20th Biennial Conference of the European Association of Aquatic Sciences Libraries and Information Centres (EURASLIC)

3-5 May, 2023, Brussels, Belgium

Sustainability and infodiversity: (aquatic) libraries strengthening biodiversity knowledge

EURASLIC

RESEARCH INSTITUTE NATURE AND FOREST

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EURASLIC - 35 years together

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In 2023, the European Association of Aquatic Sciences Libraries and Information Centres (EURASLIC) celebrated its 35th anniversary. EURASLIC was founded in 1988 in Plymouth, UK as an independent, non-profit, European interest group that gathers together information specialists from aquatic sciences libraries and information centres. Being a regional group of the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centres (IAMSLIC) the association is also globally connected. Over the years EURASLIC libraries jointly undertook different projects, united their efforts within activities of Special Interest Groups (SIG), and made available their invaluable collections to the whole EURASLIC group through inter-library loan. The association currently issues three publications: Conference proceedings, EURASLIC Newsletter, and the Euraslic leaflet. The association thrives on the exchange of information and ideas, made possible by staff exchanges, regular virtual or in-person meetings and through the biennial EURASLIC conference. This conference is held biennially at different members' institutions and countries, and celebrates its 20th jubilee this year, for EURASLIC XX.

This paper gives an historical overview of EURASLIC along with updates on its activities in recent years.

Keywords: EURASLIC; activities; aquatic sciences; marine sciences; libraries

Historical overview

EURASLIC is a European professional association that gathers together specialists from aquatic sciences libraries and information centres. EURASLIC is an independent, non-profit, European interest group established in order to strengthen collaboration between libraries in the same field, to provide a platform for the exchange of ideas and information on issues of mutual concern relevant to aquatic sciences in Europe. EURASLIC is also a regional group of the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Science Libraries and Information Centres (IAMSLIC).

The idea of creating a European association was initiated by Allen Varley and David Moulder (Zdanowska, 2009) and developed by the United Kingdom Marine and Freshwater Librarians' Group. For the 1988 annual meeting of the group, invitations were extended to other European aquatic and marine science libraries and organisations. The meeting was attended by 36 participants, from Belgium, Denmark, Ireland, Finland, France, Monaco, Portugal, UK, and the USA (Moulder, 1988). Each library introduced itself and their current situation. The idea of further cooperation and creating a European network of libraries was accepted unanimously, so this meeting held in Plymouth in 1998 is considered as the inaugural meeting of EURASLIC (Varley, 2005).

The second very successful meeting was held in Paris in 1990. During that meeting the name EURASLIC (European Association of Aquatic Sciences Libraries and Information Centres) was established. Although it was decided at the first EURASLIC meeting to identify institutions and individuals throughout Europe who might usefully cooperate, the idea was further developed during the Paris meeting which was the basis for the creation of a directory of European marine and freshwater science information resources (Baron& Varley, 1998). Altogether three editions of the directory were published. The first edition of the Directory of European aquatic science libraries and information was published in 1991, the second one in 1994. The first two versions were available as print editions while the third edition published in 2003 was (and still is) available on the Internet.

At the same meeting the possibilities of EURASLIC operating as a regional group within the framework of IAMSLIC, whilst retaining European autonomy were discussed (Simpson,1990). EURASLIC was registered in Paris in 1992. (Baron& Varley, 1998). That same year EURASLIC bylaws were ratified (Varley, 2005). Bylaws define the name and objectives of organisation, types

of membership, composition of Executive Board and duties of officers, nominating and election process, funding, meetings regulation etc.

At that time EURASLIC had its own account and was the only Regional Group of IAMSLIC with its own Treasurer. The members could choose whether to pay a higher price for combined EURASLIC/IAMSLIC membership or to pay just for EURASLIC membership. The combined EURASLIC/IAMSLIC membership was abolished in 2006 and from then, members pay just one membership price becoming immediately EURASLIC and IAMSLIC members with the possibility to enjoy the benefits of both organisations (Haspeslagh, 2007). As EURASLIC was registered in France, for years only members from France were eligible for the position of Treasurer which limited the choice. That changed thanks to the launching of the euro in the Eurozone, which allowed EURASLIC to have at least one treasurer from Germany. That proved to be quite complicated changing the bank address and account and to have a treasurer every now and then from another country. Therefore, it was decided in 2009 to close the bank account and to transfer the rest of the money to the IAMSLIC bank account, while the IAMSLIC Treasurer kindly became EURASLIC treasurer as well.

EURASLIC's first website was created by David Moulder, The Marine Biological Association (MBA) / Plymouth Marine Laboratory (PML) UK in 1996. Since 1999 the website has been hosted in Greece by the Hellenic Centre for Marine Research. The domain name euraslic.org was registered in 2001 (Varley,2005). At the Kiel Conference in 2003, the EURASLIC Board decided to grant a project to redesign the EURASLIC website. It was soon felt necessary to completely renew the site, regarding content, lay-out and hosting. A web site committee formulated recommendations for content and lay-out, and these were implemented by a small task group at the new hosting institute (Flanders Marine Institute VLIZ, Belgium). In June 2004 the new site www.euraslic.org was launched. Even though the site was well received in order to improve it further, the Website working group was established in 2007 with the goal to review the existing site and to propose new solutions. One of the reasons for the revision was selection of the new software for the website that will allow managing the site from a web interface, so any changes could be made by whoever is authorised, which was not possible previously. The other requirements were to enhance the website in order to incorporate a blog or news, and to support collaborative authoring of content. At the time two software options were taken into account: WordPress and Joomla. Also there were two options for hosting of the site: on Dreamhost platform together with IAMSLIC or to continue with VLIZ, which was a hosting institute at the moment. After voting the Euraslic Web Committee decided to stay at VLIZ. To migrate pages more easily it was

decided that the look of the site was not going to be changed too much. The current website developed and hosted by VLIZ Flanders Marine Institute, was released on January 14, 2011. The whole EURASLIC site was migrated by VLIZ from Joomla to Drupal management system in August 2015. Data about membership that were available as a list on the previous website are now gathered directly from the IAMSLIC membership database and displayed on the EURASLIC website. In 2022 a task group was formed with the assignment to revise the web. Accordingly, the content has been updated and new pages are included but the design remains the same.

In 1990 the EURASLIC Bulletin Board was established on Omnet's SCIENCEnet electronic mail system (Varley, 2005). At that time, it was one of the world's largest electronic mail networks for the international scientific and engineering community. Among other entities it was used by ASFIS members, IAMSLIC, and international agencies. Within the system it was possible to create Bulletin boards, mailing lists, user groups, to receive news etc. (Hale,1990). As other Internet services became available the system was closed in November 1992 and replaced by the EURASLIC discussion list. The decision to create such a list was made at the EURASIC meeting held in Athens, Greece in 1998. The moderator of the list was Barbara Schmidt. In 2001 the EURASLIC discussion list merged with yahoo allowing members to access the list as registered yahoo users. Later that functionality was possible by using the integral facility of the EURASLIC website. A month after launching the site in 2004, a forum was added to the site (Varley, 2005). This forum replaced the old Yahoogroups application, which was mainly used as a platform for the EURASLIC mailing-list. All information and services, including the mailing-list, from the Yahoo-group were transferred to the new EURASLIC-forum by the end of 2004. As the EURASLIC Forum was quite inactive, especially after ILL requests were separated from the forum, the poll on the future of Forum was conducted in 2011. After voting it was decided not to maintain the forum anymore and it was removed from the website.

At the 3rd EURASLIC meeting there was a workshop dedicated to inter-library loan (ILL). As a consequence, it was decided to create a EURASLIC network for interlibrary lending. It was agreed to use the network to supply copies only, as many libraries have problems with sending books abroad. Besides it was agreed that in general there will be no charges, but that also depends on the number of pages, number of requests and on the policy of the different libraries. For that purpose, a form was created called the EURASLIC interlibrary lending request (Rientjes; Mex-Jorgensen, 1993). For communication purposes, to allow the exchange of ideas and information among members, a mailing list was created. The mailing list is widely used for interlibrary loan and it prevails as the format for ILL requests amongst EURASLIC members. In 1996 at the Malta

conference it was suggested to use ILL as a subject in emails for that purpose, and that is still in use even today. In 1998 thanks to negotiations with RLG Company EURASLIC members were able to obtain the Ariel full version software at a reduced price for the purpose of interlibrary loan (Goulala, 2000). Ariel could deliver documents to other Ariel workstations through FTP or email, and convert them to PDF files for patron delivery using the advantages of the Internet at the time (Hosburgh, 2010). In 2002, IAMSLIC developed a resource-sharing system IAMSLIC Z39.50 Distributed Library based on Z39.50 protocol that searches standard OPAC catalogues. Smaller libraries have the possibility to share library holdings through the online Union List of Marine and Aquatic Serials. Both systems are at the disposal of EURASLIC libraries to submit their requests (Butler, 2004). As the information about inter-library loan activities within the group are dispersed through various services it is difficult to gather correct data about total requests.

At the meeting held in Bremerhaven, in 1992 the UNESCO CDS/ISIS library management software was presented to EURASLIC members (McFadden, 1993; Molder, 1993). It was of particular interest to participants from developing countries, as it was provided at little or no cost.

The idea of creating the EURASLIC Archive was approved in 2000. The first EURASLIC archivist was Sofia Goulala as she started the idea during her presidency by gathering and maintaining EURASLIC documents from 1998 onwards. EURASLIC archivist is a member of the EURASLIC Executive Board. Małgorzata Grabowska-Popow took the duty of EURASLIC archivist in 2009. An Archive outline was posted on the web in 2022.

Publishing

Publishing is one of the significant EURASLIC activities. In the past, as noted, EURASLIC published three editions of the EURASLIC directory. EURASLIC Newsletters, leaflet and conference proceedings are published on a regular basis.

The EURASLIC Newsletter has been published since 1989 (Baron& Varley, 1998). The EURASLIC logo was designed in 1998 the same year the Newsletter was redesigned to incorporate the logo (Goulala, 2000). It was also decided to publish two issues per year and to apply for an ISSN which was assigned. During the conference held in 2011 in Lyon there was discussion about the Newsletter’s future, as the blogs become popular and could bring news immediately. It was decided to continue with publishing the Newsletters, however it should be reduced to once a year instead of twice. Since 2000 all newsletters have been available online, and reached its jubilee 50th issue in 2021.

The first EURASLIC leaflet in print was produced by Joan Baron and Sarah Heat in 1998. The EURASLIC leaflet has been revised several times. The last version was designed and published in June 2017. The leaflet is available in five languages (English, French, Ukrainian, Russian and Polish) and its content is regularly updated.

Members have the opportunity to publish their work in Conference proceedings. Until 2007 the proceedings were published in print and distributed to the members by mail. At the conference held in Krimskoe Primor'e it was decided to publish e-proceedings instead of print. The proceedings of the 12th Biennial Meeting was distributed on CD-ROM. Since 2010 the proceedings have been available online on the EURASLIC web pages, even the older ones, and the page was updated with missing issues in 2022.

EURASLIC conferences

One of the most important activities of the association is the EURASLIC conference. This is where members can present their work and their institutions, but above all it is an opportunity to meet the member colleagues personally, which gives a sense of community and lays the foundation for everlasting friendship. At the beginning, meetings were held more frequently as there was a need to establish rules of procedure, to work out principles of cooperation and organisational structures, but after the initial period EURASLIC conferences are usually held biennially. So far 20 meetings were held: in Plymouth, Paris, Lelystad, Bremerhaven, Gdynia, Valletta, Athens, Aberdeen, Brest, Kiel, Split, Krimskoe Primor'e, Brugge. Varna, Rome, Bremen, Zagreb, virtually via Galway, and Brussels. Some of the conferences were held in conjunction with the International Association of Aquatic and Marine Sciences Libraries and Information Centres (IAMSLIC). The fourth meeting in Bremerhaven, ninth meeting in Brest, thirteenth meeting in Bruges, sixteenth meeting in Rome and nineteenth virtual meeting were joint EURASLIC/IAMSLIC events.

The first two meetings (Plymouth, Paris) were mainly dedicated to the formation of the association, where conditions were defined for EURASLIC to become a formal organisation as well as forms of future collaboration with IAMSLIC.

The third meeting took place in Lelystad in 1991 in the Netherlands. At the conference, members from Poland and Russia were noticed and welcomed. The discussion was about ways of enhancing national and international cooperation. Agreement was reached over interlibrary lending and the future structure of EURASLIC. Apart from the reports, several databases were

presented. Furthermore, steps were made towards the improvement of European input into the aquatic database ASFA (van Leeuwen, 1993).

The fourth meeting was held a year later in 1992 at the Alfred Wegener Institute, Bremerhaven, Germany. It was combined with the 18th IAMSLIC conference. This was the first IAMSLIC conference held in Europe. The conference was dedicated to aquatic information resources and tools. A special session was given to German libraries. Especially well-received was a workshop on CDS/ISIS, a software program developed by UNESCO and used widely by libraries and information centres across the world. During the conference the EURASLIC Board meeting was held. At that meeting it was decided that EURASLIC as an association will be registered in Paris, preparations for a new EURASLIC directory were taken and the place for the next conference was chosen (Fuseler; Wiist 1993).

