgody na budowę Instytutu Politechnicznego [Photograph of a gift to Tsar Nicholas II for having granted permission for the building of the Warsaw University of Technology].

SUBJECT – eksponat muzealny; historia Politechniki Warszawskiej; Politechnika Warszawska; historia szkolnictwa polskiego [museum exhibit; the history of the Warsaw University of Technology; the Warsaw University of Technology; the history of Polish schooling].

DATE – 19th century.

DESCRIPTION – Includes information about the contents of the photograph as well as historical data: Photograph of cake stand made in silver by the artistic workshop “Brothers Łopieńscy”. The photograph dates from the 19th century, a gift from Ms Józefina Łopieńska (1996) to the Museum of WUT.

TYPE – photograph

SOURCE – In the event that an object does not have as yet a description in either the local catalogue or the NUKAT catalogue, information is entered on the object’s place of holding: Original located in the Museum of WUT RELATION – Objects from the Museum of WUT.

Each museum exhibit item received subject keywords (museum exhibit item, history of the Warsaw University of Technology), objects supplemented with words best describing the object (e.g.: history of Polish schooling, student record books). The majority of exhibition objects do not have descriptions in the NUKAT catalogue, which are to be created following the publication of instructions for MARC 21 for photographic documents catalogued by Krystyna Sanetra. They will then be added to the Central Catalogue.

Currently, much of the collection is made up of: the digitalized and catalogued photographs of Warsaw artist-photographer Henryk Poddębski, the outstanding documentary photographer from the first half of the 20th century, and are included in the series Polish Photography Before 1939. Other works making up the collection are: the photographs of Czesław Olszewski, the Warsaw photographer of modernist architecture; as well as documentary photographer of the post-war generation such as Edward Falkowski, Leonarda Jarzembki or and Leonard Sempoliński. The Society for the Care of Monuments of the Past brought together documentary photographers, who participated in inventory projects aimed at immortalising monuments and other objects important from the perspective of the city's history. The main theme was the city and its architecture, with particular reference to places and buildings which were subject to transformation, decay, or reconstruction. An awareness of irreversible change and the importance of recording and describing phenomena constituted the essence of these documentary photographs. Post-war photographers linked to Warsaw were guided by the need to capture the radical transformations taking place within the city. These photographs, which recorded the images of objects and places undergoing change or about to disappear, gained special significance in the context of the preservation of both memory and the historical identity. When presenting them to the public, one should place great emphasis on the collection and record all pertinent details.

When working on Poddębski's photographs, it was necessary to overcome problems typical for documents of this type, which crop up not only in digital libraries, but also in traditional libraries. In spite of the fact that Polish norms have yet to be published, a great deal of effort is being put into the description process, as based on the guidelines issued by both the National Library of Poland and those provided by the NUKAT Centre (Pietrzak, comp., 2008; Sanetra, n.d.).

Problems with the formal cataloguing of iconographic documents begin with their definition. According to BN guidelines, an iconographic document is a “two-dimensional, image, motionless, not intended for projection by any portable technique”. This definition was based on the French norms and principles as published by The Library of Congress (FD from 44-077, 1977; Betz, 1982). In this light of this fact, it is possible to doubt the contents of the new collection of the DL WUT, since the digital version of an iconographic document is an image intended for projection. Moreover, amongst the many types of iconographic documents, we may list: graphics, sketches, paintings, photographs (positives and negatives), graphic matrices, posters, invitations, postcards, and medals. From among the iconographic documents, numbering 18,000 items, we may look in vain for diapositives.

Given our experience with creating iconographic collections for the DL WUT, it seems that an iconographic document should be defined as a graphic document, whose contents are presented in the form of the image. The present definition divides a iconographic document between projection and non-projection. Such a division seems sees the digitalization of library collections as artificial. An elaborating of the definition has arisen from the MARC21 format, which points to different ways of treating projection documents. However, it doesn't changing the fact that a iconographic document once scanned, becomes an “image destined for projection”, but by way of its digitization has not ceased to be an iconographic document.

Bundling iconographic document with electronic documents is the result of some misunderstanding. On account of its idiosyncrasies, an iconographic document i.e. its presentation in the form of an image, irrespective of the form it takes, remains an iconographic document.

The descriptive and subject cataloguing of such a document is very difficult, and is preceded by the laborious accumulation of essential information. A photograph is generally without text. The librarian must process visual information in order to generate bibliographical description. Data gleaned from the document, constitutes the basis for creating the record through the cataloguing and supplementing of information from outside the basic source.

