

## Co-operation Amongst Polish Research Libraries

by EWA DOBRZYŃSKA-LANKOSZ

### LEVELS OF CO-OPERATION

Polish research libraries have a long tradition of co-operating with one another, particularly when certain solutions require a collective effort. Co-operation can take place either at local, national or international level. In the past, we were able to observe close co-operation at the national level between libraries in similar disciplines (for instance, co-operation of groups of medical, technical and economics libraries). This form of co-operation has existed until today. Then, at the beginning of the 1990's a new 'configuration' of library co-operation was initiated, that is, co-operation between libraries in various disciplines within one consortium aimed at choosing, purchasing and implementing the same integrated library system.

The next step was co-operation undertaken within an inter-system consortium in order to fund a national union catalogue. This was an enormous enterprise, whose aim was to facilitate access to catalogue information on the collections of Polish research libraries and accelerate the process of cataloguing books. The National Union Catalogue [NUKAT](#) is based on shared cataloguing. At present, the catalogue is being created by 60 libraries, mainly academic.

### OTHER JOINT INITIATIVES

Other examples of initiatives at the national level are: the Standardization Group for Polish Research Libraries, the joint creation of the databases SYMPO.net and BazTech, an interlibrary loan project 'Doc@med', and the Conference of University Libraries' Directors.

The task of the [Standardization Group for Polish Research Libraries](#) is to establish evaluation methods, indicators and standards for research libraries in Poland, as well as to conduct comparative research on indicators and standards in research libraries abroad. The bibliographic database [SYMPO.net](#) is co-created by 16, mostly academic, institutions and contains information about pre-conference, conference and post-conference materials in Polish libraries.<sup>1</sup> The bibliographic database for Polish technical journals, [BazTech](#), is co-created by 21 research libraries. [Doc@med](#) is an interesting project set up by Polish medical libraries. It is a document delivery system designed for delivering copies of articles whose original printed versions are located in national medical libraries.

The [Conference of University Library Directors](#) was established in March 1997. Its main goals are:

- presenting opinions and statements regarding libraries,
- undertaking activities leading to the integration of the higher institution libraries,
- supporting initiatives aimed at improving the activity of the university libraries,
- representing interests of the employees of the university libraries,
- promoting the social prestige of the position of librarians and information scientists.

An interesting example of co-operation at the local level is the KRAKUS automated regional system. Only one of its modules has been implemented, the serials union catalogue of Krakow research libraries, but it has been intensively exploited for many years.

## **LOCAL CONSORTIA**

Examples of current local consortia include the following: the Krakow Library Group (KLG, 1994), the Poznan Foundation of Scientific Libraries (1996) and the Scientific Libraries' Consortium of the Kujawsko-Pomorski Region (2003). The first of these, the [Krakow Library Group](#), was founded in order to implement the same integrated library system in Krakow libraries. The current tasks of KLG are the following:

- co-ordination of library activity,
- co-ordination of acquisitions (journals in particular),
- supervision of automation of library procedures (mostly coordinating compatibility with the National Union Catalogue NUKAT),
- upgrading staff qualifications.

The tasks of the other local consortia are very similar.

## **ORGANIZATION AND FUNDING**

Libraries co-operate in a more or less formal way. An agreement is the most popular form of co-operation. For instance, KLG has been set up by an agreement signed by the Council of Rectors of 11 Krakow universities and the head of the Polish Academy of Science (Dep. in Krakow). The BazTech project and SYMPO.net are also based on agreements.

Another way of co-operating is to establish a foundation. A good example of this form of co-operation is the [Poznan Foundation of Scientific Libraries](#). The Conference of University Libraries' Directors is based on its own regulations. However, in the near future the Conference will prepare an agreement for its members.

The next question is that of financing. Several solutions can be considered here. One of them is performing all tasks arising from co-operation within the professional duties. The second solution is covering expenses by membership fees paid by the parties to the agreement (consortium). In this way additional work, performed apart from professional duties, necessary purchases and commissions of some tasks to external companies (e.g., equipment service, expert advise, etc.) can be financed. The third solution is to obtain funds from other institutions (ministries, foundations, EU), constituting co-funding. Co-funding applies to the implementation of the whole project, until its completion, or only to one or several of its stages. If a given venture continues for a prolonged period of time, then financing may be discontinued at a certain moment. Such a situation poses a threat to the continuation of the project. Therefore ventures which continue for a prolonged period of time include those that should absolutely have steady and secure sources of financing. These are, for example, projects aimed at creating databases at the national level: NUKAT, SYMPO.net or BazTech.

## **INTERNATIONAL CO-OPERATION**

Finally, we should also mention co-operation undertaken at an international level. One of the most important examples is co-operation between the NUKAT Centre and [OCLC](#). Since Poland's accession to the European Union, the number of projects realized jointly by Polish university libraries and libraries in other countries of the European Union is expected to grow.

Thanks to co-operation, especially that undertaken over the last decade, libraries have been able to complete numerous valuable projects, including: joint preparation of rules for electronic description of collections, launching a union catalogue, efforts aimed at creating collections in electronic form and making them available online, analysis of libraries aimed at developing standards and library performance indicators.

### *Acknowledgements*

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## WEBSITES REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

BazTech. <http://baztech.icm.edu.pl>

Conference of University Libraries Directors. <http://kangur.ae.krakow.pl/Biblioteka/Konferencja/>

Doc@med. <http://www.docmed.pl/>

Krakow Library Group. [http://www.uj.edu.pl/IRO/NEWSLET/IRC6/Uj\\_mell.html](http://www.uj.edu.pl/IRO/NEWSLET/IRC6/Uj_mell.html)

NUKAT, <http://www.nukat.edu.pl/katalog/>

OCLC - Online Computer Library Center. <http://www.oclc.org/>

Poznan Foundation of Scientific Libraries. <http://www.pfsl.poznan.pl/english/index.html>

Standardization Group for Polish Research Libraries, <http://ssk2.bu.amu.edu.pl/standaryzacja>

SYMPO.net, <http://gate.bg.pw.edu.pl/ALEPH/-/start/sym01>

## NOTES

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<sup>1</sup> More than 16 institutions have declared a willingness to cooperate, but not all of them have been currently entering data