As more members from Central and Eastern European countries joined EURASLIC, it was of great importance to have a meeting in that part of the world. The Fifth EURASLIC Meeting was held in Gdynia, Poland, at Sea Fisheries Institute, under the direction of Henryk Ganowiak, the head of the library and information centre of Sea Fisheries Institute (SFI). It has been already accepted and established that speakers from different European countries report on the progress of work in their respective institutions. These presentations have been termed "country reports" and so far at least one session of a EURASLIC conference was devoted to this type of presentation where participants share experiences from their own work and discuss access to electronic information sources. There has been an increase in cooperation between libraries and information centres with a fishery and aquatic profile. A special part was dedicated to the CDS/ISIS Databases workshop (Moulder, Varley, 1995).

Photo 1. EURASLIC V, Gdynia, 1994

The sixth conference was held in Valetta, the capital of Malta, in April 1996. The majority of the presentations at this conference were "country reports" in which participants shared their experiences and information about progress in their own libraries and information centres. At the same time the concept of assistance in acquiring fisheries and water science literature between the European library members of EURASLIC was further developed. It was the basis for the future inter library loan activities (Moulder et al, 1996).

Beginning with the seventh EURASLIC conference held in Athens, Greece, on May 6-8, 1998, each subsequent conference was given a title. Thus, the Greek "meeting" was held under the title "People and technology: sharing knowledge and shaping the future of aquatic information in Europe" (Charou et al, 1998). It was expected that the papers submitted to the conference would be thematically coherent and match the established theme. However, reports on the progress of library work in individual countries, the "country reports", were still an important element.

The eighth conference fell in a special year - 2000, the millennium year, and this was reflected in the slogan under which it was announced. The title was: "New skills for the Millennium" The

conference was held May 3-5, 2000, in Aberdeen, UK, with Joan Baron-Varley making a major contribution to its organisation. The conference discussed new tasks of libraries, new information media, electronic journals, and the growing role of the Internet. The participants had the opportunity to attend several workshops: User Education and On-line Databases, here they reviewed - ASFA IDS (CSA); Oceanbase (Elsevier) and oneFish (SIFAR/FAO) (Heat et al, 2000).

The next conference "Managing resources in a sea of change" (Markham et al, 2002) was held in Brest, France from 14 to 19 October 2001 and was special because the 9th EURASLIC conference was held in conjunction with the 27th IAMSLIC conference. Given the date (one month after the terrorist attack on the World Trade Center in New York), there were concerns about attendance. The fears were unfounded, because many IAMSLIC representatives from the USA as well as from Africa and other continents came. Joan Baron Varley, who was president of EURASLIC at the time, presented a report on the activities and statistics of the association. A report on the activities of IAMSLIC was presented by the then President-Elect Linda Pikula (Pikula, 2002). During this conference, discussions were initiated to increase the integration of the two associations, as the European branch was independent and separate. Virtual information sources received much attention and papers were presented on the development of "wallless or, virtual" libraries (Markham et al., 2002). In the panel session, a new portal that collects all information related to fisheries created in FAO and released under the name of One-Fish was demonstrated. It contained descriptions of scientific institutes involved in fish and aquatic environment research, information on research, programs, conferences, and even provided new jobs in various countries for specialists in such fields as fisheries, aquatic ecology, oceanography, etc. (Baron-Varley 2002).

The tenth EURASLIC conference was held on 6-9 May 2003 in Kiel, Germany. It was organised by the libraries of the Institut für Meereskunde and Universitaet Kiel. The title of the conference was: "Smooth sailing: crossing the boundaries in aquatic sciences information management" (Bacheva et al., 2003). During this conference a lot of attention was paid to transition from print to electronic media, cataloguing the Internet, and networking. The activities of Cambridge Scientific Abstracts and the functioning of ASFA were also discussed. There was also a presentation of the database of natural and agricultural journals - AGORA (Collins 2003). One session was devoted to "cataloguing on the Internet," how to find the information you need, and how to navigate in cyberspace. The Belgian representative from the Flanders Marine Institute in Ostend, Jan Haspeslagh, discussed a project to create a website for EURASLIC, which is still functioning today and fulfils an important role in the information and library cooperation. At the

workshop ‘Getting lost in cyberspace’ websites of scientific institutes were analysed, stressing the mandatory data for a well-functioning website, its individual features and evaluating their advantages or disadvantages (McCulloch, 2003).

The eleventh conference was organised by the Ruđer Bošković Institute in Zagreb and Institute of Oceanography and Fisheries in Split, Croatia, on 4-6 May 2005. The title was "Open waters - open sources" centring around Open Access. Consequently, a lot of the papers and presentations reflected on what Open Access should be and how to organise it, but also gave insight on Open Access projects already underway in aquatic libraries across Europe (Konjevic et al., 2006). During this conference several workshops were held. This was not the first such form of knowledge transfer to conference participants, as this type of "training" had already been provided at previous conferences. There was an interesting workshop conducted by a specialist from Belgium, Mr. Paul Nieuwenhuysen, on the use of online possibilities for acquiring literature, for example, through Google Scholar (Nieuwenhuysen, 2006). Also several Special Interest groups had discussion sessions during the meeting.

The twelfth EURASLIC Conference took place in Crimea and was organised by the Ukrainian Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas from Sevastopol on May 2-4, 2007. This time the title was "From treasures of the seas - to treasures of the libraries" and it was dedicated to library resources with consideration given to old, rare or archival books. The role of the library in the modern circulation of information, the needs and expectations of readers and information users were analysed (Konjevic et al, 2009).

Another joint conference was organised on September 27-October 1, 2009 in Bruges, Belgium, as the 35th meeting of IAMSLIC and the 13th EURASLIC meeting. The title of the conference was: Confluence of Ideas: Evolving to meet the challenges of global change. The focus of the conference was on the topic how libraries could adapt to the challenges of our times. Innovative and customised services such as data publishing, data curation, involvement in cyberinfrastructure, collaborations and marketing of the library or information centres were discussed (Barr, 2009).

Caught in the “fishing net” of information was the title of the 14th Biennial Meeting of the European Association of Aquatic Science Libraries and Information Centres, that took place in Lyon, France, on 17-20 May 2011. The conference was held jointly with 28th annual conference of the French group of librarians and documentarists in marine and freshwater science OMER (EauxMer). A

very wide range of papers were presented at the conference. Among others, there were presentation on the 50th Anniversary of the IOC/IODE Programme; a description of VOA3R, as a European Research Consortium Project for digital libraries, subjects like bibliometric and citation analysis, search engine optimisation, open access, country reports, group activities, poster presentation and also user surveys (Baligand, 2011).

At the Lyon conference, there were three proposals for the 2013 EURASLIC conference: Bulgaria, Russia and Poland. Although Moscow was chosen as the next conference site, due to some changes at the organiser institute, the 15th Biennial Conference of the European Association of Aquatic Sciences Libraries and Information Centres was held in Varna, Bulgaria from 13-15 May. At Varna EURASLIC celebrated its 25th anniversary along the warm Black Sea with a birthday cake. The official part of the conference started with a brief overview of EURASLIC history and its activities. The participants had the opportunity to discuss the management of scientific information in accordance with the title Ocean of Data & Information: Creating Value by their Organisation and Management. Among other things, the meeting provided an insight into creation and functionalities of some repositories (CEEMAR, FULIR, INTEGRYB). Other presentations covered subjects such as: information literacy, e- libraries, information systems, Black Sea biodiversity and Black Sea ancient coastlines. ODINECET project gave an overview on ongoing activities, and following the tradition of the EURASLIC conference there were also country and institutional reports presented (Bacheva, 2013).

Although there was more than one institution willing to host the 2015 conference the FAO was chosen as the host of the joint 41st IAMSLIC Conference/16th EURASLIC Biennial Meeting. Conference that was held in Rome, Italy from 7-11 September. The theme was “Blue Growth” that is defined as: "sustainable growth and development emanating from economic activities in the oceans, wetlands and coastal zones, that minimize environmental degradation, biodiversity loss and unsustainable use of living aquatic resources, and maximize economic and social benefits" (Bartley et al., 2018). Both presentations and posters proved that 'Blue Growth' can be understood in many ways. Presentations covered topics like managing scientific data, sustainable information management, innovations and technology at library user services (Bartley et al., 2018). One of the main topics discussed during the conference was how to keep IAMSLIC and EURASLIC relevant and establish successful library partnerships. During the conference, a meeting of the ODINECET Steering Group was held on the 10th anniversary of the group. This highly successful conference was well attended by 90 participants from 30 countries and from all 6 regional groups of IAMSLIC, all enjoying the wonders of Rome. The only shadow of the meeting

was the information that the FAO fisheries library as one of EURASLIC libraries was closed and subsumed into the main FAO library (Barr, 2016).

Photo 2. EURASLIC XVI, Rome 2015

Riding the Wave: Information Retrieval and Resource Management for the Future was the title of the next 17th Euraslic conference, which took place in Bremen, Germany from 8-10th May. Peter Pissierssens, from IODE, and Matthew Buys from ORCID kindly accepted an invitation to give a presentation at the EURASLIC meeting. Peter Pissierssens, with the help of David Baca who joined the session via Skype, gave an overview on IODE-IAMSLIC cooperation in which EURASLIC as a sub-regional group is interested as well. Main activities of IODE were shown with emphasis on their new policy that is directed towards sustainability. Matthew Buys gave an overview of the ORCID persistent digital identifier that is already adopted by many publishers and some CRIS systems and is interoperable with DOI and some other identifier schemes. Barbara Bultmann from National Marine Biological Library, Marine Biological Association, Plymouth, UK gave a presentation on the DIGIMAR project. ASFA and its activities were presented along with the ASFA Trust Fund and discussions were held on what direction the ASFA database should be

developed. How it is hard to find literature on a particular subject and the importance of rare and special collections in libraries was stressed by Nils Moosdorf, from ZMT (Konjevic, 2017). The Conference encompassed a variety of topics: from journals and publishing, open access, research data management, to research information technology, databases etc. Participants also paid a visit to the Alfred Wegener Institute for Polar and Marine Research, Bremerhaven having a round table discussion on shaping the future of EURASLIC. For the first time several colleagues joined the conference via Skype which somehow announced the future direction of the conferences (Schrader ; Konjevic, 2017).

Singing in the rain or rather *Deliberating in the rain* has become a symbol of the 18th Euraslic members' meeting in Zagreb, in May 2019. Although it was cold and raining outside the windows, the atmosphere of the meeting was, as usual, warm. The very title of the conference River of no Return: Sail or Sink helped to raise the temperature of the meeting. How can libraries survive in times of such rapid technological advances, how to sail so as not to sink, the challenge of Open Science - these were the questions the conference participants tried to answer. GDPR was one of the hot topics for the European libraries, therefore it was also presented among other subjects. There were three workshops during the conference, one giving an overview of the joint activities between EURASLIC and IAMSLIC, presented by the presidents of the both associations, Maria Kalentis gave an interesting workshop about the new developments in ASFA. Ekaterina Kulakova organised a workshop on OceanDocs. The workshop was sponsored by IODE. Other topics addressed at the conference were data management, copyright issues, new and innovative library services and activities, new publishing models, as well as the country/institutional reports (Mayer et al., 2019; Goosens, 2019).

All in-person conferences were usually followed by some interesting field trip like rafting on the Cetina river, hiking the Karadag mountain, Kaliakra trip, Perouges, Bruges by Boat, and walking in the rain along Plitvice lakes.

Photo 3. Karadag Mountain - EURASLIC XII (2007)

Photo 4. Lyon underground tunnels- EURASLIC XIV (2011)

Photo 5. Walking in the rain - Plitvice lakes - EURASLIC XVIII (2019)

The following years were full of surprises and unexpected changes. Even though the AWI as a host for the joint EURASLIC/IAMSLIC conference was presented in Zagreb, due to the departure of Kathrin Brannemann to a new job, EURASLIC had to look for another host. Luckily Stephanie Ronan (Marine Institute Oceanus Library, Galway) offered to host the joint conference. Everybody was looking forward to visiting Ireland but all of a sudden COVID-19 outbreak occurred in 2020. Nevertheless, there was still hope that all will be over by 2021, but as time was approaching it was obvious due to pandemic and travel impediments that an online conference was the only alternative. The first EURASLIC online meeting was held on October 12-14, 2021, in conjunction with the 47th Annual IAMSLIC conference. It took place live from the Marine Institute, Galway, Ireland. The title of the conference was Libraries Supporting Our Ocean: Sustaining and preserving our shared ocean for our shared future. It was a completely new experience for everyone, but the conference was a success, with presentations and posters on topics including

libraries supporting the sustainable development goals, micro plastic pollution in the library, Open Science, IODE, the effects of the pandemic on libraries. There were around 20 diverse presentations, a panel discussion, a poster, breakout discussion, board meetings, regional meetings, movies and a quiz, all together with a lot of content for participants to enjoy (Ronan, 2021). Registration was free for the EURASLIC/IAMSLIC members, thanks to generous sponsorship from the Marine Institute. The conference was hosted via Microsoft Teams and expertly moderated by Stephanie Ronan, bringing an Irish feel to the online event.

