Создание консорциума пяти российских библиотек с целью предоставления единой точки доступа к своим библиографическим и электронным ресурсам

Creation of a Consortium Between Five Russian Libraries to Provide a Single Access Point to Their Bibliographic and Digital Resources

Створення консорціуму п'яти російських бібліотек з метою надання єдиного місця доступу до своїх бібліографічних та електронних ресурсів

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Російський інформаційно-бібліотечний консорціум (РИБК) був оснований проектом Російські бібліотеки третього тисячоліття, фінансуючимся Европейською комісією, в рамках Партнерської Програми Тасис в Области Інституціонального Розвитку (ППІР), предназначеної для підтримки розвитку об'єднаних організацій, некомерційних об'єднань, створюваних місцевими і регіональними органами влади, і державних установ в країнах СНГ і в Монголії. Даня програма, в частині, сприяє міжнародному партнерству між організаціями і установами європейського союзу, держав, участваючих у програмі ФАРЕ і стран СНГ і Монголії.


Крім того, започатковані технічні роботи, здійснені з використанням електронного портала, бібліотеки співпрацюють з трьома європейськими бібліотеками: Национальної бібліотеки Шотландії, Госу- дарственої бібліотеки в Берліне — Прусське наслідство і німецькою національною бібліотекою в Римі. Російські й Європейські колеги співпрацюють з метою здійснення можливости обміну опікунським і зазначали в області розвитку сучасної бібліотеки та розвитку сучасного співпраці, партнерства.

Проект почався 10 вересня 2003 р. і буде продовжуватись один рік.

В цьому досліді буде говоритись об основних цілях і діяльності проекта, особове вплив буде уделено передній і діяльністі, будучи планам життя Російського консорціума.

Russian Information-Library Consortium (RILC) was created within a project «Russian Libraries of the Third Millennium» financed by the European Commission in the frame of TACIS Partnership Programme for the Industrial Development (PPID) aimed to support the development of public organisations, non-commercial institutions established by local and regional authorities and state institutions in CIS and Mon-
golia. In particular, this programme contributes to the international cooperation between organisations and institutions of EU member countries, participating in PHARE programme, and organisations from CIS and Mongolia.

This project continues the project TacisTelrus 9705 «Creation of the Information System in the Russian State Library» (1998-2000) that gave rise to the fully integrated library system in the Russian State Library in Moscow.

Five Russian libraries are the partners of RILC: the Russian State Library, the Russian National Library, All-Russian Library of Foreign Literature, the Parliamentary Library and the Scientific Library of the Moscow State University. The libraries cooperate to create a unified portal to provide an integrated access to their bibliographic and digital resources via Z39.50 protocol.

Carrying out the technical tasks for the establishment of a unified portal, the libraries also cooperate with three European libraries: the National Library of Scotland, the State Library in Berlin — the Prussian heritage and the Italian National Library in Rome.russian and European colleagues and experience in the development of modern libraries and for the establishment of a long-term cooperation and partnership. The project was started on September 10, 2003 and will last for a year.

The paper describes the main goals and events of the project, giving a particular attention to the recent achievements and future plant of the Russian consortium

The Russian Information Library Consortium (RILC) is a consortium set up by the project ‘Russian Libraries in the third millennium’ founded by the European Commission, within the IBPP Programme (Institutions Building Partnership Programme). This programme promotes cooperation and partnership between organisations and institutions within European and Phare countries and their counterparts in NIS countries and Mongolia.

Building on the results of the Tacis Telrus 9705 project (1998 — 2000), which introduced a fully integrated library system in the Russian State Library, in Moscow, the RILC’s project involves a partnership of five libraries, namely, the Russian State Library (RL), the Russian National Library (NLR, St. Petersburg), the Russian State Library for Foreign Literature (VGBIL), the Parliamentary Library (PL) and the Moscow State University Academic Library (MSUL), working together with the aim to implement a joint web gateway, providing integrated access to their bibliographic and digital resources, utilising the Z39.50 protocol.

Partners in the project are also three European libraries, namely the National Library of Scotland, the Prussian State Library in Germany and the Italian National Library in Rome. This way, the project ensures the widest possible spectrum of both national and EU expertise in modern library development, encouraging, at the same time, the building up of long-term relationships of cooperation and knowledge sharing.
The overall management and co-ordination of the RILC’s project is undertaken by the British Council, which has extensive experience in managing library and information projects and is highly committed to library and information development.

