

CATALOGUE RULES AND PRACTICE IN THE REGION;
EXAMINATION OF THE SITUATION REGARDING
CONTEMPORARY TRENDS

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An examination of the situation of catalogue rules and practices in the region and their relation in regard to contemporary trends of bibliographic control has been initiated and financed by the Institute of Information Science (IZUM) Maribor, Slovenia. The Institute specified the research implementation mode, the countries which are to be subject to its query and requested to visit national libraries. The aim of this work has been to research catalogue rules in practice in relation to their theoretical background in order to gain a clearer picture of the situation in the region.

The subject of this study was the relationship between the emergence of new forms of materials, such as electronic materials whose appearance has initiated the need for the revision of international principles and standards for information organization. Such an investigation is important for promoting modern practices on the national level and for implementing international standards in our regional countries. It is especially significant for the creation of efficient and cost effective library activities that are based on the exchange of bibliographic and authorized data within the joint creation

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of virtual shared catalogues on the national and international level.

The study was conducted through a questionnaire which was followed by interviews which aimed to clarify particular questions and answers. The questionnaire consisted of three parts which were completed by managers and head officers of departments for cataloguing and bibliographic control in national libraries and by the chairmen of library societies. The study was conducted in 9 countries of the region: Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Montenegro, Croatia, Kosovo, the Former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia, Slovenia and Serbia.

Out of the 27 questioned, 78% completed the query, among which were 6 managers (67%), 9 head officers in Cataloguing Departments (100%), and 6 representatives of library societies (67%). It was noted that the head officers of Cataloguing Departments were the most willing to fill out the questionnaire.

As had been expected, a different attitude to cataloguing activities was expressed by the managers of national libraries in comparison to the head officers running Cataloguing Departments. A majority of managers (66%) emphasized the key importance of the Cataloguing Department for overall library operations, and all emphasized the need for its reorganization regarding task division (“a distant path of a book”). All managers agreed on the necessity for enlarging the number of staff, but their views were divided in regard to formal education required for certain types of jobs. Head officers of Cataloguing Departments also expressed a difference in opinion concerning this issue. Only two institutions prioritized vocational education (library science), which probably resulted from the status of librarianship, national libraries and education for library professionals in countries involved. When asked about the role of cataloging in the development of services on the Web and material digitaliza-

tion, both managers and head officers equally highlighted its importance.

The percentage of recall among chairmen of library societies was rather high, but the expected outcomes were missing. In compliance with membership in the IFLA and its accompanying obligations, it was expected that library societies would actively follow modern trends and that they would have an important role in accepting international standards and in their development. As it turns out, most library societies have failed to establish formal committees for cataloguing; therefore they do not deal with cataloguing issues; rather, they observe a strategy for formal content processing on the national library level. Although a majority of those examined and their libraries have shown themselves to be well acquainted with new conceptual methods and harmonized ISBD standards, a society from only one country proactively took a position in regard to these issues. This society was the only one to take into consideration the necessity of developing new cataloguing rules on a national level, while all others accepted international solutions. In spite of this fact, 50% of those examined were in favor of their library society planning the development of national guidelines with national solutions.

This investigation has shown that in spite of the formal implementation of *Rules and Manuals for the Preparation of the Alphabet Catalog* by *Eva Verona*, as a national book of rules (except for two countries who took part in this examination), practice itself has proven itself to have shifted away from these rules due to new types of materials, as well as due to the implementation of machine readable standards and library software. Head officers of Cataloguing Departments have recognized the difference between this book of rules and practice itself, even among different solutions within the same library. They think that it is necessary to adopt normative acts (standards and books of rules) which would be able to contribute to problem solving.

At the beginning of 20th century, national libraries were exposed to changes which occurred in their surroundings and it was therefore mandatory to urgently respond to these changes by internally reorganizing themselves in order to modernize traditional services and allow for the development of new user services. These changes started in the 90s of the previous century and happened simultaneously with the development of information and communication technology, which influenced the type of material and media in which materials are published and places where libraries should promote their new services. Establishing online catalogues in a common network with neighboring libraries has made it possible to provide services not only locally but also globally and hence has supported their visibility through both national and international cooperation

Universal bibliographic control and work on the new version of ISBD, whose preliminary synchronized edition from 2007 has also supported other library centers to start translating, has been extraordinarily important for the development of national cataloguing rules. Even in 2003, the IFLA working group for ISBD revision established a standard development working group to research the possibility of joining seven specialized ISBDs in order to overcome issues

such as flaws in names and concepts themselves, as well as to modernize regulations for all types of materials. The working group, based on the suggestions of its study group, reconsidered the new concept for screening general material designation (GMD), for which the new field of 0 for ISBD was agreed upon. The text in field 0 and examples of its use should have been published by the end of 2009, in order to enable libraries to be prepared for this new data entry concept. The first standardized issue of the synchronized use of ISBD, along with examples of it in use, is to be published by the end of August 2010. All notified alterations and standard amendments must be entered into the UNIMARC format for bibliographic data.

The legal obligation of national libraries is to enforce bibliographic control over national material in all media. Due to this, national libraries are important for following and participating in the development of international normative acts. The translating of international documents into national languages and the responsibility for their implementation in particular communities are matters that also fall upon library societies, which not only share with national libraries the responsibility regarding national bibliographic control, but also the responsibility for the functioning of national library systems as a whole.