Photo 6. EURASLIC XIX, joint virtual conference (2021)

After four years of virtual meetings, the 20th Biennial Conference of the European Association of Aquatic Sciences Libraries and Information Centres, was held as an in-person conference in Brussels, Belgium from 3-5 May 2023. The title was Sustainability and infodiversity: (aquatic) libraries strengthening biodiversity knowledge. The conference started with a welcome speech and ice-breaker. A short overview of EURASLIC's history was followed by an invited lecture by Peter Pissierssens on 'The evolving role of marine information in the IODE programme'. The conference covered a range of diverse topics. Several Research Information Systems were presented (FRIS, PURE, CroRIS). Focus was also given to open science and data management, and publishing. The publishing was also mentioned from the perspective of grey publishing and predatory publishers. Participants were updated on ASFA projects. During the OpenASFA

workshop new records were created and the best ones won prizes. The workshop was followed by a presentation on AquaDocs. Open Science was also the topic of the poster by Flanders Hydraulics Research speaking on optimising research data, and their disclosure and visibility through an expert platform, while the other poster brought light on the history of fake news. BIOR was represented by an institutional report. The field trip to The Research Centre for Aquatic Fauna in Linkebeek informed participants about monitoring and restoration activities for saving aquatic fauna species.

Photo 7. EURASLIC XX, Brussels, 2023.

As organising a conference is a complex process in order to give potential hosts some recommendations, the initiative of making a ‘conference minimum requirements’ document was approved in 2001. EURASLIC Conference minimum requirements are available on the EURASLIC Web. In order to accommodate current trends, the requirements were updated in 2022, they now include the possibility of hosting the biennial conference online or as a hybrid event, a major change from the in person only conference model that prevailed until 2020.

EURASLIC grants

EURASLIC occasionally offers grants to support its members according to available funds and current needs/priorities. Apart from EURASLIC grants, from time to time grants from partner organisations (IAMSLIC , IOC, IODE) are also at the disposal of EURASLIC members.

An annual EURASLIC Grant for the Purchase of Library Equipment was introduced in 2002 (Varley, 2005). The grant was intended for an underprivileged European aquatic library for purchase of computing equipment. The grant was awarded for several years until libraries became relatively equipped. At the second Intermediate EURASLIC Executive Board Meeting held in Paris, France in 2008 the decision was made to support projects instead of awarding equipment grants (Bacheva, 2008). At time equipment was also provided through other projects that EURASLIC members were involved in. As a part of ODINECET project ECET libraries received equipment grants in 2010.

At the fifth conference held in Gdynia, Poland, the subject of exchanges of staff between EURASLIC members was mentioned along with the EURASLIC involvement in training courses (Iwueke, 1995.). In accordance with the proposal EURASLIC members have been encouraged and supported by EURASLIC to partake in study visits to other EURASLIC institutes, especially visits by members from former Eastern European countries to Members' institutes in other parts of Europe. Several members seized that opportunity in the past. In 1995 Maria Kalenchits from Estonia and Igor Ivashchenko from Ukraine visited the Sea Fisheries Institute, Gdynia, Poland (Ganowiak, 1996). In 1996 the Estonian Marine Institute librarian visited several Finnish libraries. Olga Akimova (Akimova, 2000) and some other members visited Plymouth Marine Laboratory (Kalenchits, 1996) while others visited Institut für Meereskunde and Universitaet Kiel, Germany. Valentina Khazova from PINRO, Murmansk had an opportunity to take training courses at the library of the Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas (Sevastopol) in the period 1996-1998 (Khazova, 2002). Snejina Bacheva, Institute of Oceanology, Varna, Bulgaria visited the National Centre for Marine Research Directorate of Research Support & Documentation Library (NCMR), Athens, Greece in 2002 (Bacheva, 2003). The National Representative for Spain visited the EurOcean organisation, Lisbon, Portugal. In 2004 Małgorzata Grabowska-Popow with financial support of Leibniz Institut für Meereswissenschaften an der Universitat Kiel visited the two units of the Institute GEOMAR Library West and IFM-GEOMAR Library East in Kiel. Also such visits are possible by other available grants. Małgorzata Grabowska-Popow visited Germany again in 2017 thanks to the Bibliothek & Information – International/Bibliothek & Information Deutschland

grant. She visited the Scientific Library of the Leibniz Institute for Baltic Sea Research, Warnemünde, Rostock (Grabowska-Popow, 2017).

In order to support participants who do not have access to funding to attend the EURASLIC conferences, a travel grant is offered to EURASLIC members. As EURASLIC members are also IAMSLIC members they can apply for the IAMSLIC travel grant for attending IAMSLIC conferences but the funding is administered primarily by the Regional Groups.

Special Interest Group within EURASLIC

To gather together members around a common interest, occasionally Special Interest Groups (SIG) were formed within EURASLIC. Some of the groups were: Mediterranean Special Interest Group (MedSIG), Freshwater Special Interest Group, Environment Special Interest Group, and European Countries in Economic Transition (ECET). Some of the groups had their sessions during the conferences with regard to broadening discussion on common subjects and problems, while others were more active and had their meetings, educational training or joint projects. Due to the broader research scope of some institutions member libraries were sometimes part of several Special Interest Groups.

The question whether there is the need for the Freshwater Special Interest Group was raised in 1994 at the 5th conference held in Gdynia. It was stressed that even though there are 55% of freshwater institutions listed in the directory, approximately only 16% of freshwater representatives attended EURASLIC meetings. It was suggested that EURASLIC can provide the best forum for the discussion and development of freshwater information services in Europe thus giving space to Freshwater Special Interest Group (Pettman, 1995). The group had its regular discussion sessions during the EURASLIC conferences.

EURASLIC Environmental libraries gathered together around the UNIverse Project in the nineties. The coordinator of the Environmental group was Ian Pettman, from the Freshwater Biological Association (FBA). Seven EURASLIC members participated in the project: The Freshwater Biological Association; Bundesamt für Seeschifffahrt und Hydrographie; The Centre for the Economics and Management of Aquatic Resources (CEMARE), University of Portsmouth; The National Centre for Marine Research, Athens; The National Marine Biological Library, Plymouth Marine Laboratory; The National Oceanographic Library, Southampton Oceanography Centre; and The Swedish Environment Protection Agency (Pettman, 2000). During the Conference in Aberdeen along with some other groups (ECET, Mediterranean) the Environment Institutes raised

the questions of mutual concern and possible future action addressing the broader needs of the group and it was decided to establish officially an environmental interest group. The group had its discussion during the joint EURASLIC/IAMSLIC conference held in 2001 in Brest it was stated that although environmental libraries are also aquatic libraries, they have many common environmental interests (Baron, Varley.J., 2002 ; Paavilainen, E., 2002).

Mediterranean Special Interest Group (MedSIG)

The creation of regional groups like the Mediterranean was first discussed at the Open forum at the 7th biennial meeting of EURASLIC in Athens. The idea was further developed at the 8th EURASLIC conference in Aberdeen in 2000 and 9th EURASLIC conference in Brest in 2001 and Joan Baron Varley was the first to work through the initial proposition. The group was formed and had a discussion session at the 10th EURASLIC conference in Kiel in 2003. During that session, there was also a proposal to set up a network of Mediterranean libraries dealing with marine environmental information. Margaret Watts from UNEP Mediterranean Action Plan (Greece) and Sofia Goulala from National Centre for Marine Research (Greece) agreed to coordinate further actions. By the 11th EURASLIC conference in Split in 2005, the network of libraries began to form. It was a cooperative effort amongst 45 libraries and information centres around the Mediterranean, which had broader scope as it included members outside EURASLIC group like North African countries around the Mediterranean, that were members of AFRIAMSLIC regional group. The aims of the group were to share and exchange information on issues related to the Mediterranean region and to give support on developments in information management.

First meeting of the Mediterranean Marine and Aquatic Science Libraries and Information Centres Network was held in Cadiz, Spain, in 2008, where 10 representatives from six countries presented their libraries and information centres (Watts; Mayer, 2010). Later on, the web portal of the Network was set, the ILL network started to form, and the network changed its name to Mediterranean Aquatic Libraries and Information Centres Network. Due to the closing of the library/information center of UNEP MAP, whose staff (Margaret Watts) did the majority of MedSIG work, after 2012 MedSIG and the Network stopped its activities.

European Countries in Economic Transition (ECET)

The members from ECET countries began joining EURASLIC in 1994 when the EURASLIC conference was held in Poland and invitations to join the Association were sent to the Eastern European countries (Akimova, 2004). The group European Countries in Economic Transition

(ECET) was formed in 2000 during the conference held in Aberdeen with Maria Kalenchits as ECET Representative.

At the beginning, the issue the group addressed was computerisation of member libraries with adequate equipment and software, and the possibility of training for the group members. A priority goal was to optimise the Interlibrary Lending Service within the Association through improvement of the access to the information on serials available at the aquatic libraries of Central and Eastern Europe. Members of the ECET group have subsequently prepared a proposal to carry out a Scoping Study for a Black Sea Regional Library Cooperation.

At the 8th Session of the IODE Group of Experts on Marine Information Management (GEMIM-VIII) Jan Haspeslagh EURASLIC president at the time gave an overview of EURASLIC ECET group stressing the needs of marine libraries in Eastern Europe. The GEMIM Group proposed establishment of an ODIN for Eastern Europe to strengthen the capacity of marine libraries in Eastern Europe. The summary report of the GEMIM-VIII Session was approved at the 18th Session of the IOC Committee on International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE-XVIII) (Oostende, 26-30 April, 2005).

The ODINECET project started in 2006 in collaboration with IODE. The project brought together the following countries: Bulgaria, Croatia, Estonia, Poland, Russia, Ukraine, and Latvia. The first project coordinator was Maria Kalenchits (Kalenchits, 2006). As Maria Kalenchits moved to Fiji in 2006 to work as a Librarian/PIMRIS Coordinator at the School of Marine Studies, University of the South Pacific (Fiji), the project coordinator became Olga Akimova. In 2017 Ekaterina Kulakova became the project coordinator. The number of members varied over the years, at the 10th anniversary it reached 23 members and 19 institutions. Some of the goals of the project were: to support the networking of aquatic libraries in ECET countries, to provide the training to the members, to develop ECET Union Catalogue, and to establish a repository (Akimova, 2015).

The First ODINECET Training Course on Marine Information Management was held at the IOC Project Office for IODE in Oostende, Belgium on March 13-24, 2006. At the beginning the training was specially organised for the ODIN ECET group, and after the initial goal was achieved, members of the group were able to continue their education separately, attending Marine Information Management Training Courses organised as part of OceanTeacher Academy. Altogether from 2006-2013 around 15 courses were held at the IODE office, Oostende, that were attended by members of the group. Besides courses planned as Marine Information Management,

some members also attended data management courses. Two education courses took place outside Belgium. A regional MIM training course for Ukrainian and Russian aquatic librarians, 7-9th May 2007, “Krimskoe Primore” was held as a post conference workshop. The other ODIN ECET course was held in Sevastopol in 2011 as a joint meeting of ODIN ECET and ODINBlackSea group. Among presentations and other topics, the group discussed possibilities of digitisation of rare books on marine science in the ODINECET region. The OceanTeacher Academy project was replaced in 2014 by OceanTeacher Global Academy which is a network of decentralised Regional Training Centres (Akimova, 2012).

Photo 8. Participants of the first ODINECET MIM Training in 2006 in Oostende, Belgium

One of the first activities of the group was the creation of the Union List of Serials of ECET Group (European Countries in Economic Transition) aquatic libraries (Kalenchits, 2006). The idea was discussed previously by participants at the 10th EURASLIC Conference held in Kiel in 2003, and further developed after the ODINECET project started (Kalenchits, 2003). The first version of the

catalogue was too complicated for inputting records, therefore in 2012 a new web-based interface for the input and management of the ODINECET Union Catalogue of Serials was developed by VLIZ IT staff and introduced by Jan Haspeslagh. The list of serials has been updated by the Marine Library of VLIZ (Akimova, 2015).

The electronic document repository for ODINECET group (CEEMaR) was established in 2008 as a thematic digital repository covering the marine, brackish and freshwater environments and providing access to papers produced by staff of the ECET countries Institutes. On November 21, 2015 due to a power blackout the IBSS server that hosted the CEEMaR repository went down and was no longer accessible. As a consequence, the group members decided to archive documents in the IODE OceanDocs repository (OD) (Kulakova et al, 2016). At the 45th Annual IAMSLIC Conference held in Port Aransas, TX, USA in October 2019, in line with the results of the survey conducted by the Aquatic Commons Evaluation (ACE) team it was decided to create a new joint repository by merging OceanDocs (IODE) and Aquatic Commons (IAMSLIC) repositories (Kulakova, 2015). This decision had a great impact on the ECET group; therefore, ODINECET Coordinator Ekaterina Kulakova was actively involved in the Joint Repository Working Group, as a member of IODE SG, and co-manager of the project of the AquaDocs e-Repository. Implementation of KOHA software in the libraries of the ODINECET group started in 2016. The overall objective of the KOHA development project was to support the development of KOHA ILS software for libraries of the ODINECET group. KOHA software installed on the Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas of the Russian Academy of Sciences (IBSS) RAS server (catalog.marine-research.org) is configured to share a single Koha installation among multiple branches, which are supposed to be independent organisations (Akimova, 2016). The separate KOHA instance has been successfully used by IBSS as a part of the CRIS system (Current Research Information System) – SCI-INFO (sci-info.maine-research.org). Koha is used in the system as a back end bibliographic information storage, collecting information on all papers of different types (articles, patents, abstracts, monographs etc.) published by the IBSS staff during the period. The KOHA Project implementation was conducted by Olga Akimova (IBSS, Sevastopol) and her team.