DUBLIN CORE AND MARC

Descriptions of the photograph in the DL WUT are made in the Dublin Core format, and applicable to the description of electronic documents. The descriptions intended for the Central NUKAT Catalogue are created in the MARC21 format.

Dublin Core, the format most often used for the description of metadata used in digital libraries, consists of 15 elements called attributes. A number of them are universally known, since they appear in other formats of bibliographical description, e.g. Author, Title, Subject Description, Publisher. Part of the attributes contains technical data, such as the size of the file, and the identifier or the format. However, the remaining elements are intended for information typical for a document presented in digital libraries, e.g. copyright. Below are a detailed set of fields of the format Dublin Core (Dublin Core, 2009) and description in the DL WUT.

TITLE – includes the name of source, which is formally known.

CREATOR – Unit for creating contents of source. It includes proper and corporative names. In DL WUT the keyword is accepted in the form established in the file of sample entries of the catalogue NUKAT. In this field we giving the name of the creator of the photograph.

SUBJECT – generally includes keywords, subject headings (acceptable are also symbols of the Universal Decimal Classification describing contents of the source).

DESCRIPTION – This element can contain a free text determining the content of the document, such as the abstract, the table of contents, information about illustrations and the edition. In the case of the DL WUT in this field you will generally find historical data, dates for the construction of the object, and information about the creators of the object – in other words, the architects and others.

PUBLISHER – the entity responsible for making the source accessible.

CONTRIBUTOR – entity responsible for co-creating/contributing to the source. Similarly as in the attribute Author (Creator) entries are accepted in the form established in the file of the source sample subject words of the NUKAT catalogue. As a value of this attribute, one enters the names of the photographic studios, printers, the authors of the accompanying documents, editors, creators of the collection etc.

DATE – Date of publishing the source. This element of the format contains the date of the making of the original (in this case of the photograph). It is most often the date from a negative. The date of the copy which we have in collection is given in the field Description.

TYPE – defining the category of source content

FORMAT – contains the name of the format, in which the digital form of the source was written (in the case of dLibry the program alone recognizes the format and fills in the field automatically).

IDENTIFIER – Identifier of the digital store. Most often contains the URL address. In case of dLibry digital libraries it is a unique URL address for every document.

SOURCE – sending to the source from which the digital figure of the document comes from. In the case of the DL WUT this is sending of the source to bibliographical description in the local ALEPH catalogue, which is a faithful copy of the NUKAT record.

LANGUAGE – Language of contents of the source. In principle in DL WUT, this field is not applied because of the fact that on our photographs there is no text.

RELATION – sending to sources which remain in relation with that described in the DL WUT. This element contains the name of the series or sub-collection, where we place our photographs. E.g. Polish photograph before 1939.

COVERAGE – range of the content of source.

RIGHTS – information about legal ownership transfer of source. This attribute is very important in the case of digital libraries, because it determines the legal status of the document. In the case of the DL WUT, it happens that apart from the Main Library or the Museum of the Warsaw Technical University, descendants or heirs may also retain legal title.

The most difficult element of the bibliographical description of an iconographic document is the title zone. Data for this field should appear in the form which appears in the document. It can be a text placed by the author on the obverse, on the reverse, on the original cover, or on the wrapping of the document. A text written by the author is acceptable, from the negative. If we do not have such data, we look for inscriptions made by subsequent owners. They often contain the descriptions of persons and objects or places described in the photograph. We also look for titles in accompanying documents or other copies, if any do exist. Later we look to specialist literature in catalogues, bibliography, biographical dictionaries, encyclopedia, or the Internet.

In the case of H. Poddębski's photograph collection, the title is described as based on the image recorded in the photograph. If the need arises, every title is supplemented with a geographical name. One does not add any specification of the type of document, nor does one apply square brackets. The situation is different in the NUKAT catalogue. In the case of Henryk Poddębski's photographs where the text is missing, all information included in the fields of the bibliographical description is included in square brackets and supplemented by remarks in fields 5 XX. In the digital library the attribute Source refers the user to the description in the MARC21 format in the NUKAT catalogue. For this reason we can depart from widely accepted principles, wherein we assume that the description of the document in the digital library should be user-friendly. The substantial amount of square brackets does not support this notion as they are incomprehensible to the

majority of users. In a number of descriptions in the local catalogue (in the future the NUKAT catalogue) in the title zone the four brackets appear, such as:

245 \a[The Cathedral of the Birth of Mary, The Blessed Virgin in Sandomierz] \h [Photographic Document] : \b [interiors] / \c [Henryk Poddębski].

http://gate.bg.pw.edu.pl/F?func=direct&l_base=wtu01&doc_number=000169977.