Started on 10 September 2003 and with a duration of one year, the project has received funding from the European Commission of 589,450 Euro.

**Goals & objectives**

The Project has two overall goals:

- to set up a best practice example of a distributed joint catalogue and a digital library, via utilising the Z39.50 protocol and gateway software with advanced searching capabilities.
- to encourage cooperation amongst the Russian partners (as well as with the three European partner libraries) for the sharing of knowledge, strategies and resources, focused on the provision of innovative and improved services to their end-users.

To achieve these goals, the project has been pursuing a number of specific objectives, namely:

- To facilitate and support the creation and strengthening of the project’s consortium, having a clear vision, mission, goals and objectives both within the framework of the project and beyond its duration
- To coordinate the technical work of the project consortium to provide integrated access to their digital resources
- To promote exchange and sharing of knowledge and expertise and create a network of human and electronic resources in the Russian Federation and the EU Member States
- To encourage replication of the results of the project in any interested libraries in the CIS countries.

**Activities**

The workplan of the project has a very tight schedule to be fulfilled within the period of 12 months and includes a range of activities, which can be split into four main components:

**Consortium Building**

Libraries, as well as other cultural institutions, are nowadays realising that joining together to create consortia with a clear vision and mission and pursuing common goals is the only way forward to ensure that advanced and sustainable services can be provided to their users.

The ‘consortium building’ activity is the ‘corner stone’ of the project. This activity is aimed at strengthening collaboration and partnership amongst the five Russian partners to sustain the results of the project activities beyond its time frame.

The main role in this respect is played by the Steering Committee, which, composed of the five library Directors, has been operating in the framework of four Steering Committee Meetings, advising on the high level strategic direction of the Project’s implementation and discussing and defining a Consortium business plan for the future.

**Building the joint gateway**

The other fundamental component in the project is the development and implementation of the joint web gateway to the bibliographic electronic records and to the digital resources of the five Russian partners. As mentioned, the gateway will utilise the Z39.50 protocol, enabling the five libraries’ catalogues to be linked together and to be made searchable via a single access point.

**Procurement of equipment**

In order to build the gateway, technical equipment, including hardware and software has to be procured. Because of the limited duration of the project and of the complex EU procedures required to acquire the equipment, this activity has been delegated to a specialist procurement agency. This has been providing expertise and support in the various phases of the procurement, including drawing up of the technical specifications for the equipment, defining of a procurement plan, preparing the tender documentation and contracts and overseeing the final installation of the equipment.

**Transfer and sharing of knowledge and expertise**
Workshops

Four workshops are planned in the project workplan. The workshops have a two-fold aim: to gather the partner technical experts from both the Russian and the EU libraries to discuss aspects and agree on viable technical solutions for the implementation of the joint gateway, and to encourage partnership building and cooperation. Each of the workshops focuses on a specific topic to reflect the various phases of the Project’s implementation.

Study Tours

Another activity of the Consortium is the organisation of three study tours, which are arranged by the European partners in the project and take place in their respective countries (UK, Italy, Germany).

The main objective of this activity is to provide both the Russian and the European partners with an opportunity to share knowledge and expertise, thus, encouraging the building up of long term partnerships and collaborations.

Participants in the study tours are senior and technical staff from the Russian partner libraries, who, during the Tour, visit a number of institutions selected for their particular advancement and expertise in domains of direct interest to the Project’s objectives. Including presentations and demonstrations delivered by the staff in the visited institutions on projects and initiatives regarding the sharing and networking of resources, the study tours are structured in a way to complement the workshops and to reflect the phases of the project implementation.

Dissemination of project results

Dissemination is an important component in the Project as it ensures that information on its activities and results are widely publicised and made known to any interested parties including library professionals, policy makers and the general public, both in Russia and elsewhere.

Dissemination activities aim to attract potential funds and to establish contacts with those libraries and other institutions in Russia and the CIS countries, who are interested in the Project’s results and may want to apply those results in their own country.

Progress to date

Strengthening the consortium

The project has, so far, organised two Steering Committee Meetings where the Consortium has made progress with the definition of its main structure, role and provision of services. The two meetings have helped to strengthen the relationship amongst the partners who have expressed a serious commitment to continue their cooperation in the future and their interest in developing a strategic plan to ensure the sustainability of the Consortium in the long term. During the Steering Committee Meetings, the partners have drawn up, discussed and approved a Consortium Agreement and have started the development of a business and sustainability plan, to define services to be offered by the consortium, estimate the human and financial resources required and timeline for their implementation.