Projects

EURASLIC participated in various projects together with its partners or through Special Interest Groups. As mentioned, the Environment Special Interest Group participated in the UNIverse

Project from 1996 to 1999 (Pettman, 2000). The project was funded by the European Commission with the goal of developing a virtual union catalogue, networking environmental sciences literature in over 50 libraries across Europe (Baron& Varley, 1998). One of the targeted subjects was Environmental Sciences. The leader and coordinator of the Environmental SIG Ian Pettman, was also a project leader (Pettman, 1996). In the first months of the project, work packages were installed, a Project handbook produced, and e-mail systems co-ordinated (Pettman et al, 1998). Seven EURASLIC libraries participated in the project (Pettman, 2000).

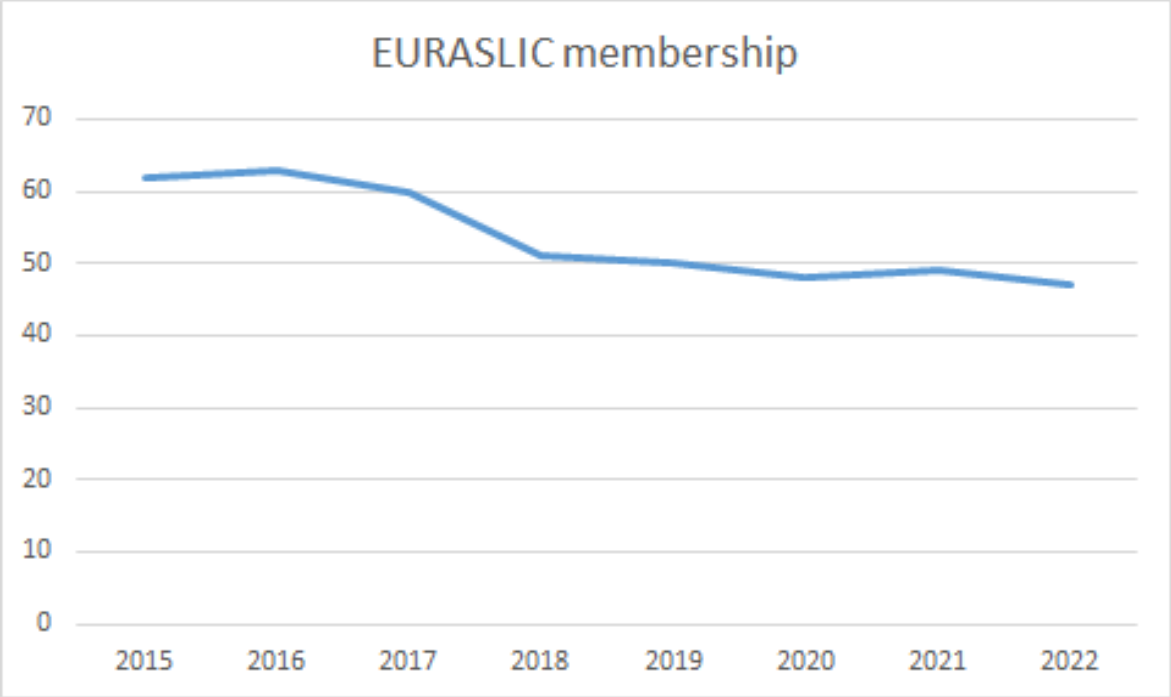
BLICOP Black Sea Regional Library Co-Operation Project was initiated in 2002. The aim was to create an online knowledge management system for literature on the Black Sea (Varley, 2005). The project brought together libraries from Bulgaria, Georgia, Romania, Russia, Turkey and Ukraine. Olga Akimova, Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas (Ukraine) was the project leader. The Scoping Study meeting was held at the Institute of Biology of the Southern Seas (Sevastopol, Ukraine) from 7th to 9th August 2002. The aim of the project is to create an online cooperative bibliographic information system for literature on the Black Sea (Akimova et al, 2003).

ECET group as already mentioned was part of the IODE ODIN project as ODINECET. The focus was on marine information management providing education, catalogue creation, implementation of Koha software, and creation of its own repository. After the CEEMaR repository was no longer available and OceanDocs was replaced by AquaDocs group coordinator Ekaterina Kulakova was actively involved in the Joint Repository Working Group, as a member of IODE SG while EURASLIC libraries from ECET group were actively involved in depositing items into the repository. AquaDocs was created and launched in 2021. By 2022, the migration of content from Aquatic Commons and OceanDocs had been implemented; its governance and maintenance had been accomplished by Atmire, the host provider. AquaDocs is funded and managed by the UNESCO/IOC International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange (IODE) and the International Marine and Aquatic Sciences Libraries and Information Centers (IAMSLIC) with support from the FAO Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts. The repository is at the disposal of the whole EURASLIC community as an information source but also as an input repository for the EURASLIC. Over 4600 records are deposited by the European Region ODIN-ECET group and other European countries, including Germany, Latvia, Poland, Russian Federation, Ukraine, and the United Kingdom. To facilitate use of AquaDocs several AquaDocs workshops were organised throughout 2022 conducted by the AquaDocs team.

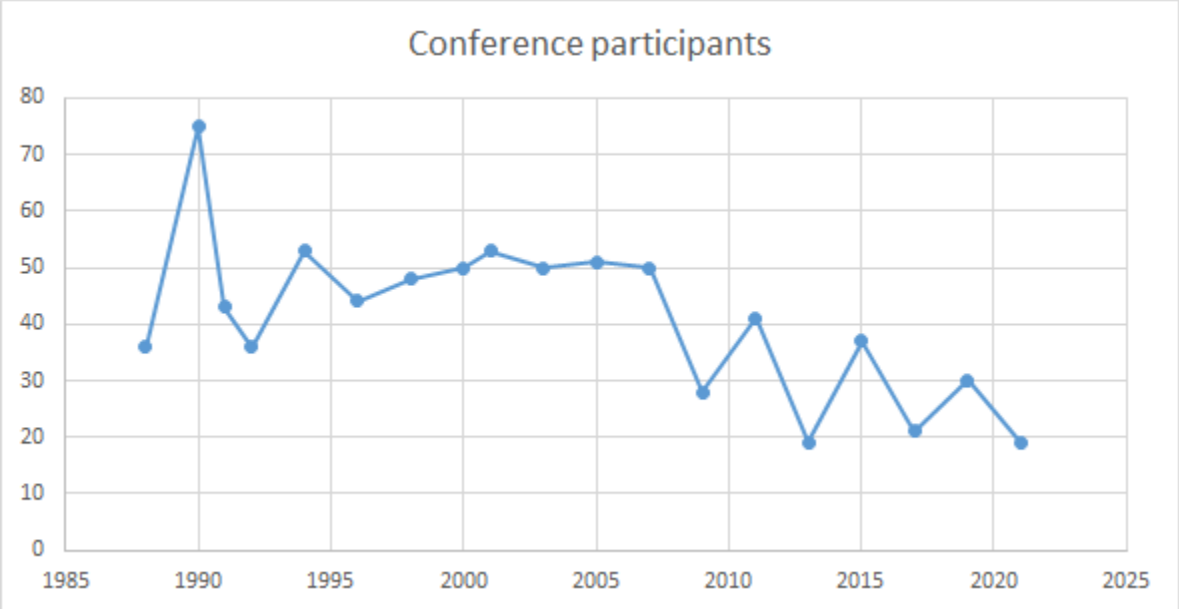
In April 2016 Bart Goosens, EURASLIC president 2015-2019 represented EURASLIC at Digimar Euromarine workshop, held at National Marine Biological Library in Plymouth. The main aim of the DIGIMAR workshop was to identify the unique records and literature that Marine libraries hold and outline potential new digital services and digitisation projects. Models for cooperation were suggested to undertake joint projects thus improving the exchange and dissemination of information (Bültmann, 2016). At the 17th EURASLIC Biennial conference held in Bremen in 2017 Barbara Bultmann gave a presentation on the DIGIMAR project with an overview on the workshop. As a future plan, the possibility of harvesting marine digital materials was mentioned (Bultmann, 2017).

Membership throughout the years

The number of members varied throughout the years. The first inaugural meeting gathered 36 participants, the second Paris meeting was attended by 75 participants. In 2001 the association had 79 members from 22 European countries, of which only 27 members were also members of lAMSLIC (Baron-Varley, 2002). In 2003 there were 106 members from 28 countries. Although there were a significant number of new members from European Countries in Economic Transition (ECET) it was noticed at the Kiel conference that there was a decrease of participants from Scandinavian and other Western European countries. The membership reached its peak in 2005 with 110 members from aquatic science institutions. The number of members has been decreasing since 2005, even though it's been stable for the last several years. The membership number also has an influence on the number of participants at EURASLIC conferences.



Graph 1. Membership throughout the years



Graph 2. Number of participants at the EURASLIC conferences

The reasons for the decrease in membership is due to lack of funds, staff retirement, merging or closure of the libraries, and most recently the Covid-19 pandemic, economic crisis and the war in Europe. One of the tasks for the future is to restore the membership numbers to its peak in the 90s and 00s. For that purpose, a Task group was formed in 2022.

Pandemic and its influence

After the 2019 conference held in Zagreb it did not occur to anyone that we would not see each other in person for the next several years. The global outbreak of coronavirus in 2020 influenced every segment of personal and professional life. One of the measures to combat the pandemic in almost all European countries was the implementation of a lockdown for several months. Libraries including EURASLIC ones had to adapt to new circumstances. During the closure there were not many activities within the association, except for interlibrary loan. Mostly work from home prevailed emphasising the importance of online services. There was some virtual contact between members in order to find out how EURASLIC libraries were coping with the situation and COVID-19 threat, however, it was not known what each library was doing to combat the difficulties. Thus the EURASLIC Board decided to run an information gathering survey in September 2020. According to the results, EURASLIC libraries, even in those circumstances, managed to provide the majority of their services to their patrons and were of great support to their institution in difficult times. Print/digital collections were partly or fully accessible online, interlibrary loan was very intensive within the community and bibliometric services were available to patrons via online research support. After the lockdown was over some libraries started working regularly and some were working partially from home for some time (Konjević et al, 2001).

Participation in the international and national library events was not terminated either. The meetings and conferences turned into virtual events.

Luckily there was no EURASLIC conference planned for 2020, but the IAMSLIC conference that should have taken place in Wellington, New Zealand had to be held online. Thanks to the sponsorship, the registration for the conference was free of charge for EURASLIC/IAMSLIC members. As there were no travel costs either, it was a good opportunity for EURASLIC members to participate at the IAMSLIC conference in greater numbers. The first IAMSLIC online conference was a big success and gathered more than 122 participants from all regional groups, including 17 from EURASLIC. During the conference there was time reserved for Regional group meetings, so EURASLIC seized that opportunity and held its first online (informal) meeting. Members agreed to have online meetings from time to time (Konjević, 2020).

In 2021 the situation regarding the COVID-19 pandemic had not improved greatly. EURASLIC adapted quickly to the new circumstances, making the decision in April of 2021 to hold the joint conference virtually instead of an in-person conference. The conference gathered 138

participants, including 19 EURASLIC members, and was a great success thanks to being well organised, having interesting presenters, and especially thanks to the enormous effort and exceptional moderating skills of Stephanie Ronan who managed to bring us a virtual taste of Ireland.

EURASLIC had its first online membership meeting called “Short EURASLIC catch-up meeting” in December 2020. There were three catch-up meetings in 2021, and it was decided to continue with this activity.

In 2022 one catch-up meeting was held in March, and members that were attending the IAMSLIC hybrid conference attended a Regional group meeting during the IAMSLIC conference. Besides catch-up meetings, for the first time, online board meetings started in 2021. It started with the 2021 online conference, where both board and business meetings were held online. The first Board online meeting outside the conference was held on November 25, 2021. In 2022 the EURASLIC Executive Board meeting was held in June. Regardless of some technical problems, those meetings prove to be a very convenient way to discuss problems, and to take measure or inform the community about novelties. As a result of those meetings in 2022 two Task groups were formed:

Task group 1 – Membership: with the goal to determine activities in order to increase the number of members and to get current members more involved in EURASLIC activities, which is an ongoing activity.
Task group 2 – Web page: with the goal to revise the current website, find inactive pages or to suggest changes to existing one, which has been done.

In order to perform their activities Task groups also had online meetings and e-mail communication.

Cooperation with other organisations

Throughout the years EURASLIC has had good cooperation with its parent organisation IAMSLIC, as well as with IODE and ASFA. Thus EURASLIC members can participate in IAMSLIC committees, but also in joint projects, workshops and conferences. Some of the EURASLIC libraries are ASFA partners or ASFA Associates. EURASLIC representatives occasionally participate at IODE Sessions of the IODE Committee. The last one (26th Session of the IODE Committee) was held online 20-23 April, 2021. Among issues of interest for EURASIC, attention

was given to the future of ODINS, AquaDocs repository, strategic plan (2022-2025) for data and information management.

Thanks to the virtual environment several EURASLIC members were able to participate at the International Ocean Data Conference, which was held in Sopot, Poland as a hybrid event in February 2022.

In collaboration with ASFA in March 2022, an OpenASFA Workshop was organised for EURASLIC members. The workshop also included the invitation to EURASLIC members to participate in AGROVOC Multilingual Thesaurus. The FAO ASFA Secretariat and AquaDocs organised a joint training programme on the use of OpenASFA and AquaDocs, in five training sessions. The training programme was held online from August 29 to September 2. The training sessions were open to all, whether they are members of ASFA or EURASLIC/IAMSLIC. The Europe-based participants in the training represented Croatia, Germany, Ireland, Poland, Russian Federation, Turkey, the UK and more. After each session the trainees could complete a test and get a certificate confirming their participation.