The average user of digital libraries is generally not interested in those regulations for cataloguing which have been adopted by libraries. The description most often assesses the usefulness of information included in the bibliographical record. As a result, a greater emphasis is placed on the reliability of the information (identification of all elements of the description, such as: author, title, year of issue, details about the object) found in the bibliographical description as opposed to actual formal requirements, such as the numbers and kinds of brackets in individual fields.

SUBJECT CATALOGUING OF ICONOGRAPHIC DOCUMENTS

The next group of issues involve the material cataloguing of a photograph. It would be highly unusual for a user to look for a photograph according to the title as formulated by the cataloguer. Therefore, the attribute Subject and Keyword as in the case of an iconographic document is the most important element of the description. Since the photographic document does not have a search text, we are looking to the DL WUT to endow this attribute with as many phrases as possible. In the case of books, every word from the text can enter the index. However, the iconographic document requires another form of mapping its contents. Subject cataloguing in the Main Library of the WUT is made up of: classification according to the UDC, keywords and the call number of the document, indicating its place on the shelf. In a digital library, for determining the subject of a document, keywords are exclusively used. Entries are taken from the keyword authority file created in DL WUT, but they also allow for a certain amount of flexibility.

In the DL WUT an authority file of keywords is being built in accordance with the methodology for the building of thesauri; but only the method for forming lexical units is used. Keywords have the form of nouns and are most often the terms used in specialist literature. If it is possible, a natural train of words is kept: on top spot the noun is in the nominative case, followed by adjectives, nouns, participles, numerals or prepositional phrases determining the noun. There are exceptions to this rule, where the said train of words is not provided. Some keywords are not included in the file

of sample entries. And so in this way they do not deviate from the rest in terms of its linguistic form. However these are always the words which best describe the contents of the photograph.

In the DL WUT for the descriptions of photographic documents a dozen or so keywords are applied. A different approach is taken with the local Main Library catalogue, which includes copies of records from the NUKAT catalogue, where every keyword entered into the model file has its equivalent in the form of a UDC symbol. Such a connection necessitates certain limitations which are missing in the Digital Library, since documents are only catalogued thematically with the help of keywords. No restrictions are applied in quantitative terms. It is recognized that the more keywords assigned to the document, then the easier it is to identify it. Moreover, the dLibra software has a very helpful tool which offers the possibility of creating a dictionary of synonyms.

In the case of the DL WUT, this mechanism completes the records for so-called rejected forms of terms, which in traditional catalogues fulfill the role of so-called reference marks “see”. In model files created in the MARC21 format, these are variants of keywords which are to be found in the fields 4XX. Popularly, they are determined as tropes, e.g.:

MAIN HEADING: Politechnika Warszawska [Warsaw University of Technology].

DICTIONARY OF SYNONYMS: PW [WUT], the Warsaw University of Technology, Państwowa Wyższa Szkoła Techniczna [National College of Technology], Warszawski Instytut Politechniczny im. Mikołaja II [The Nicholas II Warsaw Polytechnical Institute].

PHOTOGRAPHIC DESCRIPTIONS IN EUROPEANA

When discussing issues associated with standards for photographic descriptions for digital libraries, we must mention the principles applied in Europeana, a service which ensures access to multilingual collections of European digital libraries, spearheaded by the European Commission within the framework of the program “i2010: Digital Libraries” and overseen in the EDLnet.

The Europeana prototype has been operating since December 2008. The combination of descriptive metadata, traditionally treated differently in libraries, museums and archives, proved an issue which the creators of Europeana had to resolve. It was decided to treat descriptive metadata as search metadata. The format used was Dublin Core with certain modifications. New elements were added, such as: the User tag (public tags created by registered users), Unstored (a type of basket for useful

information which does not fit into other fields), Object (internal use only) and labels of the IsShownBy relation (URI link to the digital object) and IsShownAt (contextual presentation of the object, in the parent digital library).

Also, a specification was drawn up to copy information from bibliographical descriptions of digitized objects to metadata typical for Europeana (Specification determined in the document for the Metadata Elements for the European Prototype) (*Specification...*, 2008). Proposed is the keeping of all XML attributes, which included the initial description without changes. The use of the xml:lang attribute is recommended wherever possible: determining language, and in which metadata they are saved. However the element dc:language determines the language in which an object (document) is written. Every description must contain 5 compulsory fields: the date of the authentic document, link to the digital object, name of the institution storing the original, the title and the object type (text, image, motion picture, sound). Giving the language is recommended, and also in the case of picture documents if they contain some text (placard, poster).