The Consortium has also made progress with regard to cooperation, having established contacts with a number of similar initiatives in Russian and in the EU. One of the achievements in this respect was the signing of an Agreement with the Russian LIBNET project. Supported by the Ministry of Culture, LIBNET’s overall goal is to promote and facilitate the production of high quality bibliographic records by libraries in Russia by creating a National Union Catalogue of quality records in RUSMARC format. Because RILC’s and LIBNET’s target audiences are clearly different, the first aiming to promote and enhance free access to end-users, the second, committed to foster high quality cataloguing at a national level, a future cooperation between the projects could benefit and strengthen each others. This is one of the points stressed in the agreement, where the two projects agree to collaborate by exchanging information on progress and developments, and by supporting and promoting each others. In addition, in the Agreement, the two projects express their willingness to consider a closer cooperation in the long term, once the RILC gateway is fully operational and provided that an adequate technical protocol (e.g. SRU — Search and Retrieve URL Service protocol) is implemented by LIBNET to enable the sharing of the bibliographic resources of its Union Catalogue with the RILC gateway.

Finally, as a result of the work carried out by the Steering Committee, the Consortium is considering the option of joining the recently started Russian Electronic Library project, funded by the Russian Ministry of Culture, and having as partners the RSL and the NLR. Aimed at creating a joint repository of
digital resources of the two national libraries, the project has the potential to become a self sustainable
service by providing access to other libraries to the digital repository, upon payment of a fee. In case all
the project’s partners agree, the Consortium could be registered as a not for profit legal entity, which the
two national libraries plan to establish.

Developing the gateway

The first fundamental technical decision taken by the project partners at the Kick-off Meeting, in Sep-
tember 2003, was to implement a distributed joint virtual catalogue, providing a single access point to the
partners’ individual catalogues and digital resources, utilising the Z39.50 protocol.

Since then, the project has made a substantial work and achieved important results, which are summa-
rised below.

- A detailed implementation plan for the gateway was drawn up by the Project technical team
- The technical specifications for the equipment required for the gateway implementation were
drafted and finalised
- Because two of the partner libraries did not have Z39.50 implementations, the project had to
purchase and install the Z39.50 software and servers at the two libraries, namely, the Parlia-
mentary Library and the National Library of Russia;
- Tests on the five Z39.50 implementations were then carried out and adjustments were made
to deal with any resulted inconsistency/technical problem;
- One of the tasks of the project is the implementation in the gateway of a multilingual thesau-
rus providing subject searching of the joint catalogue. During the initial phase of the project,
the Consortium agreed to implement the EUROVOC Thesaurus in the project gateway. This
is a multilingual and multidisciplinary thesaurus of the European Parliament and the Office
for Official Publications of the European Commission, which was translated into Russian by
the Parliamentary Library, in Moscow. Once the authorisation from the OPOCE (Office for
Official Publications of the European Commission) was obtained to use the EUROVOC the-
saurus in the project, a company was contracted to carry out the work on its adaptation and
conversion;
- Finally, the technical team has drawn up and finalised the specifications for the web portal
through which the joint gateway will be accessible. This is being developed by a web; design
company, selected by the Project team.

Procurement

Considering the demanding and complex task of procurement of equipment required to implement the
joint gateway, and the strict regulations which EU projects need to comply with, the Project team gave this
aspect the utmost priority. The contracting of the International Procurement Agency to provide assistance
with this activity, approved by the EC in December 2003, was a fundamental achievement in this respect.

The first task of the procurement agency was the purchase of the Z39.50 software and servers for the
Parliamentary Library and the National Library of Russia via a separate Negotiated Procedure. As a matter
of fact, having the Z39.50 implementations in all the five libraries was the basic requirement for the
successful implementation of the project.

In February 2004, the final procurement plan for the remainder of the equipment was approved by the
EC and work commenced on the preparation of the various procurement procedures.

An Open Tender with public announcement in a local newspaper regarding the procurement of hardware
(PCs, scanners, servers) was published in March 2004, while Negotiated Procedures without publication were
initiated for the procurement of remaining pieces of software for some of the partner libraries, as well as for
the software to be installed on the central gateway. The Negotiated Procedures involved consulting a number
of perspective suppliers and selecting those, which best met the requirements of the Project.