EURASLIC members were also invited to participate at the *Aquatic Science Information Professionals Supporting the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)* joint event by FAO ASFA Secretariat and AquaDocs (IODE and IAMSLIC) online conference held on 15th September 2022.

In 2022 the IAMSLIC conference was entitled “From streams to oceans: Libraries informing sustainability of aquatic resources” and was held as a hybrid event. It was hosted in person in Montevideo, Uruguay and online, once again giving EURASLIC members an opportunity to participate at the IAMSLIC conference. As it was the first IAMSLIC hybrid conference it was demanding in organisational terms, there were small technical obstacles that were solved immediately. The FAO sponsored two live interpreters, for English and Spanish, which really added to the accessibility, and reach of both the audience and the presenters. The conference was amazing with a lot of interesting presentations covering subjects of data science, library administration and leadership, information literacy but also ocean and climate change literacy and support initiatives for the Sustainable Development Goal. Unfortunately, the virtual attendees missed the opportunity to network in person with colleagues, attend the conference dinner, try their hand (or feet) at tango and milonga, and of course the field trip to Maldonado.

There were several events in 2023 of interest to the EURASLIC community. A very successful International Ocean Data Conference “International Ocean Data Conference – II” which was held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, France between 20-21 March 2023 as a hybrid event. This was followed by the 27th Session of the IOC Committee on International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange which was held in Paris, France on March 22-24, 2023 as an in-person event. EURASLIC as an organisation received an invitation to participate at both events therefore the EURASLIC President represented the association. IODC II conference had 4 sessions that were covering the following topics: Implementing the fair and care principles for ocean science and sustainable development; Community engagement and capacity development in data literacy; Global ocean digital ecosystem; Interdisciplinary, societal needs. Among other projects ASFA was presented with an overview on software historical development from CDS-ISIS to OpenAsfa 3.0 and implementation of FAIR principles in its development, also OBIS - Ocean Biodiversity Information System recommended as data system, and AquaDocs as document repository for Ocean Decade. Part of the program was especially dedicated to the Ocean decade project. Next IODC III meeting will be held in Barcelona, Spain in 2024, as an in-person event.

During 27th Session of the IODE Committee the report on the past inter-sessional period was presented along with a short overview of IODE supported projects, among them also was the AquaDocs repository. IODE Action paper was presented and discussed, together with a proposed work plan for the next inter-sessional period. Besides that, new co-chairs for the next inter-sessional period were announced. As mentioned before, the ODIN ECET project was suspended as well as other ODIN projects. It is recommended that the group activities should be focused on IODE ongoing projects, therefore EURASLIC is already engaged in AquaDocs, as the main project for the IAMSLIC/EURASLIC community. In regard to AquaDocs further collaboration of ASFA and AquaDocs and joint promotion, and collaboration with IAMSLIC were advised. A more active role is expected from IAMSLIC and EURASLIC in recruitment efforts in order to increase IODE Associated Information Units (AIUs).

The 49th IAMSLIC conference was held jointly with the 34th meeting of the Cyamus regional group in October 23 – 26th, 2023. The theme of the conference *What we do matters: Libraries, climate change, and transformation* reflects actuality and the roles of libraries. The conference was held as a wholly online event, which once again gave the EURASLIC community a chance to participate in greater numbers.

Conclusion

In the past 35 years, EURASLIC successfully served as a platform for bringing together aquatic information specialists from all Europe. Over the years the Association provided to its members a range of activities such as projects, educational workshops, grants, publishing activities, and free of charge interlibrary-loan services. EURASLIC continuously has its conferences and in 2023 reached its 20th jubilee conference. Although being a European association, EURASLIC is involved in international activities through IAMSLIC and by ongoing cooperation with IODE and ASFA. For the future, EURASLIC is planning to continue with current activities and projects and to attract new projects, new members and to expand its visibility.

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The evolving role of marine information in the IODE programme

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Abstract:

In this presentation the objectives, membership and structure of the International Oceanographic Data and Information Exchange programme of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission of UNESCO (IOC) were explained as well as the objectives and benefits of joining the IODE network as an Associate Information Unit (AIU). A brief overview of marine information management (MIM) products and services such as OceanExpert, AquaDocs, Ocean Best Practices System and IOC Ocean InfoHub and the IODE training programme OceanTeacher Global Academy was given. The presentation ended by inviting EURASLIC member libraries to join the IODE network of Associate Information Units to promote greater communication with the global marine information community and to provide the community with a stronger voice to influence the planning of data and information products and services.

Exploring grey areas in publishing in aquatic sciences

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Abstract:

Nowadays many scientists are lost in their publication strategy, they have solicitations (to publish articles, to support the peer review process, to lead special issues) from plenty of publishers, however, are they reliable? How to know? In this context, it is more and more difficult to identify predatory publishers and unscrupulous actors motivated by profit rather than advancing scientific knowledge. We also notice an emerging and very nuanced "grey area“, with controversial publishers and ambiguous editorial practices, which increases the doubt. This presentation zooms in on two of them, analyses their strategies and underlines the limits of scholarly publishing.

Keywords : grey area, scholarly publishing, predatory publishing, editorial practices

Filling information gaps: update on ASFA projects

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Abstract:

ASFA has a long history of undertaking projects to meet specific information needs across aquatic science disciplines. In past years, these projects have been undertaken by ASFA partners and funded from the ASFA trust fund. However, in recent years ASFA has supported FAO fisheries and aquaculture projects by providing a knowledge management component. This presentation provided a brief overview of two of the projects ASFA has supported: CECAF-PESCAO project “Improved Regional Fisheries Governance in Western Africa” and FAO-SEAFDEC project. While the first project resulted in an inventory of marine fisheries research produced in nine countries (Benin, Côte d’Ivoire, Ghana, Guinea, Mauritania, Morocco, Nigeria, Senegal, and Spain), the second one was used OpenASFA to record research and data from countries in southeast Asia (Cambodia, Indonesia, Philippines, and Vietnam) related to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) Indicator 14.4.1 – Proportion of fish stocks within biologically sustainable levels. More than 3 500 publications and datasets were identified and recorded by the project's participants thus improving the awareness of and accessibility of these research and data. Lessons learnt from these two projects could be applied to future areas of work and are not limited to OpenASFA but could also include work to improve the ASFA subject thesaurus or to meet a specific information need. Having not undertaken a project in Europe for several years, ASFA welcomes suggestions from EURASLIC members on potential project areas.

OpenASFA 3.0: introducing recent improvements to enhance aquatic science knowledge exchange

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Abstract:

OpenASFA is the system used by the ASFA partnership to create, store and export bibliographic records. From OpenASFA, records are sent to the full database, hosted by ProQuest, and also made freely available on the FAO Fisheries and Aquaculture website. Since its launch in April 2021, OpenASFA has undergone a number of improvements designed to increase the exchange of aquatic science research and data, and to ensure the system is user friendly. As the cornerstone of ASFA's transformation to a new business model, OpenASFA provides a flexible platform to meet the partnership's goal of disseminating the world's aquatic science research, paying particular attention to grey literature and the needs of developing countries.

This workshop presented OpenASFA and highlight new features that are of particular interest to EURASLIC members, including: harvesting from OAI-PMH compliant repositories; import/ export mechanisms; option to record and store data sets; detailed indexing from four controlled vocabularies; and analytics to measure usage. A demonstration of the system was provided to show how to create a record, navigate the system and harvest from a repository. Whilst OpenASFA is primarily used by ASFA's network of partners, collaborating centres and associates, the option to harvest and import data provides a way for institutions and organisations outside the ASFA network to contribute with minimal time required. The advantages of contributing to OpenASFA, such as increased visibility of records, was therefore also presented during this workshop. Similarities and differences between other systems, such as AquaDocs, were discussed.

FRIS: one window on research information in Flanders

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Abstract

In Flanders, the government has embraced an ambitious policy initiative to foster Open Science, with FRIS, the regional CRIS, appointed as the primary tool for monitoring progress.

Employing a CRIS as a monitoring tool for a regional policy initiative offers several advantages, including enhanced transparency, consistency, comparability of results, and reduced administrative burden for institutions once the information-gathering and reporting processes are established.

This means that research institutes do have to deliver research information to FRIS and this can be done in various ways, manual or via integrations – custom-made or via off-the-shelf products. All needs to be adapted to meet the requirements of FRIS.

Defining the Open Science framework proved to be arduous and time-consuming as it involved concept definition, creation of definitions, scope discussions, and goal-setting. However, it proved immensely valuable and necessary in establishing a shared understanding of the context, resulting in improved metrics and better alignment among stakeholders towards common objectives.

This current metrics framework is not an ultimate destination but merely a starting point. It represents an initial effort to enhance our monitoring of Open Science as we accumulate more insights along the way. These metrics play a pivotal role in unifying all stakeholders, driving them towards a shared vision of promoting Open Science.

FRIS, the regional CRIS of Flanders

This paper provides an overview of FRIS, the Flanders Research Information Space, which is a regional Current Research Information System (CRIS) capturing metadata on publicly funded research in Flanders.

FRIS is connected with various CRIS systems of universities and knowledge institutions like INBO, allowing for automated information flow and updates. Once a research institute modifies information in its system, an automated update is promptly sent to FRIS, including changes, deletions, or additions of information.

And so the coverage of research information in FRIS continues to expand, including an increasing number of connected research institutions and a broader range of research information objects. At present, FRIS comprises a wealth of data, containing information on more than 40.000 researchers, 2.000 research groups affiliated with approximately 100 research institutions, nearly 60.000 projects, almost 600.000 publications, and a growing collection of information on emerging objects such as patents, datasets, and research infrastructure.

FRIS serves as a database that collects both open data and non-public data for various purposes. Its key benefits include:

Accelerating the chain from idea to innovation by maintaining an automated information flow with up-to-date data.
Simplifying reporting procedures and reducing administrative burdens for researchers and organisations by obtaining accurate information directly from the source.
Enhancing policy preparation and monitoring through efficient access to a centralised database, containing all publicly conducted research, ensuring correct and up-to-date information.
Facilitating the dissemination of publicly funded research via a research portal and web services, thereby enabling free utilisation and providing insight into the nature of research activities taking place in Flanders.
Complying with GDPR and other relevant laws or regulations, FRIS enables the delivery of data for policymaking and monitoring processes in Open Science without exposing sensitive information to external organisations, systems, or individuals.

FRIS and monitoring

FRIS plays a crucial role in monitoring research activities in Flanders, providing insights into research funding, outcomes, and specific research topics.

It is used by the Flemish government for policy monitoring and answering research-related questions from the parliament.

Since 2019, FRIS has also taken on the responsibility of monitoring the advancement of Open Science in Flanders. To this end, a measurement framework for Open Science was established, defining key performance indicators (KPIs) and metrics based on data in FRIS. The framework aims to encourage stakeholders toward Open Science and is continuously being improved. The monitoring process began in 2020, and in 2024, the Open Science initiative will be evaluated, allowing for further optimization of the monitoring metrics. The primary goal is to make progress in Open Science in Flanders.

Monitoring of research activities

FRIS contains a good overview of the research activities of publicly financed research performed by research institutes in Flanders. The Flemish administration uses this information for policy monitoring, by tracking how research funding is growing through the years, how it is spread across research disciplines, what the outcomes are in terms of publication outputs etc. The information in FRIS also helps to highlight which research groups or researchers are involved in very specific research topics. In addition, FRIS plays a crucial role in addressing research policy inquiries from the parliament, for example: “how much budget did the Flemish government spend on biodiversity related to climate change and which projects are currently running?”. Using FRIS, answers can be generated quickly without having to bother the knowledge institutions and ask each of them to search for the information (the institutions deliver once to FRIS, the administration re-uses it often).

Monitoring of Open Science

When the Flemish government launched its Open Science Initiative in 2019, FRIS received a new task in policy monitoring as it was appointed as the tool to monitor the progress of Open Science.

To be able to monitor Open Science, a framework needed to be put in place. This process of setting up the measurement framework was quite laborious, starting with the launch of installing the Flemish Open Science Board, defining KPIs, setting goals, extending the research information models to include datasets and all additional attributes needed for the metrics, explicating in detail

the metrics based on the data in FRIS and finally executing the measurements via predefined KPI's.

The purpose of these KPI's is to move all stakeholders towards Open Science, and monitoring this with metrics that are started as "best effort" for now, realising the metrics might still be improved over time. The main goal is to make general progress in Open Science.

FRIS and data delivering

FRIS places a strong emphasis on ensuring up-to-date and high-quality information. To achieve this, research institutes have established integrations between their own CRIS systems, whether custom-made or off-the-shelf solutions, and FRIS. This automated data delivery process ensures seamless information flow. Alternatively, research institutes without integrations can manually provide data through an administrative interface.

In cases where a research institute doesn't have an integrated research information system, an admin module allows them to input data directly into FRIS. This feature benefits smaller institutions without dedicated IT departments, enabling them to deliver data, including (meta)data that may have been challenging to access otherwise.

Regardless of the delivery method, the information needs to comply with well-defined business rules and validation criteria. FRIS expects a number of mandatory attributes on the objects and in some of the cases; the format is also defined. An automated validator will check if the data corresponds to the requirements. If yes, data will be ingested, if not, the data provider will be sent an error message to be able to correct the data before re-offering to FRIS. Thus a high level of data quality can be guaranteed.

