Implementation of authority control in COBISS.SR

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After being implemented in COBISS.SI (Slovenia) and COBISS.BG (Bulgaria), authority control was implemented into COBISS.SR (Serbia). At the moment, the system COBISS.SR includes only the personal names authority file of authors, but there is a plan in the second phase to include corporate names, as well as the subject headings authority file in some further work. The personal names authority file in the domestic system is called CONOR.SR. Bibliographic and authority records are linked through the CONOR.SR database. CONOR.SR is a unique database for all Serbian library members of the system COBISS.SR which contains unique authority record for each author's name that appears in the bibliographic record. CONOR.SR database project was realized by the Matica Srpska Library, the National Library of Serbia and the University Library "Svetozar Marković", with the participation of all libraries in Serbia who maintain and develop their cataloguers under the COBISS platform. The initial CONOR.SR database was installed in 2013 and edited in the period from 2013 to 2018. A complete implementation of authority control in the system COBISS.SR included the following steps:

One-day course for cataloguers

During 2018 librarians from the three libraries mentioned above were trained to educate cataloguers from libraries how to use the system COBISS.SR. The educators from the University Library "Svetozar Markovic" held 12 courses

for about 250 cataloguers from the University libraries in Belgrade, Niš and Kragujevac. After that all cataloguers got privileges for creating basic records in the authority file.

Course for editors of authority records

The National Library of Serbia organized a training for updating data in the authority file records intended for the so-called "Middle" editors, who were given more privileges. The most privileges were given to the so-called "Top" editors.

Update of existing CONOR.SR database

The year 2018 and the beginning of 2019 were key periods in terms of editing records and deleting duplicate records in the existing CONOR database. Particular attention was paid to identifying and deleting duplicate records because after the implementation of CONOR database, this cannot be possible. As bibliographic records are linked with appropriate authority records, deleting an authority record would mean that a specific bibliographic record would be left without an author heading (authority access point) and would not be correct in OPAC representation.

In this period, it was important to check and correct as many records as possible of personal names that are significant to our culture, as well as records of authors whose names are associated with the largest number of bibliographic records. The University Library "Svetozar Markovic" has the responsibility to edit the authority records of local researchers, whose names are linked with the largest number of bibliographic records in COBISS.

Linking authority and bibliographic records

A test CONOR database was established in early April 2019 and enabled cataloguers to become familiar with the system and to exercise the work process before installing the real database. During the weekend of April 13th and 14th, 2019, IZUM (Institute of Information Sciences) installed the software for authority control and connected CONOR to COBIB and local databases. The CONOR database has been active in our COBISS.SR system from April 15th, 2019. When creating a record, there is no longer a manual entry of the author heading in block 7XX. There are two possibilities to fill block 7XX:

- to link with the corresponding authority record if it already exists in the CONOR database
- or to create a new one if there is no appropriate authority record in the CONOR database.

As Serbian libraries have specific situation regarding to a parallel use of the Cyrillic and Latin script, the creation of the uniform heading for the personal name means that there are two parallel fields 200 in the one CONOR.SR file. The first authority access point is always in the Cyrillic, and the second one in the Latin. Some examples illustrate this:

Example 1. – A domestic author

200 1 <7>cb - cyrillic - not specified <a>Црњански<b>Милош<f>1893-1977
200 1 <7>ba – latin<a>Crnjanski< b>Miloš <f>1893-1977

Example 2 – A foreign author whose name is originally written in Latin

200 1 <7>cb - cyrillic – not specified <a>Ирби<b>Аделина Паулина< f> 1831-1911 200 1 <7>ba – latin<a> Irby <b> Adelina Paulina <f> 1831-1911

Example 3 - A foreign author whose name is originally written in Russian Cyrillic

200 1 <7>ca - cyrillic - not specified <a>Достоевский<b>Фёдор Михайлович< f>1821-1881 200 1 <7>ba - latin<a>Dostoevskij<b>Fedor Mihajlovič<f>1821-1881

For Russian authors, it is also necessary to enter the name reference in the field 400 which is an alternative access point. For example:

400 1 <7>cb – cyrillic - not specified <a>Достојевски<b>Фјодор Михајилович<f>1821-1881

At the moment of writing the paper, the number of authority records in the CONOR.SR database was about 52000.[1]

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[1] The data was retrieved from the CONOR database on April 25, 2019.

Full synchronization of the system and linking of bibliographic records created before April 15th, 2019 to CONOR will be done by the Institute of Information Sciences (IZUM) after May 1st, 2019.

Working with authority records is a precondition for linking data from local and union catalogues to Linked Open Data. We believe that we will be successful in the new work process and that authority control will improve both the quality of bibliographic records and their uniformity.