

Interlibrary Loan Service
in the context of Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition
of Serbian Libraries - KoBSON

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Abstract

Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition of Serbian Libraries – KoBSON is established in 2001 with the main purpose to provide the access to e-journals, e-books and electronic services. KoBSON is partly financing the Interlibrary Loan Service: four academic libraries in Serbia are incharged for this service.

During its history ILL service in "Svetozar Markovic" University library marks ascents and descents. Due to Consortium, the ILL is actually reestablished: from 2001, when the ILL hardly existed, until today, we are notifying the rapid growth, achieving the certain level and than stagnation.

At the same time number of downloaded articles from services accessible via Consortium marks constant increase.

Focused on articles, it is noticeable that even with increasing number of downloads, as well as with much bigger access to e-journals (from 17.000 in 2006 to 35.000 in 2007), ILL requests slightly increase (from 2006 to 2007). The explanation could lay in general growth of "hunger" toward information. That tendency is, we believe, stimulated by the activities of Consortium. A traditional service – ILL still takes significant part of library services, simultaneously with other resources and we can suppose that this trend will last during the next few years.

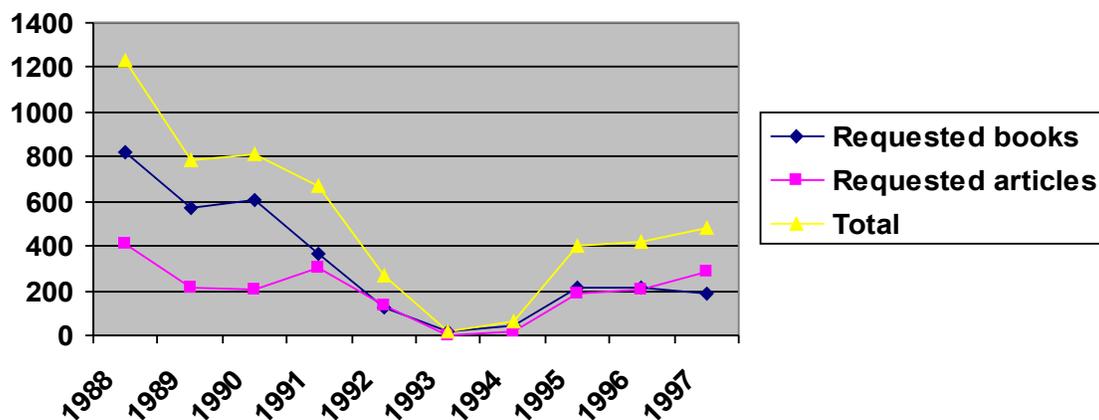
Does the activities of an new formed Consortium influence the traditional service such as interlibrary loan and how – the experience of University library "Svetozar Markovic" in Belgrade is presented in this paper. We believe that two main aspects of the influence of the Consortium could be outlined: first, more formal, is related to the Consortium's capability to provide material support for the interlibrary loan. The other aspect is more complex and mean a qualitative connection between the other activities of Consortium, particular providing the access to e-journals, and ILL. Can we notice that increase of electronically available journals leads to the decrease of ILL requests for articles?

University library “Svetozar Markovic” is founded in 1926 as a central library of the oldest and biggest university in Serbia – University of Belgrade. The real development of the ILL service in the University library can be traced after 1962 when the Department for scientific information is formed. The main tasks of the new formed Department was to provide all sorts of scientific information to users in the Library and abroad. In the Statute of the Library from that period we can find that one of the functions of the Department is also interlibrary loan. That service exists today within the same organizational structure. The number of requests (from Library to abroad), during longer period after formation of the Department, fluctuated between 1000 and 1700. [1]

Generally, ILL service marked ascents and descents according to other problems in the Library, which meant mostly the lack of financial resources. It could be said that the ILL reflected the global problems of the Library, even the problems of society. During war and sanctions which stoke Serbia from the beginning of 90's, ILL naturally marked decrease, but even than in did not completely stop.

Table 1 and Figure 1 are showing the numbers of ILL requests during late 80's and in the beginning of 90's.

