Connecting the Western Balkans through digital librarianship

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Western Balkans academic libraries collaboration

Three main areas of collaboration up until 2021 have been:

- shared system for library automation including cataloguing- Cobiss,

- promotion of PhD thesis and

- the keyword searchable library that encompass digitized culture heritage materials from several Western Balkan countries

Cobiss - Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services

-organizational model of joining libraries at national and regional level around the shared system for cataloguing,

-union bibliographic/catalogue database,

-local bibliographic databases of participating libraries,

-the authority database,

- ....

Cobiss Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services

-Cobiss system covers several states in Western Balkans

-Created, maintained and upgraded by Institute of Information Science IZUM, from Maribor, Slovenia

-1400 libraries in the system, Slovenia 917, Serbia 225, others <100 each

-12.406.187 records in union catalogue databases of national systems Slovenia 5.613.048, Serbia 3.557.805 records

Cobiss – Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services

-797.369 bibliographic records have been exchanged between 2004 and 2019.

-Cobiss conference is held annually

-Its mostly about the experience and knowledge sharing.

Promotion of PhD thesis in academic libraries

-kick started by Tempus Joint project- Governance Reform 158764-TEMPUS-RS-TEMPUS-JPGR "New Library Services at Western Balkan universities"2010 till 2012

-encompassed academic libraries from Serbia, Bosnia and Herzegovina and Montenegro

-main result of the project is a network of repositories providing for safeguarding of doctoral dissertations and their efficient presentation

the keyword searchable library PRETRAZIVA.RS

-Academic libraries from Serbia, Montenegro and Bosnia and Herzegovina,

-600.000+ pages,

-METS-ALTO format,

-the largest and the only substantial existing collection of keyword searchable materials in Western Balkans,

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- originated from CIP ICT-PSP project 'EuropeanaNewspapers – A Gateway to European Newspapers Online'' 2012 – 2015

-University library in Belgrade built the system for preservation and presentation of METS-ALTO files,

-acquired the means for their production docWorks software

- all the needed elements to have the full circle from creation of digital image to presentation of digital document to the user in and efficient and effective way

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- several national projects financed by Serbian ministry for culture transformed this bases into the largest keyword searchable digital library of the region,

-The relations between participating libraries remain loose

-University library Belgrade maintain and upgrade the system within its own operations

-participating libraries provide the initiative for addition of materials from their collections, digitize materials (JPGs or METS ALTO files depending on availability of certain programs within each library)

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-Importance for social science and humanities scholars,

-Research paradigm shift in Western Balkans,

-Connecting dots in the process of digitization of culture heritage, from pictures to enhanced materials

-Each library, big or small can find its place in the great process of digitization of culture heritage

-Grounds for the research in humanities and social science

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- allows for scalable projects

-activities within the regular working processes to small, medium and large projects

-local, national, regional, international (EU) financing and support

-and networking….

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-One interesting way of using this digital infrastructure to promote further collaboration among libraries and nations and spark interest in certain user groups or in general public is creation of thematic digital exhibitions/collections based on materials available inpretraziva.rs

-One such example is the creation of the collection of 400+ journal articles on Belgium published between 1866 and 1945 available at http://belgija.unilib.rs/eng/index.htm

the keyword searchable library PRETRAZIVA.RS

-12+ collections have been created to facilitate user access to materials on certain topic by extracting the most interesting materials

-Function of keyword search across full text makes this task easy compared to meticulous manual search otherwise needed to find hundreds of articles in collections of 600.000.

-collections/exhibits are now available at http://pretraziveizlozbe.unilib.rs/

- libraries participating in the process were bound together in an effort to provide their users with selected materials on their town, famous personality or some thematic issue that allow for the creation of the specific virtual exhibit.

Connecting the Western Balkans
through digital librarianship

By fostering use of digital tools among libraries from several Western Balkan countries EU and to some extent national financing has helped bring together library professionals and their audiences and make them realize that shared culture, science and history can be valuable.

When creating the infrastructure needed to provide such shared services and in the process of using it librarians from different countries in Western Balkans develop more close professional relations that allow for further enhancement of services and possible joining of other digital library services in the future.

Q&A time!