In the case of a photograph bereft of all notes, stamps, etc., this attribute is ignored. The fields which the user can search for are: title, author, date, subject (keywords). One should remember that Europeana does not store digital objects, but shows them in a brief general description. In turn, it provides a link to the digital object, or the miniature of the object and refers to the description in the parent library of the object.

An exemplary photograph description (Tram in the Warsaw ghetto) in Europeana contains 7 attributes (fig. 2). The number of keywords is striking, albeit this is not the norm for objects in Europeana.

In the description of this photograph used by La Réunion des musées nationaux (Rmn) a Polish reader may be surprised by the lack of data in the data field (in Europeana) and the generalized date – the 20th century – in the original description (fig. 3). The empty field “Date” in Europeana results perhaps from the conditions of the conversion, permitting only the determined format of the input. It is worth recalling that in the document Specification for the Metadata Elements for the Europeana Prototype, the contents of the field “Date” were given as the date of the creation of the original object (analogue or digital born), rather than the date of the digitization of the object.

Original description (source in the parent entity), aside from data, like the call number, includes also information about legal title: the keywords are: antisémitisme, étoile de David, ghetto, scène de rue, Seconde Guerre mondiale, tramway, transport en commun.



Tramway dans le Ghetto de Varsovie

Twórcza: Heydecker Joe ,

Opis: photographie (technique),

Instituția: Culture.fr/collections

Język: fr

Źródło: Allemagne, Berlin, BPK

Prawa: Diffusion uniquement sur le territoire français. (C) BPK, Berlin, Dist RMN - Joe Heydecker

Mniej

Temat: TRAMWAY DANS LE GHETTO DE VARSOVIE PHOTOGRAPHIES ALLEMAGNE BERLIN BPK CHEMIN DE FER 20EME SIECLE XXEME SIECLE XXI SIECLE DAVID ETOILE ETOILE JAUNE DEUXIEME GUERRE MONDIALE 2EME GUERRE MONDIALE GUERRE 1939 1945 COURANT DE PENSEE PHOTO VIE INTELLECTUELLE ET SCIENTIFIQUE THEMATIQUE TRANSPORT FERROVIAIRE PHOTOGRAPHIE TECHNIQUE GUERRE EPOQUE CONTEMPORAINE ETOILE DE DAVID SIECLE TRANSPORT EN COMMUN SYMBOLE RELIGIEUX TRANSPORT FUNICULAIRE GENRE ICONOGRAPHIQUE DESCRIPTION ICONOGRAPHIQUE TRANSPORT PAR CABLE TRAMWAY SCENE DESCRIPTION ICONOGRAPHIQUE EVENEMENT POLITIQUE RELIGION HEYDECKER JOE POLITIQUE 20E SIECLE THEORIE COURANT DE PENSEE TECHNIQUE TECHNIQUE EVENEMENT ANTISEMITISME SCENE DE RUE PERIODE CONTEMPORAINE SECONDE GUERRE MONDIALE TRAIN GHETTO EVENEMENT MILITAIRE RACISME

Date: 0

Fig. 2 Description of photograph: “Tramway dans le Ghetto de Varsovie” in Europeana

<http://www.europeana.eu/portal/full-doc.html?query=varsovie&start=42&startPage=37&uri=>

<http://www.europeana.eu/resolve/record/03903/29837FD87BE8FE9BFFB98301EC7B70385F0E34DB&view=table&pageId=bd#>

Cote cliché :	07-523493	
N° d'inventaire :	Fonds :	Photographies
Titre :	Tramway dans le Ghetto de Varsovie	
Auteur :	Heydecker Joe	
Droits d'auteur :	(C) Bildarchiv Preußischer Kulturbesitz	
Crédit photographique :	Diffusion uniquement sur le territoire français. (C) BPK, Berlin, Dist RMN	
/ Joe Heydecker		
Période :	20e siècle	
Technique/Matière :	photographie (technique)	
Localisation :	Allemagne, Berlin, BPK	
Mots-clés :	antisémitisme , étoile de David , ghetto , scène de rue , Seconde Guerre mondiale , tramway , transport en commun	

Fig. 3. Description of photograph “Tramway dans le Ghetto de Varsovie” in La Réunion des musées nationaux (Rmn)

<http://www.photo.rmn.fr/cf/htm/CPicZ.aspx?E=2C6NU0CW9CGO>

Amongst the numerous keywords placed in field “Subject” and describing “Tramway dans le Ghetto de Varsovie” there is an absence of denotations, inseparably linked with the historical period and the very event commemorated in the photo. There is an absence of phrases such as: fascism, Naziism, German occupation of Poland, persecution of Jews. This example shows that in spite

of numerous keywords, the description does not always deliver complete information about the object to the average user, who has found his way to the digital library by way of the open Internet.