To do this, an Evaluation Committee was set up to evaluate the offers received both in response to the
Local Open Tender and to the Negotiated Procedures. The evaluation is scheduled for 8 April 2004.

Following the evaluation and the resulting awards of the tenders to the successful companies, in the
ensuing months, the following actions will be taken by the Project:
• Contracts will be issued to the companies awarded as a result of the evaluation and to the selected companies for the supply of the remaining components of the equipment.
• The hardware and software will be delivered and installed at the five partner libraries, including the installation of the software on the central gateway, at the Russian State Library.
• The technical team will then undertake a test aimed to verify the correct configuration of the searching software and to identify any missing functionality for the Z39.50 servers.
• After the required conversion, the EUROVOC thesaurus will be implemented on the gateway.
• The web portal for the gateway will be integrated with the gateway’s software, on the central server.
• A usability test will be carried out to collect users’ feedback and implement any required improvements/adjustments on the portal.
• The Project gateway will officially be launched.

Encouraging sharing of knowledge and cooperation

Workshops & Study Tours
The project has, so far, organised three workshops. The first Workshop (4-5 November 2003) helped to clarify and define all the initial organisational and technical aspects crucial to the commencement of the work related to the development of the joint gateway. Workshop 2 (15-16 December 2003) focused on the topic of archiving of and access to digital resources, and facilitated the agreement amongst the partners on the range and typology of digital resources to be made available via the gateway, discussing all relevant technical aspects, including formats, metadata etc. The Workshop also acknowledged the importance of a joint digitisation policy for the development of a future consortium digital collection.

Workshop 3, held on 18-19 March 2004, focused on the topics of ‘Change Management’ and ‘Business Planning’, contributing to the progress in the definition of the main areas and issues to be addressed in the Consortium’s business plan as well as in its practical development and implementation. Thanks to the presence of two key experts from the European TELservice project, as well as of representatives from two of the EU partners, the Workshop enabled discussions and sharing of knowledge and expertise amongst the participants in the areas of consortium building, business planning and development of consortia’s sustainable services.

In January 2004, the first Study Tour was held in the UK. The Tour was organised by the National Library of Scotland and included visits to a number of libraries and relevant institutions in London, Edinburgh and Glasgow. Overall, the tour was very successful, covering topics and issues of direct interest to the Project’s activities and goals and providing the participants with a valuable opportunity to discuss and share issues and problems related to library networking and cooperation.

At the time of writing, the Project is coordinating the organisation of the second Study Tour which will be held in Italy on 3-11 May 2004.

Disseminating the results of the project
Since the start, dissemination has been given serious attention by the Project team.

The Consortium arranged a Press Conference, organised by the Project team, on 25 November 2003 at the State Duma, in Moscow. The project was officially presented to journalists as well as to representatives from the European Commission and the British Council.

A presentation on RILC was delivered at the EVA Moscow Conference, on 1-5 December 2003, in Moscow.

Besides its participation in the Crimea Conference, on 5-13 June 2004, in Sudak, the Project will also present its final results at the conference ‘The Digital Age of Culture’, in Krasnaya Poljana, on 6-10 September 2004. This is an important event which gathers representatives and policy makers from libraries as well as other cultural institutions such as museums and archives. It also attracts participants from public, governmental, academic and business sectors, Ministers and Heads of Departments from the Ministries of Culture, Education, Industry, Science and Technology, economic Development and Trade...
and representatives from the banking, mass-media and information technology sectors. At the conference, which will be attended by most of the Project’s partners, the final results will be presented.

Information and material on the project’s activities, both in English and Russian, are regularly published on the project’s web site at [www.ribk.ru](http://www.ribk.ru).

**A long-term vision**

The expected results of the Project can be summarised as follows:

- The creation of a strong consortium with a long-term vision and a business plan for the future
- The provision of a single-access point to a wealth of Russian resources: books, ancient manuscripts, journals, dissertations, educational materials, materials in foreign languages and legal resources etc.
- The development of a human network of professionals from the partner libraries who have exchanged and shared experiences and expertise in the use of advanced technologies for resource networking.

The RILC Consortium will hopefully build on these results, continuing its life beyond the Project’s end, providing additional services to local and international users and clearly affirming its position in Russia, Europe and elsewhere.

As emphasised at the beginning, collaboration and networking is the only way forward to libraries and similar cultural institutions who want to play a leading role in modern society as providers of advanced cultural services to their users rather than as mere repositories of valuable and inaccessible collections.