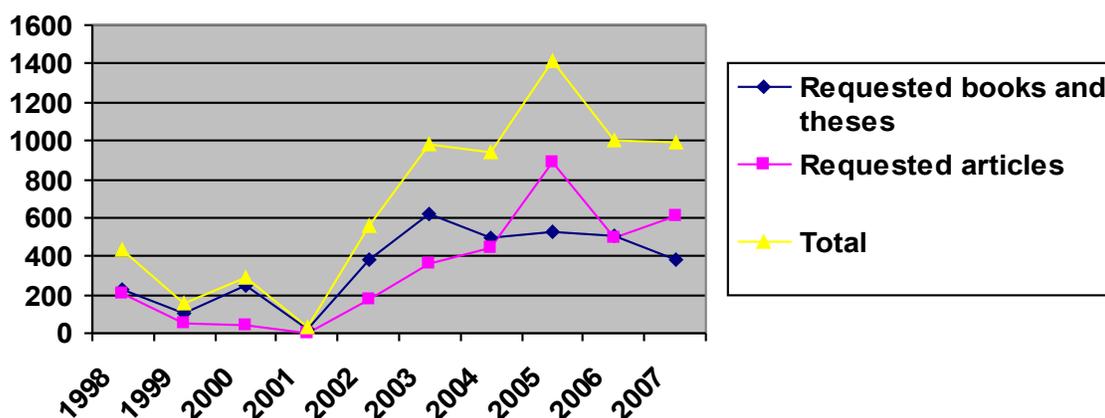
	1988	1989	1990	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996	1997
Requested books and theses	823	571	605	365	127	14	41	217	211	198
Requested articles	407	212	203	306	138	2	19	183	204	285
Total	1230	783	808	671	265	16	60	400	415	483



In the late 90's and in the beginning of the year 2000 and further on, the ILL marked again a stagnation. The reason was the lack of material funding and impossibility to retrieve the support from the Ministry (country suffered the consequences of long time crisis and political instability).

Table 2 and Figure 2 are showing the trends in ILL in the UL “Svetozar Markovic” from the late 90's till today.

	1998	1999	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007
Requested books and theses	224	105	247	24	380	620	500	523	503	383
Requested articles	207	55	39	2	173	357	441	890	495	611
Total	431	160	286	26	553	977	941	1410	998	994



The formation of Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition of Serbian Libraries – KoBSON

The initiative for organization of Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition of Serbian Libraries – KoBSON is made in the end of year 2001, and the initiators were the leading scientific libraries in the country: National library of Serbia (Belgrade), University library “Svetozar Markovic” (Belgrade), Matica srpska Library (Novi Sad), University library “Nikola Tesla” (Nis), University library of Kragujevac, heads of the Reference Departments from National Library of Serbia and the University library “Svetozar Markovic”, and presidents of the Serbian Library Association and Serbian Academic Library Association. This Consortium is formed so that the acquisition of relevant sources for scientific work (mostly electronic: databases and electronic journals) could be much easier. On the web presentation of KoBSON it could be found that the main goals of this Consortium are: acquisition of foreign scientific information, moving from paper to electronic editions, the improvement of access to electronic information.

National library of Serbia became the official negotiator of the Consortium in front of editors and ministries charge for this area (in the beginning there were Ministry of science, technology and development, Ministry of education and Ministry of culture, but lately, KoBSON came under authority of the Ministry of science).

In the Protocol of the Consortium it is in brief indicated what are the rules of this organizations and the tasks of its members. It is underlined that the

purpose of the KoBSON is wide accessibility and utilization of scientific information in the libraries of scientific, educational and cultural institutions. All interested institution from those domains founded and financed by the Government of the territory of the Republic of Serbia can join the KoBSON. Among the duties of the members of Consortium it can be pointed out those: the member has to participate the work of KoBSON, to propose the acquisition and to share information about sources of scientific information, to give information to KoBSON about the publications in its collections, to inform their users about resources available through KoBSON, to promote the idea of the association, to organize the education in its surrounding etc.

Finally, from 2002. the KoBSON is member of international eIFL Direct project which includes 2500 libraries from 60 developing countries. Thanks to that the libraries in Serbia have access to electronic resources EBSCO, Blackwell, Oxford etc.

After a registration, users (mostly professors, researchers and other members of academic population) can use KoBSON and search all available services via Academic network in Serbia.

Interlibrary loan within the Consortium

From the first day the Interlibrary Loan became the part of Consortium's activities. It means that Ministry of science one part of budget intended for Consortium is assigning for ILL in Serbia. That sources are divided between four main libraries: 50% receive the University library "Svetozar Markovic", the other part is divided between Matica srpska Library (25%) and university libraries in Nis (12,5%) and Kragujevac (12,5%). Founding includes also the acquisition of certain number of IFLA vouchers.

The users of ILL have to participate in the costs for ILL, and that fees are agreed on the Consortium, so the costs are same in the whole country.

Once a year, on the meeting of Consortium, this process is evaluated: the number of requests, the sufficiency of the material resources, the needs of participants in the process, the perspectives of the ILL etc.

The ascent in ILL could be noticed from the first year of Consortium's real activity (2002). The number of ILL requests during 2002 was more than 20 times bigger than number in 2001 (see Table 2).

