

# FREE FLOW OF BIBLIOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

## IMPORTANCE OF INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AMONG LIBRARIES



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It is a great honor and joy for me that Mr. Davor Šoštarič invited me to speak to you.

I would like to congratulate him and his staff on the tremendous progress the development of software programs of IZUM, like COBISS and SICRIS, have made in the past 20 years. I do admire their success and hope that this continuing progress will go on also in the time of less money.

Let me thank all members of staff who helped preparing this conference. Its success is the reward for the countless hours spent by each of them.

A warm welcome to all teachers, students and postgraduate librarians, the alumni from IZUM-COBISS student-courses, the fact that you are here is a vivid example of Life-Long-Learning (LLL).

Life-long-learning is a frequently used buzz-word especially in the field of information with its permanently changing technology and software packages. European Union has installed some programs for LLL like GRUNDTVIG activities ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc880\\_de.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/grundtvig/doc880_de.htm)).

Let me tell you about my own Life-long-Learning to demonstrate that it is not something new but a necessity for anyone, past or present, trying to make progress in whatever field one has chosen to work in.

I started my university years with studying German Language, Geography and Ethnology with the aim to become either a teacher or a cartographer, something that

fascinated me very much. The combination of subjects was not seen fit for becoming a teacher at that time – a few years later this was not the case any more – the profession in a folklore museum or as cartographer was made impossible because there was no offer of a post. After receiving my PhD in Geography I needed to start all over.



Figure 1: Karl-Franzes University Graz

I switched to Chemo-technology and finished after 2 years with a degree comparable with today's bachelor degree.

This probably led me to work at the University Library of Graz where they need scientists not only humanists. I did all library studies and examinations, I started as a cataloguer, and after three years became the Information Specialist for Chemistry using the Chemical Abstracts Services of Ohio/USA, called CAS.

A year later I started to teach both students and librarians how to use the paper-form of an index or abstracts, like the Science Citation Index or chemical abstracts, biological abstracts, physics abstracts and so on.

Almost ten years after starting to work at the library I became the system-analyzer for the first library-lending program of a number of Austrian libraries.

In addition to that I became deputy librarian of the then director, Franz Kroller.

Mr. Kroller at the time had close contacts to two international library organizations, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, IFLA, as well as to the Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche, LIBER.

Through Mr. Kroller I learned how important it is to cooperate with colleagues, different libraries and library organizations.

Learning is a continuous process furthered through courses and conferences for ourselves as we can help others to learn by teaching colleagues in our own or other libraries wherever they may be situated. Also the visiting of different library types in the own country as well in other countries is an interesting learning factor.

After Mr. Kroller's retirement I became the director of the library and held that position for fifteen years. In that time I was also the president of the Vereinigung Österreichischer Bibliothekarinnen und Bibliothekare, VÖB, the librarians union in Austria.

In each function I needed to cooperate with colleagues of many other universities, taught courses or took part in courses myself.

Teaching and learning on every level is a necessity especially in the field of Information.

We also were partners in many European programs about digitizing, data archiving, preparing data also for blind and handicapped persons. This cooperation with university-, national- and public libraries in many European countries was helpful for all participants.

In Austria currently the library system ALEPH is being used.

Information is distributed frequently to colleagues and exchanged between Germany, Austria and Switzerland in the so called DACH circle using the international country codes of these countries.

Changes to another system are being discussed; they are complicated and require large amounts of money.

Assessment of user needs in connection with the ability to provide professional development of personnel should help to find optimal solutions for library users.

Very early in my career I had the opportunity to visit together with Mr. Kroller the University Library of Maribor.

He had frequent contact with Bruno Hartmann, then director of the library, while I was in contact often with Irena Sapac and Zdenka Petermanec.

I quite often had the opportunity to work with IZUM when the group was part of the University of Maribor and later when they were a separate organization.

I remember the Online-Guide Project for which IZUM worked together with the Alpe-Adria-Libraries, the Austrian KI-Center (Cooperation and Information Center in Vienna).



Figure 2: A-A University Libraries

The names of Aleš Bošnjak, Franci Pivec, Branko Zebec, Marta and Tomaž Seljak remain in my memory; working with them was a great pleasure for me.

I was able to observe and be part of many activities of libraries in the former Yugoslavia, cataloging or professional development within the involved libraries. I then compared these activities with those of OCLC of Ohio State in the US.

That was in the nineteen hundred eighties. I notice that there are strong contacts and information transfer between OCLC and IZUM here till today when you signed a cooperation-contract to help users to get better library-services.

2011 "*Free flow of bibliographic information*", the theme of this year's conference, will require ongoing cooperation, education and Life-Long-Learning as part of our profession. Now I am retired, but I am honorary working in UNESCO-Memory of the World, in the Austrian BAM-Group (**B**ibliotheken-**A**rchive-**M**useen, libraries-archives-museums), in the Austrian Information-Technology-Center (AIT) in Graz or as mentor. Each of these activities I like to do and bring me together with information specialists of different fields.

This year for the first time COBISS offers a special postgraduate-librarianship-study-program to alumni, which is used by many of you, my heartfelt congratulations.

This conference affords many opportunities for participants to get to know each other, to restore both professional and personal relationships and to exchange your rich experience.

You are given the opportunity to learn and teach at this conference as well as at home. Now and in the years to come you work with the software-and information-center of IZUM.

I am sure that you share with me the view that learning as an ongoing process is an exiting and satisfying part of our personal and professional lives.

May I wish you continuous success in your endeavors to build an excellent social network to help users of your libraries to get information of highest quality.