

Ukraine

STEP BY STEP TOWARDS WHAT?

By

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My first acquaintance with EURASLIC was in 1994. The resulting communication with the colleagues from abroad was encouraging and stimulating; it was a fresh impulse to revise the past and to begin reorganising. After having taken practical training at the library of Plymouth Marine Laboratory, I felt a strong desire to change the rhythm and the model of work at my own library and the, given the success, at all marine and aquatic libraries of Ukraine. I wished to advance at every flank and to win the battle. I wished to gain the victory immediately. A then I heard wise words from David Moulder. He said 'step by step, please'. I am still grateful for this advise.

Now I would like to briefly describe this step-by-step advancement.

The First Step

1994 was marked by two events: the library got its first computer, and I took a training course in Plymouth. I gained the experience in general management and in the operation and programming of CDS/ISIS. My sincere thanks to Allen Varley for his patience and the words of encouragement at teaching me.

On my coming back home, I initiated a series of actions for compiling an electronic catalogue at my library.

In 1995 an opportunity appeared to connect to the internet. We did not miss the chance and began exploring the possibility to broaden our horizon. In the same year we joined ASFA, and FAO provided us with another computer so that we could adhere to standards in our work. Owing to our partnership with this organisation, the library has got a complete CD set of ASFA and since 1999 the on-line access to this valuable source of scientific information.

By 1999 the library of our Institute could provide prompt access of the interested researchers to the abstracts through ASFA CD and on-line as well as reprints of scientific publications from EURASLIC and IAMSLIC.

The absence of steady financial support from the state to the IBSS made me begin search of other financial sources which would allow to enlarge the technical base (computers, printers, Xerox apparatus) of the library. Having looked through the Report on Diagnostic Procedures and a Definition of Minimum Requirements for Providing Information Services on a National and/or Regional Level where the IODE Group of Expert in Marine Information Management, I decided to compose a draft version of a project and to venture formal. I did what I could and began waiting for a resolution. I waited a long time.

The Second Break Through

In 1998 International Renaissance Foundation (IRF), the Representation of the Soros Foundation in Ukraine, announced a project contest 'Developing Internet in Ukraine' for Ukrainian libraries.

It was our chance to receive a grant. The project I submitted was titled "Organising a centre for providing access to the information base of the internet and disseminating electronic publications on environmental protection and ecological problems among the libraries and non-governmental organisations of Crimea and Ukraine".

In 1999 the implementation of the project began. Strictly speaking, by that time we had created a consulting module which served other libraries. We had also drawn up a CDS/ISIS – based programme for an electronic catalogue. Since then the program has been distributed among marine and aquatic libraries and other interested users. Fully realising the importance of connecting to the internet many other libraries, especially those dealing with aquatic sciences, we decided to get a robust library server for connecting the libraries of Sevastopol and Crimea to the internet. In doing this, we would fulfil an essential task set by the Information Centre.

Another task of utmost importance was to ensure the dissemination of electronic publications. Therefore, under the aegis and with the financial support of the International Renaissance Foundation a consortium of the largest libraries and information centres was organised in Ukraine which made possible to have access to full texts electronic versions of scientific journals by Springer.

Another consortium of Ukrainian libraries was created under the aegis and with the support of the Institute for Open Society (Hungary) and EBSCO, the largest publishing house in the world. Through this, in the end of 1999, we got access to more than 3,000 full-text electronic journals and some other publications in social and natural sciences. The medical database MEDLINE is also open to users.

The scientific Library of IBSS participates in both the consortia. To cope with the current and long-range tasks having been set to the Information Centre, our library has got a number of essential technical devices such as four computers, a library server, several photocopying devices and printers; two of the computers are connected to Internet. Our web site is as follows: <http://library.iuf.net>.

Let me describe briefly what services we provide to scholars, post-graduates, university students, non-governmental environmental organisations and libraries.

- Access to Springer electronic publications.

We have described how to access and search in detail. Spring electronic publications for Internet users who are in touch with the provider of the Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas.

We provide information to those who do not have Internet access. This includes the list of Springer high-rating electronic journals on the problems of aquatic sciences and ecology. In compiling the list we took into account the information gathered before about journals which would definitely be requested by concerned libraries and scholars. The library subscribed to the contents pages of these journals. The contents pages are available in electronic version and on the paper; the former are sent to libraries or other users by e-mail, the latter by regular mail. The readers order full texts of the Springer electronic publications after acquainting with the contents and making their choice.

- Access to the ASFA CD and on-line.

- Acquaintance with contents and abstracts of scientific journals published by Elsevier, Springer, Kluwer, Inter-Research, Academic Press and others.

The Scientific Library of IBSS has got a subscription to contents high-rating journals highlighting advances in marine and aquatic researches and published by Elsevier, Springer, Kluwer, Inter-Research, Academic Press and others. The Centre offers an opportunity for users to have copies of the contents through e-mail or regular mail as well as to look through the contents directly at the library. Those who may be acquainted with the contents through Internet, are provided with e-mail address of the publishing houses. The number of

cooperating publishing houses will grow. We are receiving requests for contents pages of journals which have not been put on the list as yet.

- Receiving reprints from journals on marine and aquatic researches within the framework of international Inter-Library Loans.
- Access to EBSCO information search system.

The information Centre takes and handles requests for finding information in need in EBSCO database. Libraries and users connected to the IBSS server are permitted to make the on-line search by themselves.

The Centre serves the users by using stocks of the library, giving requested reprints, and through inter-library loans. The list of foreign periodicals available in the scientific library is accessible through our web site.

We offer the following services to Libraries:

- Connection to the library server of the Institute of Biology of the Southern seas;
- Software for compiling and updating the library catalogue worked out with the employment of Micro CDC/ISIS;
- Consulting and training courses in the modern library management and operation to librarians.

Our web site also informs interested librarians about the professional library associations of the world (such as EURASLIC and IAMSLIC).

The Centre has just begun operating; we shall be enlarging the range of our services and potential to fully satisfy the demands of the users.

Our recent ambition is to have all marine and aquatic libraries of Ukraine joined together. Today this integration is blocked due to the financial instability of the majority of Ukrainian institutes. Many scientific libraries do not have computers and hence the access to the internet and e-mail. A pressing problem is the generally meagre salary of the librarians, who do their regular and extra work being guided by sheer altruism and enthusiasm.