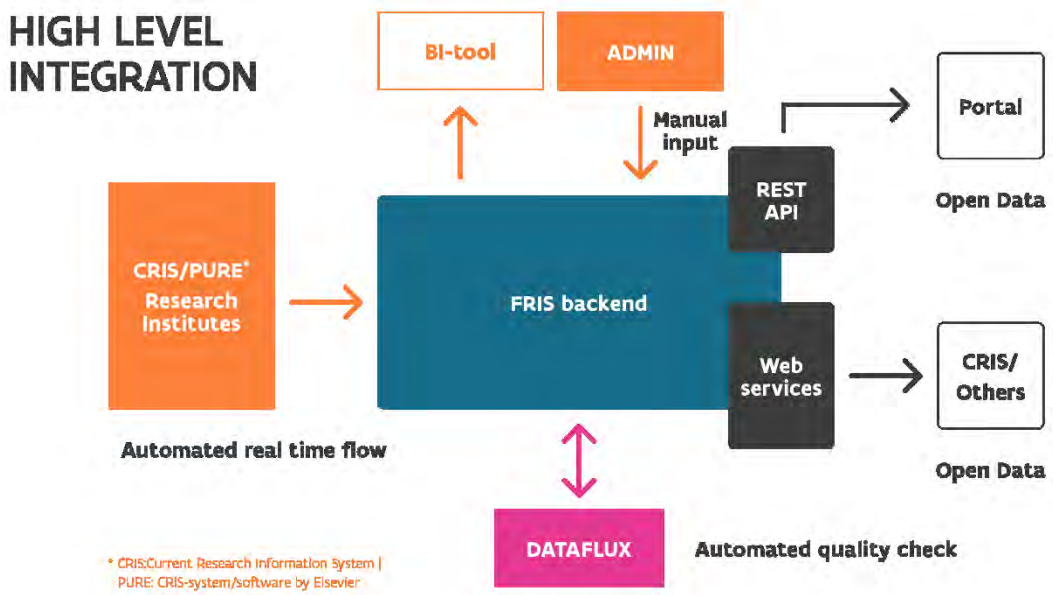


Figure 1: High level integration FRIS

Information exchange - standards and formats

In FRIS the open data is made readily available through the FRIS portal (www.researchportal.be/en) and accessible via open APIs (https://frisr4.researchportal.be/ws/).

The data is structured and exchanged using the version 1.5 of CERIF[2], which stands for Common European Research Information Format. This format provides a comprehensive data model covering all aspects of research information. Moreover, it serves as an internationally recognised exchange format, known as CERIF-XML, enabling seamless integration between CRIS systems or between CRIS systems and other repositories, and fostering interoperability and data linkage.

Using the CERIF-model, FRIS slightly changed the principle of interconnection between objects from bi-directional to unidirectional, ensuring a structured delivery of information.

[2] https://eurocris.org/eurocris_archive/cerifsupport.org/index.html

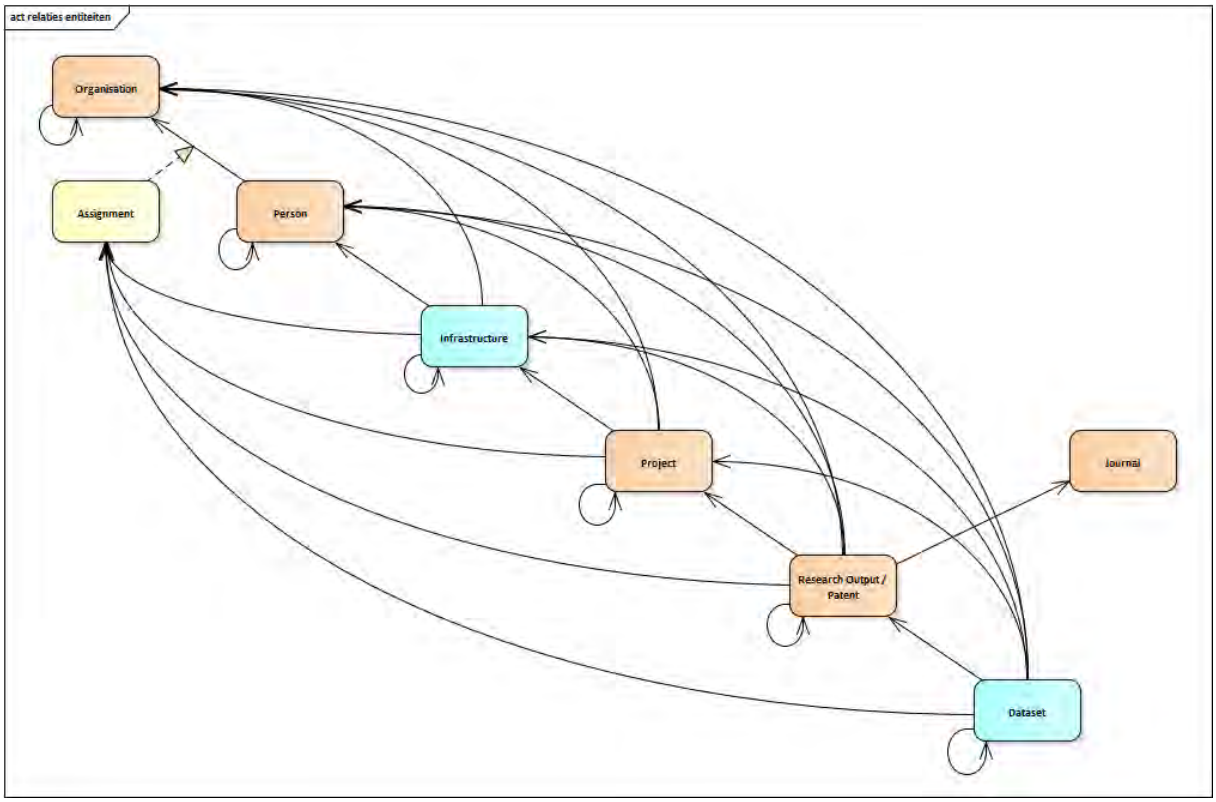


Figure 2: Unidirectional data model

As the CERIF model had some critique, some adaptations have been made to translate the model in the needs defined, and so FRIS deviated the CERIF model into a FRIS model.[3] The derived model made it possible for FRIS to incorporate the entity of “funding” with its specific semantics (policy level, funding organisation, money stream, type of research,..) and to use the principles of ternary relationships (assignments) and participations. This ternary relation, an assignment, is a link on an attribute of an entity with its own identifier which makes it possible to link persons to different research groups (i.e. smallest part of a research organisation) over time, and makes it possible to manage persons/organisations differently in terms of information available/requested. Participations make sure that different entities are linked and results between entities can be traced, as a publication can be a result of a project, or a patent can be the result of a certain research project.

This allows users to retrieve information from FRIS, getting all relevant data associated with a particular entity, regardless of its chronological order.

[3] Vestdam T, Plauborg B, Van Campe L, FRIS R3-CERIF XML in large scale exchange of research information, Procedia Computer Science 106 (2017), 74-81, http://dx.doi.org/10.1016/j.procs.2017.03.037

FRIS and INBO: interconnected via PURE

As mentioned above, research institutes and FRIS are interconnected via different CRIS systems. As for INBO, FRIS connects with the CRIS system PURE, an off-the-shelf product of Elsevier. From the technical viewpoint there is a difference between the PURE and institutional custom CRIS systems. The latter pushes information towards FRIS by calling the FRIS ingestion service with a SOAP-XML standard. As for PURE, information needs to be pulled via an API. This API is provided by the PURE by default and checked regularly for updates. FRIS checks each 10 minutes for updates, but this can vary depending on the needs.

In both cases, endpoints and workflows determine which data will be sent to FRIS or which data can be pulled from the API to be saved in FRIS. In this case, INBO controls which data can be pulled. This is done on different layers:

Filtering on the API-key: configuration on level of the API-key will determine which entities are available for which API-key.
Validation flow: depending on the validation, data may or may not be saved to FRIS. For example, research outputs marked in the validation-flow with label ‘for validation’ are still not filled in completely and will not be available in the PURE-API.
Mapping between FRIS and PURE: to make sure that information is well captured, the PURE term needs to correspond to the right FRIS term. When there is no mapping, information will not be ingested in the FRIS system.
Confidentiality: in this case the data can be pulled into FRIS, but it is not consultable for other open data users. This is the case for data of PURE that for legal reasons must be sent to FRIS, but should not be Open Data. The result is that the information should not be available on the portal, and not through the consumer services (SOAP-XML), but is stored only in the FRIS database and document store.

In reference to the Open Science framework, a new object needed to be mapped and attributes created. Without these new configurations and additional information, the Open Science KPI’s cannot be measured. By mapping different sources on the same FRIS classifications (and terms), FRIS ensures that all KPI’s are similarly measured. In PURE this is done by updating the mapping in the FRIS system. For the custom made systems, this is done by SOAP-XML messages.

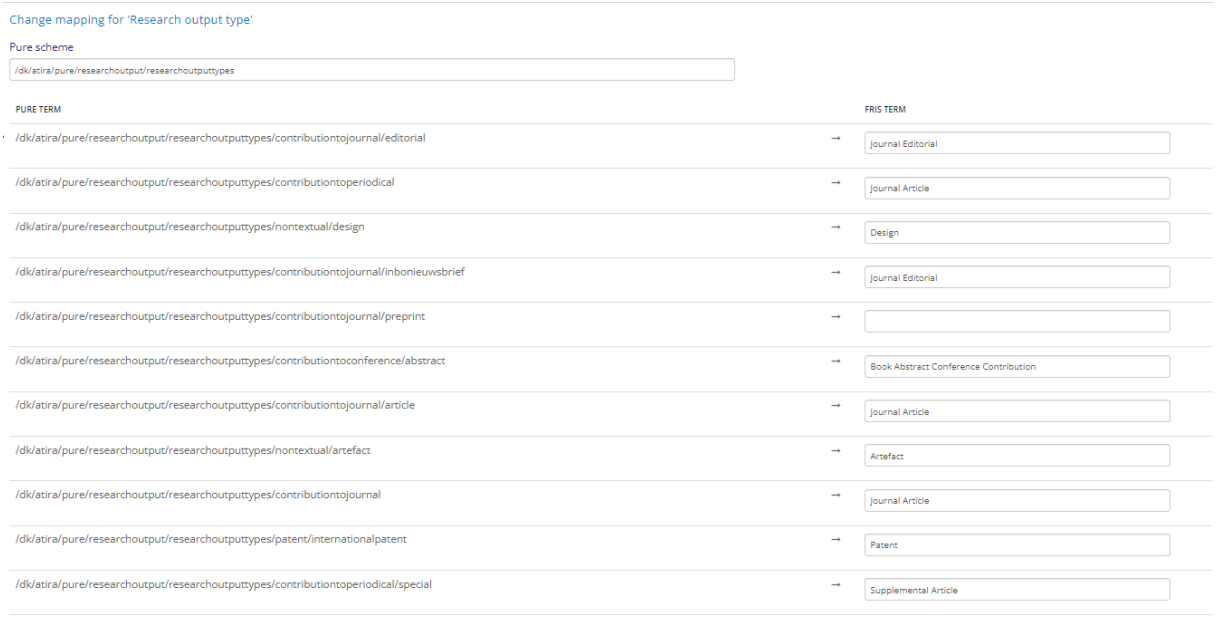


Figure 3: Example of mapping PURE term with a FRIS term

Scrum Development

FRIS started in 2008 and development has continued in different stages, depending on the business needs. This resulted in some technical debt when the most recent development phase started in 2020:

Software libraries not updated
Old java[4] version
Monolithic structure
No Kubernetes[5] or control over containers
…

To solve this technical debt, first circular dependencies are removed. Without the dependencies, FRIS could integrate with Camunda and draw a BPMN-flow[6], which was used for an orchestrator-pattern[7]. By first implementing the flow, it was easier to split services from the monolith and move further to a service oriented architecture.

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Java_(programming_language) : java programming language
[5] https://kubernetes.io/ : kubernetes container management
[6] https://camunda.com/bpmn/ : BPMN with camnunda.
[7] https://www.gaurgaurav.com/patterns/orchestration-pattern/ : the orchestrator pattern, which allows further adding services to FRIS and faster development.

Development was done with the SCRUM-framework[8], which allowed FRIS to prioritise and implement first the legal obligations, without losing track of the technical debt. With thorough collaboration between business and technical teams, both goals are achieved over time: decreasing technical debt and meeting legal obligations. The SCRUM-principles were followed as closely as possible, which ensured that if a team member left, or joined the FRIS-team, integration or continuation of development had minimal disturbance.

FRIS moved from outsourced development to in-house development. Requirements were gathered from different sources:

Policy makers for monitoring and reporting purposes
Data providers with feedback
Business analysis revealed some issues
Legal obligations
Feedback of users
Development improvements from our engineers
…

A well maintained backlog helped tremendously in the great success of following agile development. Any waterfall model would have led to worse results.