During those years (from November 2001 until September 2002) [2] the ILL in University library "Svetozar Markovic" was realized mostly via services Subito and GBW (Germany), using so called "standard service" and mail delivery. Today, Subito is still the main service used in ILL (more than 60% of requests are realized through it), but the Library is registered with few other big systems for ILL such as British library (Document Supply Center) or Urbana Illinois Library etc. Beside those systems, University library established regular cooperation with several dozen libraries in Europe and outside of Europe.

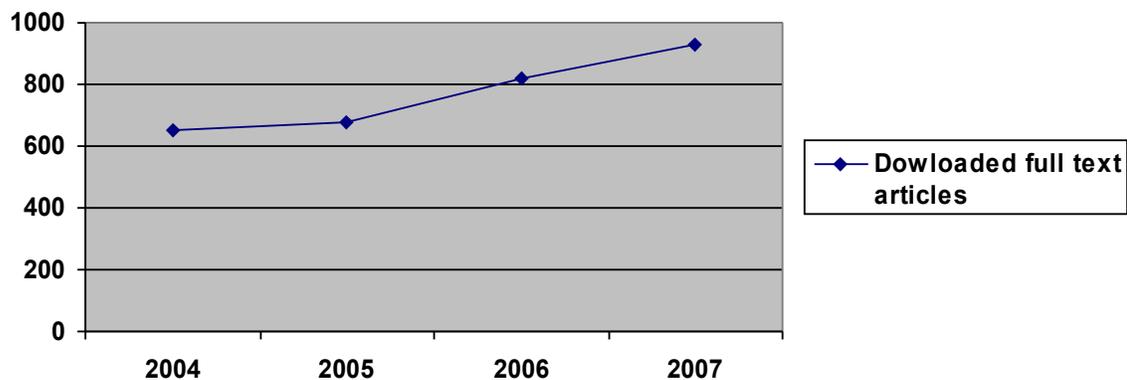
Usage of electronic services via KoBSON – electronic journals

KoBSON started with access to 3500 e-journals (through EBSCO service), but each year that number grows: two years ago it was 17.000 electronic journals and today that number marks 35.000 journal titles.

Simultaneously with that increase, the number of downloaded articles also marks constant and steady growth.

Table 3 and Figure 3 are showing the number of downloaded full-text articles

	2004	2005	2006	2007
Downloaded full text articles	652.187	676.838	816.158	927.097



ILL and downloading articles

Comparing the figures between Table 2 and Table 3, specially the numbers concerning the years 2006 and 2007 and focused on articles, we can notice one peculiar thing that the numbers of ILL requests for articles increased at the same time when the number of downloaded articles grew. Here it could be add that even in first quarter of this year (2008), the same thing is happening: by the end of March in 2007 the numbers of requested articles were 153, and in the year 2008, when the number of accessible e-journals jumped for nearly 100%, that number is 234 (30% more).

Maybe these figures rebut the conclusion of Hans Martin Fagerli that: “By the time, however, interlibrary lending, both of original material and of copies, will surely have sunk to a level approaching zero” [3] How come that the number of requested articles in our Library ordered via ILL is still growing, slightly but noticeable?

The answer probably lies in the general growth of “hunger” toward information, which is, we believe, stimulated by the activities of the Serbian Consortium.

In the other words, maybe we can witness the phenomena which can be formulated: *the more information you get, the more you need*. Or, the more it is offered to you, your needs become bigger.

We shouldn't also underestimate the fact that the Serbia belongs to the countries in transition which are trying very hard to recoup the lost time. The users (researchers) get what they need via KoBSON, but at the same time they find all sorts of information about some subject, not accessible electronically, but only via ILL.

Actual Serbian experience with ILL in the context of Consortium could be example of transferring the accent from Interlibrary Loan to more wide Interlibrary Lending and Document Delivery Service (ILDS) where we can recognize the tendencies that Ngjan lek Choh presented: "If we expand ILDS to become a service that does more than responding to a user's request for a document, to one that makes all the connections to the resources for the user even before a request is made, the new ILDS service can serve many more types of users more proactively, and in the timely manner (...) It is a service that is embedded within the value chain of the enquiry and resource discovery service, mediated or un-mediated." [4]

This kind of figures can be places now, but in this moment we do not possess information about books. Three years ago KoBSON had access to 3500 e-books, but from this year new service Ebrary started with access to 30.000 books. This new possibility hasn't show its advantages yet, so it is to early for any kind of conclusion, and maybe the usage of this service will growth after the courses that are taken actually in the University Library "Svetozar Markovic".

Conclusion

The formation of the Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition of Serbian Libraries – KoBSON helped one traditional service such as interlibrary loan. It reestablished it in the period of crises and enabled that functioning of ILL can be stable and on the certain level acceptable for the university library of such capacity. On the other side, the ILL within Consortium, took significant part of offered library services, simultaneously with other resources and we can suppose that this trend will last during next few years.

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