

COBISS Meet 2020 – Online Conference Presentation of New Approaches for All participants in the COBISS.net Network

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Ana Vasiljević
ana.ivkovic.va@googlemail.com

Jelica Zeljić
jelicazelj1971@gmail.com

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*National library
Osečina, Serbia*

The Institute of Information Sciences in Maribor (IZUM) organized COBISS Meet 2020 conference from 1st to 3rd of December 2020. The gathering was organized online because of the Covid-19 pandemic. The conference took place live on the internet platform <https://hopin.to/events/cobiss-meet-2020>. The virtual scene was a great opportunity to discuss ideas and joint plans for the future, contact with lecturers, colleagues and other participants of the event. The event was attended by over 600 participants from more than 10 countries. The central topic was the presentation of new approaches and innovations that have recently been implemented by IZUM for all participants in the COBISS.net network.

Welcome speech, lectures and a discussion with lecturers from Slovenia were scheduled for the first day of the conference. In his welcome address, Mr. Alen Bošnjak, PhD, Principle of IZUM, referred to the ongoing circumstances in the world that, however, did not prevent us all to continuously fulfill our mission. Even in such circumstances, we must enable our customers our full services. Afterwards, other lectures were announced and it was pointed out that everyone would have the opportunity to exchange views with lecturers and other participants after each session, which was an excellent chance to exchange ideas and make joint plans for the future.

In his welcome speech, Mr. Jure Gašparič, PhD, State Secretary in Ministry of Education, Science and Sport, pointed out the importance of IZUM and COBISS throughout his educational and research career in the field of librarianship, whose activity is not only recognized in Slovenia but also

throughout the region, as well as by UNESCO. COBISS and SICRIS are two very important parts in the mosaic of the Slovenian Development Strategy 2030, which is focused on the quality of life of all because the educational strategy that connects science and economics is of key importance for the transfer of knowledge. He also commented that the COBISS Meet 2020 event was probably the largest project in the field of science that IZUM organized in recent years in cooperation with Slovenian universities. The Academic Digital Collection of Slovenia is a relevant national information resource for researchers. It will be a unique platform for accessing full text versions of electronic information sources to which universities and their libraries are subscribed individually, which will significantly improve the overall user experience. IZUM is preparing a common open science national repository, dubbed dCOBISS. It enables the storage of open access researchers' publications and it provides project details. The upgrade of the national infrastructure – HPC RIVR – supercomputer will start working in the spring 2021 and it will strengthen the national high performance computing capacities needed for innovation in both research and economics.

In the presentation that followed, Mr. Bahan Neupane, the representative of UNESCO, talked about the cooperation between UNESCO and IZUM. The UNESCO Executive Board began considering the work of IZUM eight years ago. The agreement between the government of Slovenia and UNESCO was signed in September 2012 for a period of six years, however the center became functional on January 14th 2020, under the auspices of UNESCO. This effort will have a direct impact on the exchange of knowledge between different countries. Mr. Bahan Neupane also added that IZUM should continue to work in the key area of influencing the policies of how knowledge gets produced, processed and archived, as it must bridge in between where the knowledge exists and where the knowledge lacks. He stressed that IZUM should disseminate through workshops, various types of brainstorming and knowledge exchange processes. The things done by IZUM are example of good practice for countries in the region and beyond. He specially emphasized and praised the preservation of multilingualism within the COBISS.net system.

In the presentation of Mr. Miran Petek we had the opportunity to hear about the digital repository COBISS, or dCOBISS for short, which is a new product of IZUM, installed and available to all libraries in the COBISS system. It is the latest IZUM web application intended for storing digital content used in libraries. Afterwards, Mr. Petek explained the connection with the Slovenian part of the repository which is connected to Slovenian

libraries. The application for this web application is autonomous and closely integrated with COBISS3-cataloging, COBISS+ and Sicris. All libraries in COBISS.net will have access to the central repository; librarians from different systems will be able to search the repository while librarians from a local system of a member state will be able to store and search records and files in their central repository. First step in the process of work of librarian is creation of bibliographic record in COBISS3/cataloging while copyright data and open access digital content files are added to bibliographic record in the dCOBISS. Slovenian research agencies as well as other research academic institutions support the preparation for the analysis of open access to a local repository, which has yet to become functional. The data from a local repository are aimed to be entered into the academic repository, which will be part of dCOBISS and in open access. Also, all libraries will be able to access the dCOBISS test environment where librarians with username and password may practice, test and learn and try out new upgraded features.

Ms. Janita Tacer Slana presented new information about COBISS+, such as ordering of articles stored in COBISS+ in the last two years. The development, upgrade and update of COBISS with new functions is constant and always taking into account the remarks of librarians and users. Ms. Tacer Slana presented the new characteristics of the My COBISS profile, concerning the production of the lists of search results and the limitation of search aspects. The last significant upgrade which refers to the adaptation for the blind and visually impaired, as well as the user interface for researchers were also presented. All portals work on the common COBISS+ software platform. One of advantages for users is that when they enter a search term, they search both COBISS and e-resources in full text. To improve customer service the Excel export option is included. Ms. Janita Tacer Slana also presented ways to reach different user groups in faster, easier and more comprehensive manner.