Since FRIS started with automatic delivery in bulk in the early years or later incremental, most effort went to automatic ingestion development. Afterwards the admin interface, which was developed for internal FRIS-use, was made externally accessible for manual ingestions. This admin interface is currently being replaced, for several reasons:

The Grails-framework[9] was used, which hasn't the support of Angular[10] or Vue.js[11] Updating the framework was very cumbersome and engineers are harder to find.
User friendliness of the admin was not the best and some large parts need to be rewritten to improve this.
There was a close coupling between the admin and the core in the code.
There was a different flow for just the admin, compared to the automatic ingestions, which led to solving the same bug twice: once for the admin and once for the automatic ingestions.

[8] https://www.scrum.org/resources/what-scrum-module : the scrum framework, an agile way of developing software
[9] https://grails.org/ : grails framework, now Vue.js and Angular are most commonly used.
[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Angular_(web_framework): angular framework
[11] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vue.js

Next steps: enrichment, golden record, new portal

Currently FRIS is delivering data to European initiatives: EOSC and OpenAire. This gives some efficiency benefits. If FRIS builds an integration with different initiatives, all data providers from FRIS don't need to do this anymore. At the same time, FRIS seeks to enrich its data as it is done already with the open access label, delivered by Unpaywall. In the future, FRIS also wants to display the corresponding label of the Sustainable Development Goals on projects and publications.

Another next step, FRIS is already working on, is building so called golden records whereas the information of funders or other authentic sources functions as the source of truth. Information from these sources are dominant compared with the data of other data providers. Nevertheless, the information of all other data providers will be added so the information is complete and quality can be guaranteed. The principle is that FRIS will build a record with all the information coming from authentic sources and leaving out obsolete or altered data. This will be called a golden record.

This golden record will then be shown on the new portal. For now, anyone who is interested in the research performed in Flanders can consult it in the current FRIS-portal[12]. But, in the coming years, FRIS will build a new portal, up-to-date, with golden records, meeting the last requirements of its users.

Similar as for our new admin interface, there is also a website[13] on which you can check which data is delivered to FRIS. This website has been running for a couple of years and will be updated in one of the coming months or years.

Conclusion

FRIS as a regional CRIS-system collects research information from research institutes in Flanders through various ways: manual via an administrative interface, or via integrations with in-house built IT-systems or with an off-the-shelf product such as PURE.

The gathered research information helps the Flemish government for policy preparation and monitoring. Especially for Open Science, FRIS is appointed as the primary data source to observe

[12] Researchportal.be: This is the portal containing the open data information from FRIS.

[13] Researchportal.be : The new portal will contain the same url as the current one.

the progress of Open Science in Flanders. Therefore, extra definitions and research information needed to be added to the FRIS-database.

No matter what system a research institution uses to ingest information to FRIS, the data quality will be checked through a data validator to comply with the minimum quality requirements. The right quality and the right information is necessary to provide a valuable and proper analysis or report to measure the progress of Open Science.

In the coming future FRIS will focus on developing a new admin interface for manual ingestion, enrichments from authentic sources, building golden record visualisations and a revamped research portal.

CroRIS - Croatian Research Information System

Marina Mayer and Sofija Konjević

Ruđer Bošković Institute, Centre for Scientific Information, Zagreb, Croatia

The development of the new Croatian Research Information System (CroRIS) started in 2017 as a part of the strategic project of the Ministry of Science and Education “Scientific and Technological Foresight”. It was co-financed by the European Union through the European Regional Development Fund. The project partner is the University of Zagreb University Computing Centre (Srce). Ruđer Bošković Institute (RBI) formally joined the project in 2021 and since then, the Centre for Scientific Information of the RBI participates in CroRIS development at all levels. The aim of CroRIS is to provide comprehensive, complete and accurate data on Croatian research information via one central portal.

Prior to CroRIS, research information was dispersed in various independent information systems and databases, each one collecting information about different segments of research activities: publications, projects, equipment etc. Separate databases were important sources of information about scientific activity and were partially interoperable with each other. Those data are fully migrated and re-implemented in CroRIS as separate modules. Work process of preparation of data for migration consisted of data mapping, data cleansing, migration of data and integration.

CroRIS integrated The Ministry of Science and Education Register of Researches, Registry of Research Organisations and Registry of Higher Education Institutions, classification of scientific fields and subfields, as well as several databases originally developed and maintained by the Center for Scientific Information (CSI) (former Library) of Ruđer Bošković Institute: Croatian Scientific Bibliography – CROSBI, Database of Project Activities in Science and Higher Education in Croatia – POIROT, Database of Instruments for Scientific Research – Šestar.

The system now consists of several separate modules: Ministry of Science and Education Registers, Persons, Projects, Equipment and Services, Institutions, Croatian Scientific Bibliography (CROSBI), Journals, Events, Patents and Products and Reports.

CroRIS also contains various controlled vocabularies and authority files maintained by CroRIS super administrators, which ensures data accuracy.

Authentication is enabled through a unique user identifier for Croatian academic community AAI@EduHr. The data are provided by researchers, while institutional editors are editing and verifying the records assigned to their institutions and checking their authenticity. Besides the researchers that are data providers and end users, there are several roles within the system. Each research organisation or higher education institution appoints a CroRIS coordinator who authorises CroRIS editors for the certain module at that institution. Besides editors there are also administrators for specific modules and super administrators that coordinate different activities for the whole system.

Project activities also included 26 workshops for end users, which were held in four Croatian cities, preparation of promotional materials and promotion of CroRIS at different Croatian and international conferences.

Instead of various decentralised systems, researchers now have at disposal one centralised information system which unifies all data on scientific activities of the Croatian scientific and research community. CroRIS and majority of its data are publicly available and thus supports and promotes open science.

Further development and maintenance of the system, as well as its promotion, educational activities and user support, continues after the formal end of the project (end of July 2023). It should become the official source of information about research and scientific activities in Croatia, with data being used by state institutions (like the Ministry of Science and Education) for various purposes.

Involvement in the projects brought additional work to the CSI, but also new workplaces and staff and a completely new department within CSI.

Keywords: CroRIS ; Croatian Research Information System ; RIS ; research information ; open access ; open science ; Centre for Scientific Information

Contributing to the Marine Information Hub

Lennert Tyberghein, Laurian Van Maldeghem, Bart Vanhoorne, Milan Lamote, Liesbeth Lyssens, Heike Lust, and Marc Portier

Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ), Belgium

Over the past 20 years, the Flanders Marine Institute (VLIZ) has been developing an information system (IMIS) that structures metadata on datasets, publications, persons, and institutions and links them together. To further facilitate the sharing of marine data, information, and knowledge, VLIZ is currently working on an updated version. The new initiative, MarineInfo.org, will use semantic web technology to increase availability and accessibility for both humans and machines. By publishing linked open data, marine research outputs will become more interoperable and easier to integrate with other research platforms and databases, enabling seamless data exchange and collaboration. This will accelerate the effectiveness of marine research and support stakeholders in the marine scientific landscape.

Keywords: Marine, Open Science, Data, Linked Open Data, Interoperability

Elsevier Research Intelligence

Günther Hansen
Elsevier

The presentation “Elsevier Research Intelligence” looked at the different stages of research as a cycle and which technical solutions can support the various stages: Research strategy, research expertise and collaboration, research funding, conducting research, research management and research impact and societal engagement influenced by research. The presentation showed the importance of trusted underlying data and the interdependencies between the various stages of the research cycle.

Using Pure in an effective way: automating processes and implementing webservices: a use case at the Research Institute for Nature and Forest

Bart Goossens
Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO),
Geraardsbergen, Belgium

Abstract:

Pure as a Current Research Information System (CRIS) is a software platform designed to help research institutes manage their research activities effectively. It provides a comprehensive solution for managing research data, tracking research outputs, and measuring research impact. Pure helps in centralising all the research data and information in one place. It eliminates the need for multiple systems and platforms, making research data more accessible.

Pure enables us to streamline our workflow by automating several processes to reduce manual effort. In this presentation we will focus on these processes and synchronisations that have been setup and on the web services that have been used to display the scientific research on the INBO's website.

Evolution towards an open science institute, challenges along the way

Dimitri Brosens

Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO), Brussel, Belgium

The Open Science Lab for Biodiversity team (Oscibio) in the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO) has its origin in the Information and Data team, which started to publish data and advocate for open access in 2009. Since then, the Research Institute has steadily grown in its commitment to open science principles and practices. In 2014 the Bouchout Declaration for Open Biodiversity Knowledge management was signed.

INBO's OSCIBIO team specifically focuses on developing tools and workflows for open and collaborative research in biodiversity informatics. The team promotes the use of open standards and best practices in data management, sharing, and analysis.

In addition to OSCIBIO, the INBO has established an Open Science Task Force, which implements various initiatives and strategies to make its research outputs more accessible, transparent, and reproducible. The institute has developed a data management plan framework, implements open access policies for publications and data, and offers capacity-building activities to enhance researchers' skills and knowledge on open science by organising open science café’s and R Coding club meetings.

This talk explores our evolution to an open science institute as well as the challenges and lessons learned along the way.

How data stewards help to set the scene for open science: a sneak peek

Lien Reyserhove, Sofie Meeus, and Elien Dewitte

Flemish Open Science Board (FOSB)

Abstract:

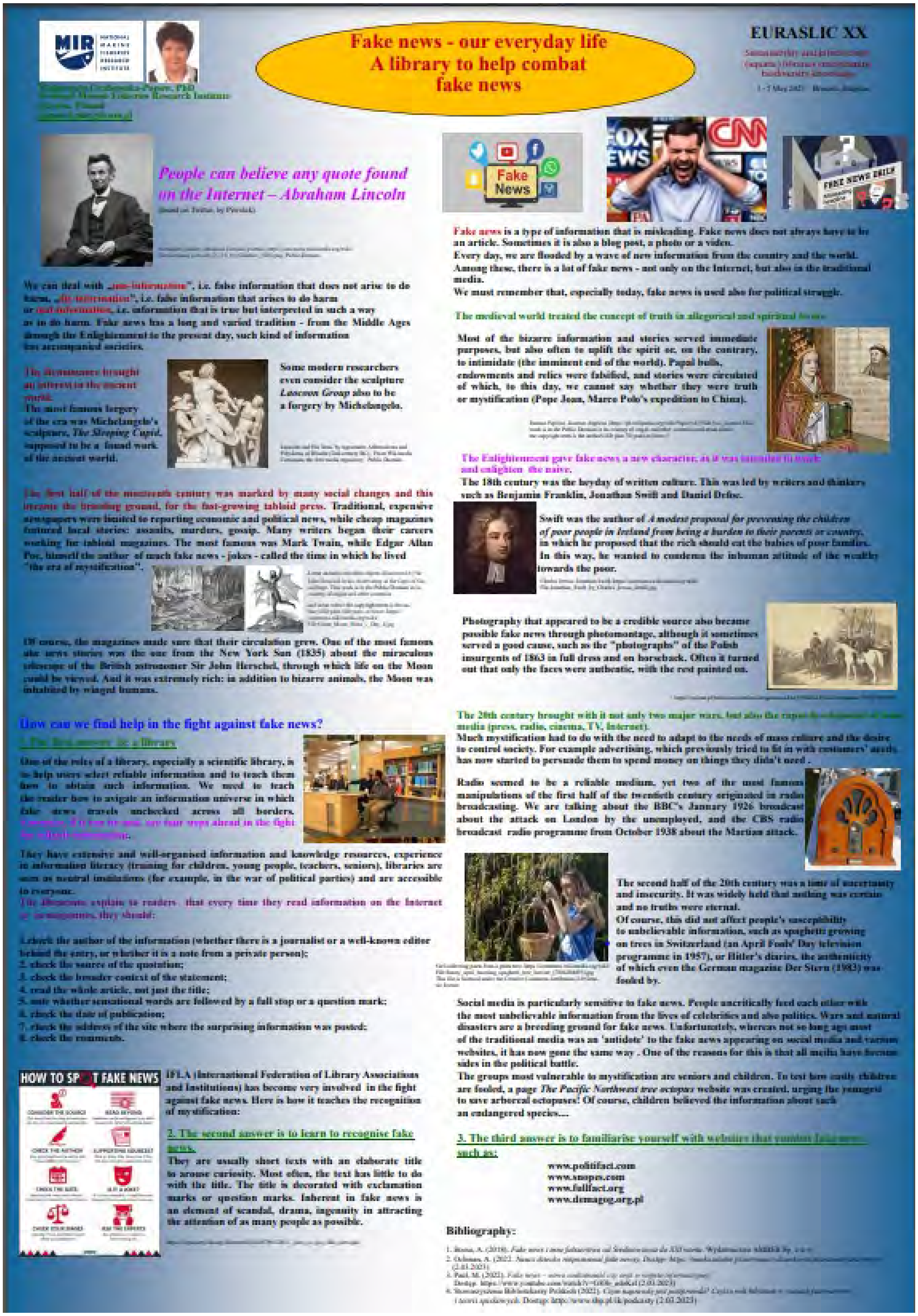
The Flemish Open Science Board (FOSB) aims to set the scene for an open science policy in Flemish knowledge institutions. Its operation focuses mainly on open data and research data management (RDM). This requires infrastructure, metadata and data discovery and on-the-job training and expertise. Especially the latter requires the deployment of "data stewards": Profiles who can coach researchers within knowledge institutions regarding RDM, the FAIR principles and open data, in order to encourage a more open culture. The data stewards of the Flemish Scientific Institutions (VWI's) decided to join forces and cooperate in this. This presentation will focus on the work and achievements of the data stewards in supporting researchers and setting the scene for open science.