The problem with integrating the format of the description (at least in part by encompassing compulsory fields) is typical not only for photographs, but for all digital objects made available through Europeana. The goal of Europeana is to facilitate access to the multilingual and multicultural heritage of Europe and to preserve its cultural legacy for future generations. In order to achieve this aim a unified standard is essential for all cultural institutions – libraries, archives, museums. Every cultural institution with digital collections may become a Europeana partner provided that the technical requirements are put in place. Polish libraries, archives and museums have such a possibility. Here we return to an issue stated at the beginning of this article: the need for all institutions of memory to arrive at a unified standard for the description of photographs.

NEW CHALLENGES FOR LIBRARIANS

Regulations for cataloguing will not alleviate the array of problems that libraries face when formally and materially cataloguing iconographic documents, particular given that these same regulations devote little time to difficult and ambiguous cases which outnumber the difficulties met when cataloguing books. A lack of data may always lead to the visual misinterpretation of an iconographic document. It is necessary to accept that the cataloguer will require the help of a subject specialist, such as an art historian. The correct identification of an object in a photograph is sometimes very difficult and time-consuming. It often happens that collecting data for a bibliographic description can take up to three weeks. The library cataloguer or the editor of the digital library must be ready to accept help from external sources, such as network communities. Such solutions are offered by the Web 2.0, which have made an immense contribution in recent years.

There is no doubt that supplying a bibliographical description with a substantial amount of keywords is needed. The question is whether controlled vocabulary is needed, when it is a lexis written in a dictionary of synonyms. Perhaps a solution would be a dictionary based on enquiries entered by users in digital library search engines. For example, incorrect forms of enquiries would find their way to a synonym dictionary (such an idea appeared at one time on the Polish Library 2.0 Forum)

Taking into consideration the specificity of digital libraries which the user usually finds via a search engine such as Google, one should provide complete information about the digital object, and in the case of a photograph, where a distinct feature is the absence of text, there must be very specific information about the context of the image. This is related to the necessity of breaking from traditional and dogmatic modes of describing documents.

In digital libraries, the source document, the electronic document, as well as the object are described in one record. This is particularly visible in the case of a photograph, where it is important to provide as much information about the photograph as possible. Such a solution is often defined as a feature typical for libraries based on dLibra software. However this solution is not associated with the software, but with the specificity of digital libraries, which largely rely on scanned documents, as opposed to digital born documents. For the user they are simply copies of authentic documents.

In digital times with universal access to information via the Internet, the needs of the user must be the starting point for digital libraries. These needs are often elusive in the absence of either research or tools which would allow us to determine such needs. Libraries, as well as other institutions of memory, have to contend with the unification of standards followed by their adaptation to the newer demands associated with the ever-wider access to digital collections.

In looking to link the collections of cultural institutions and creating a global library, it will be necessary to unify both standards and the aggregation of data. This goal will not be achieved, however, by making recourse to once-determined norms and provisions. Standards are needed for the cohesion and accuracy of a catalogue. But the fundamental argument for applying a standard should be the possibility of searching scattered databases and enjoying universal access to data held in other institutions. In order to develop better solutions, joint actions on the part of institutions of memory are essential. An example may be an initiative taken by Dutch libraries, archives and museums, which in January 2009 entered into an agreement with associations governing copyright pertaining to the digitization and granting of access to collections of national heritage (FOBID, 2009).

Standards need to be constantly developed and adapted to the needs of users, even though they may not be able to formulate these said needs. Librarians, or the creators of digital collections, must accept that the methods for classifying and cataloguing documents, developed over the centuries,

must evolve. A new challenge will be posed by the Semantic Web, using the analysis of user actions, considering classification and search semantic associations. Solutions of this type are already being applied, such as in the Digital Library of Gdańsk Technical University (the future Pomeranian Digital Library), where JeromeDL software is using the advanced services of the semantic network. The technology of semantic knowledge, raising the value and functionality of the digital library, will be one of the possible responses to the needs of users and librarians, who must be open to new technologies and ideas.

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