In the presentation of Ms. Tadeja Brešar, Head of Bibliographic Control at IZUM, we had the opportunity to get familiar with the general list of subject headings of COBISS. She indicated that there are 5.5 million records in the joint catalog and approximately 83% of these records contain at least one subject heading. Half of the records were created in the National and University Library (NUK) and other Slovenian libraries, and only 6% of the records contain a subject headings from another lists of subject headings (Library of Congress Subject Heading, REMEAU, etc.). The list of subject headings was created in the form of authority database that enables a unique system of naming subject headings for the entire COBISS system. This means that all

libraries could use the same list of these subject headings. The database enables the controlled entry in the field of the subject entry, which means that incorrect subject headings cannot appear nor can different catalogers express them differently. Authority control allows control of synonyms, which means that all authority records contain both normative and variant forms; besides it is required for all catalogues to use only the normative form of the subject entry when adding it. A general list of subject entries is structured and the entries are hierarchically related, both with superordinate and subordinate terms.

The second day of the conference started with the presentation of Ms. Tanja Turšek who works in the department for development of local applications COBISS3. Her presentation showed some new functions and updates that are built into COBISS3. She presented some functions of the most frequently used Loan software module, like updates related to the faster access to most often used material, member search by IDs or nemas, access to textbooks, e-book lending, booking via COBISS+ or mCOBISS.

Ms. Tanja Žuran Putora presented the new generation of inventory, the online inventory, that was implemented in 2019; it is performed in the COBISS3 production environment. The development took place in two steps, the solution for the revision of monographs was prepared at first, after which the possibility for the revision of serial publications was added. The application enables finding material on the shelf based on inventory numbers by using bar code readers.

In the mCOBISS application development, Mr. Boštjan Batič has the role of a programmer but he also works on the promotion and training of users for the use of the mobile application. This presentation referred to the unique mCOBISS application within the COBISS.net network. In 2013, IZUM started developing the mCOBISS mobile application, the project was co-financed by the European Union under the auspices of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport of Slovenia. The aim of submitting the project was to encourage the development of a wider selection of e-services and mobile applications in various forms of information society, as well as to establish new technological concepts that will contribute to the transition to a modern and efficient knowledge society.

Mr. Sergey Lach presented COBISS as a social network, as he works in IZUM on public relations, training and building user relations, and is a member of editorial boards of several IZUM social media. Lach pointed out that the Agreement on the COBISS.net network and the exchange of bibliographic records between the national library information systems in the

countries of the Western Balkans was signed in 2003. COBISS.net develops library information system, connects eight countries and a total of 1400 libraries; over 5800 librarians are connected and cooperate. The network uses information technologies in 8 national languages and 2 scripts, which is a huge network of librarians and library users who can connect to social networks run and maintained by IZUM.

On the third day, Mr. Miran Petek presented the ADZ project related to the Academic Digital Collection of Slovenia. This project started last year when the first version of the so called *discovery* tools on the COBISS+ platform was installed. COBISS+ was first presented at the COBISS conference in 2014, while it was installed in 2016, and the previous system COBISS/OPAC was replaced by the COBISS+ platform. The basic platform that uses the functionality of the *discovery* tool for the research and academic environment was thus set up. This portal is intended to become the portal of the Academic Digital Collection of Slovenia while the development of a special part of COBISS+ intended for the research is planned.

Ms. Romana Muhvič Šumandl, head of the Service Management Sector, presented the new customer support functions. The project of including school libraries in the COBISS system was completed in 2018 and presented to the Associations of Library Societies. For the needs of school libraries certain conversions had to be done as some school libraries worked using different systems, such as WinKnj or School Library. The software upgrade with the option Material in quarantine, which is related to the work of libraries in the situation caused by the covid-19 virus pandemic was presented afterwards. Ms. Muhvič Šumandl mentioned that the enrollment of users via the Internet increased due to the pandemic. She also added that the commercial Oracle database was replaced by the relational open source database PostgreSQL. An interesting fact is that a total of 95 libraries joined COBISS.net in two years.

Mr. Bojan Štok, the Head of Software Development, introduced us to the architecture of the COBISS system and presented the transition to an open source platform. He presented the architecture of the COBISS system as it is today, the technology changes involved in the development of COBISS2 and COBISS3, as well as the future technology that will be used in the development of COBISS4 software. The container technology will be used instead of virtual servers. Technological changes will depend on the development of technology in the future. JakartaEE and MicroProfile technology, which are the successors of JAVE EE enable faster application development and are planned to be used.

Ms. Gordana Mazić presented concept and preliminary results of the analysis performed within the task of creating normative records for works within the COBISS system. She pointed out that when creating an authority record for a certain title, i.e. work, it is necessary to link it with records for all its editions and translations into different languages. An authority record for a work is related to authority records for authors as well as to the bibliographic records for its various editions and translations. Authority records for works are like a jigsaw puzzle that builds a broader picture of the works themselves. Keeping such normative records puts intellectual and artistic content at the highest level of abstraction.

The lectures that were held every day, lasted in total two hours and were followed by discussion. For better understanding all lectures were translated into three languages. The moderators were: Mr. Boštjan Batic and Mr. Branko Kurnjak.

This virtual gathering was a great opportunity to discuss ideas and joint plans for the future. In addition to monitoring professional work, exchange of opinions, examples of good practice and achievements with lecturers, colleagues and other participants, this event was also a great opportunity for social networking and sharing of more than 1500 comments, greetings, questions and answers lined up on the conference page during the event. The presentation of new approaches and innovations, which IZUM introduced in the last period, were well received, which was reflected in the discussions with the lecturers. The interest in participating in this event was great. The welcome speech and all lectures, including discussions are available on the You Tube channel COBISS - the path to knowledge, IZUM Maribor.¹

1. [Conference video material](#)