Fake news - our everyday life. A library to help combat fake news [Poster]

Małgorzata Grabowska-Popow PhD.
National Marine Fisheries Research Institute, Gdynia, Poland

Fake news is a type of information that is misleading. Some lies are created intentionally, others are the result of duplicate content and misinterpretation. Fake news does not always have to be an article. Sometimes it is also a blog post, a photo or a video. Every day, we are flooded by a wave of new information from the country and the world. Among these, there is a lot of fake news - not only on the Internet, but also in the traditional media. The phenomenon is so large that we encounter it almost every day. This type of information has a long and varied tradition - from the Middle Ages through the Enlightenment to the present day, fake news has accompanied societies. One of the roles of a library, especially a scientific library, is to help users select reliable information and to teach them how to obtain such information.

Key words: fake news, information, manipulation, lie, mis-information, dis-information, mal-information, history, library


Fake news - our everyday life
A library to help combat
fake news
EURASLIC XX
People can believe any quote found on the Internet – Abraham Lincoln
Some modern researchers even consider the sculpture Laocoon Group also to be a forgery by Michelangelo.
The most famous forgery of the era was Michelangelo's sculpture, The Sleeping Cupid, supposed to be a found work of the ancient world.
Fake news is a type of information that is misleading. Fake news does not always have to be an article. Sometimes it is also a blog post, a photo or a video.
Every day, we are flooded by a wave of new information from the country and the world. Among these, there is a lot of fake news - not only on the Internet, but also in the traditional media.
We must remember that, especially today, fake news is used also for political struggle.
Most of the bizarre information and stories served immediate purposes, but also often to uplift the spirit or, on the contrary, to intimidate (the imminent end of the world). Papal bulls, endowments and relics were falsified, and stories were circulated of which, to this day, we cannot say whether they were truth or mystification (Pope Joan, Marco Polo's expedition to China).
The 18th century was the heyday of written culture. This was led by writers and thinkers such as Benjamin Franklin, Jonathan Swift and Daniel Defoe.
Swift was the author of A modest proposal for preventing the children of poor people in Ireland from being a burden to their parents or country, in which he proposed that the rich should eat the babies of poor families. In this way, he wanted to condemn the inhuman attitude of the wealthy towards the poor.
Photography that appeared to be a credible source also became possible fake news through photomontage, although it sometimes served a good cause, such as the "photographs" of the Polish insurgents of 1863 in full dress and on horseback. Often it turned out that only the faces were authentic, with the rest painted on.
Of course, the magazines made sure that their circulation grew. One of the most famous fake news stories was the one from the New York Sun (1835) about the miraculous telescope of the British astronomer Sir John Herschel, through which life on the Moon could be viewed. And it was extremely rich: in addition to bizarre animals, the Moon was inhabited by winged humans.
How can we find help in the fight against fake news?
One of the roles of a library, especially a scientific library, is to help users select reliable information and to teach them how to obtain such information. We need to teach the reader how to avigate an information universe in which fake news travels unchecked across all borders.
They have extensive and well-organised information and knowledge resources, experience in information literacy (training for children, young people, teachers, seniors), libraries are seen as neutral institutions (for example, in the war of political parties) and are accessible to everyone.
1.check the author of the information (whether there is a journalist or a well-known editor behind the entry, or whether it is a note from a private person);
2. check the source of the quotation;
3. check the broader context of the statement;
4. read the whole article, not just the title;
5. note whether sensational words are followed by a full stop or a question mark;
6. check the date of publication;
7. check the address of the site where the surprising information was posted;
8. check the comments.
HOW TO SPOT FAKE NEWS
IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions) has become very involved in the fight against fake news. Here is how it teaches the recognition of mystification:
2. The second answer is to learn to recognise fake news.
They are usually short texts with an elaborate title to arouse curiosity. Most often, the text has little to do with the title. The title is decorated with exclamation marks or question marks. Inherent in fake news is an element of scandal, drama, ingenuity in attracting the attention of as many people as possible.
media (press, radio, cinema, TV, Internet).
Much mystification had to do with the need to adapt to the needs of mass culture and the desire to control society. For example advertising, which previously tried to fit in with customers' needs, has now started to persuade them to spend money on things they didn't need .
Radio seemed to be a reliable medium, yet two of the most famous manipulations of the first half of the twentieth century originated in radio broadcasting. We are talking about the BBC's January 1926 broadcast about the attack on London by the unemployed, and the CBS radio broadcast radio programme from October 1938 about the Martian attack.
The second half of the 20th century was a time of uncertainty and insecurity. It was widely held that nothing was certain and no truths were eternal.
Of course, this did not affect people's susceptibility to unbelievable information, such as spaghetti growing on trees in Switzerland (an April Fools' Day television programme in 1957), or Hitler's diaries, the authenticity of which even the German magazine Der Stern (1983) was fooled by.
Social media is particularly sensitive to fake news. People uncritically feed each other with the most unbelievable information from the lives of celebrities and also politics. Wars and natural disasters are a breeding ground for fake news. Unfortunately, whereas not so long ago most of the traditional media was an 'antidote' to the fake news appearing on social media and various websites, it has now gone the same way . One of the reasons for this is that all media have become sides in the political battle.
The groups most vulnerable to mystification are seniors and children. To test how easily children are fooled, a page The Pacific Northwest tree octopus website was created, urging the youngest to save arboreal octopuses! Of course, children believed the information about such an endangered species....
www.politifact.com
www.snopes.com
www.fullfact.org
www.demagog.org.pl
Bibliography:

Optimising disclosure and visibility of Flanders Hydraulics' research output through an expert platform [Poster]

Steven Cerpentier

Flanders Hydraulics, Antwerp, Belgium

Since 2006, Flanders Hydraulics (FH) has been using IMIS (Integrated Modular Information System) of VLIZ (Flanders Marine Institute) to manage the FH research output and library collection by means of metadata and making it available via a search interface (= library catalogue which links to the Open FH Archive (institutional repository)).

The time had come, however, not only to make this research output more visible apart from our catalogue, but also to make it more searchable. The latter was achieved by adding knowledge domains to our output.

The result is the creation of an expert platform with a dashboard in which our output can be queried to the maximum extent.

Via extensive search functions and filtering you can also search the work of FH researchers thematically by knowledge domains. The platform integrates all relevant information on water-related FH research. In a very concrete way, the literature record of a report, book or article provides access to a wide range of related information. You can discover, for example, in which framework actions were undertaken (project info), who did research on the subject, with what expertise (personal and institutional metadata), what the scientific output of a project was (publications, datasets), whether a congress was organised around this topic (events), etc.

In the coming years, the dataset module will be further adapted to FH needs regarding our RDM policy and we are already thinking aloud about the implementation of an infrastructure module and altmetrics functionality.

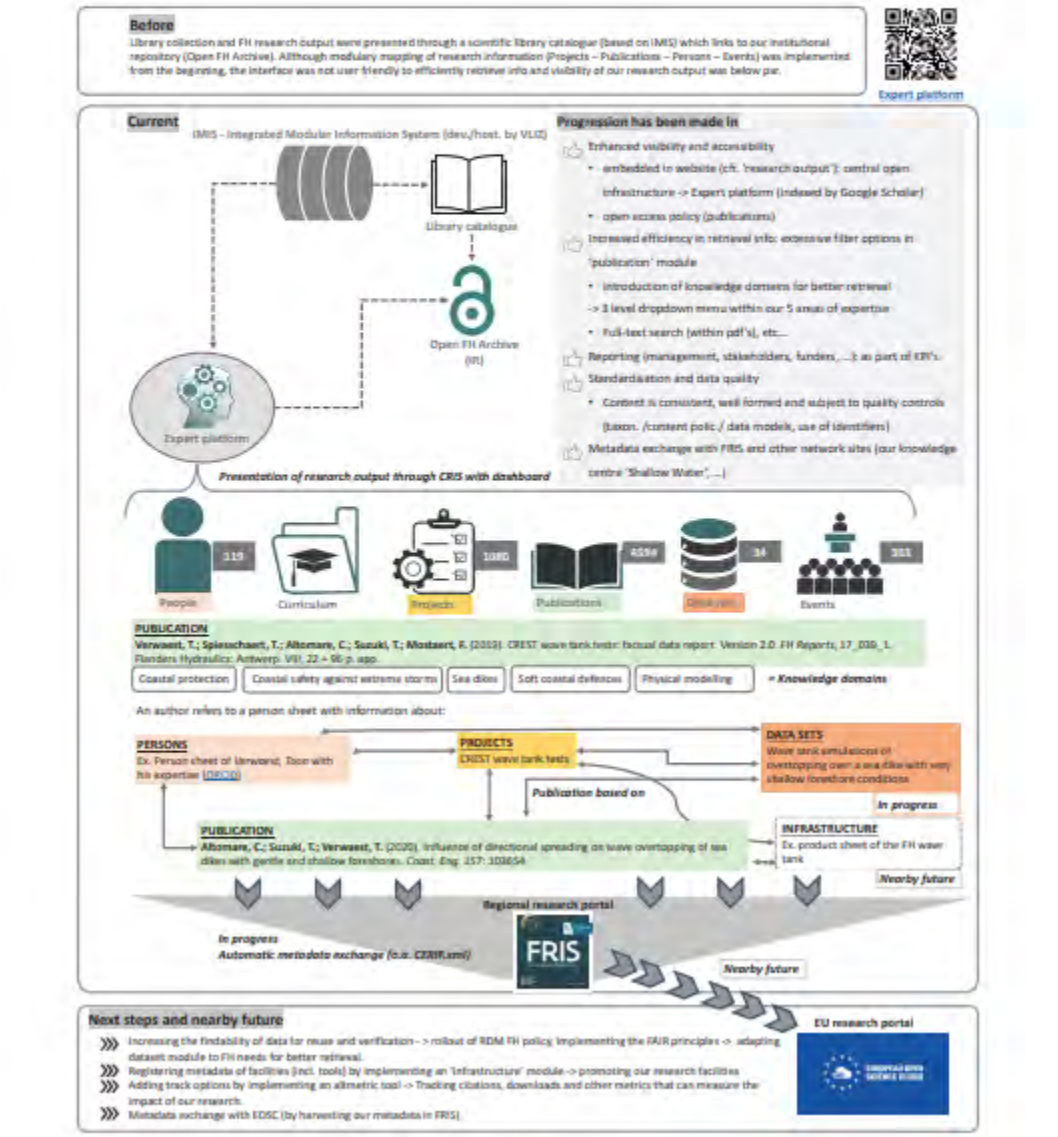
Since 2018, FH also provides its metadata to Flanders Research Information Space, a regional portal about researchers and their research in Flanders. This portal will in time act as a transit for exchange with the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC) and therefore maximises accessibility and visibility of water-related research.

Optimising disclosure and visibility of Flanders Hydraulics' research output through an expert platform

Steven Cerpentier

Flanders Hydraulics (FH), department of Mobility and Public Works, Government of Flanders, Antwerp, Belgium

Flanders State of the Art



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MOBILITY & PUBLIC WORKS

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Fisheries and aquatic research in Latvia: small library in new premises
The Institutional Report

Natalja Kondratjeva

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Abstract:

The Institutional Report presents the recent activities of the Library of the Fish Resources Research Department of the Institute for Food Safety, Animal Health and the Environment "BIOR" in Riga, Latvia. Currently, the Library is one of 22 specialised libraries in Latvia and serves the community of researchers involved in the study of fish resources of the Baltic Sea and inland waters. The Library's main activities included a move to new premises in October 2020 and a major restructuring of the core stock to create a narrower collection profile, which was completed by the end of 2022.

At the end of October 2020, the Library moved to new premises, as a new building was built for the Fish Resources Research Department, close to the central part of the Institute “BIOR”. The

Library collection was placed into a room with glass walls located on the 1st floor of the new building. The movable bookshelves were transported from the old place.

Accordingly, the new Library Development Policy, which was approved in 2018, a significant restructuring of the main stock is aimed at creating a narrower collection profile: aquatic sciences (with emphasis on the Baltic Sea and Latvian inland water environment), ichthyology and fisheries. In 2021 and 2022, the main work with the Library collection was to evaluate and select books to create an appropriate collection and include printed documents in the electronic database. Many irrelevant or used books have been withdrawn. In addition, on the basis of cooperation, books (old scientific volumes in physics, chemistry and others inherited from the Fishery Laboratory's Library, *1923 - 1940*) were donated to the library of the University of Latvia. Thus, the Library holdings were reduced to about 3500 books and 6500 serials and periodicals. A significant part of the collection is made up of unpublished documents in a variety of types (scientific reports, manuscripts etc.). These documents should be included in the electronic database in the future.

The Library provides information support and specialised research assistance based on the identified needs of the Department's researchers. The Library collection of printed books is regularly updated with new scientific monographs. Since the 1990s, the Library fund has been replenished to a large extent through participation in projects based on the financial support of the Fish Fund of Latvia. In 2023, the Library plans the next purchase of new books, taking into account the scientific interests of researchers.

In order to improve professional qualification, the librarian participates in annual meetings and thematic workshops organised by the Competence Development Centre of the National Library of Latvia. The Electronic Union Catalogue of Latvian Libraries of National Significance provides the possibility to search within these libraries' created catalogues. Interlibrary Loan offers the opportunity for the librarians to use materials from the National Library of Latvia or other research libraries collections in order to satisfy the incoming requests of the researchers.

Membership in IAMSLIC/EURASLIC (2002) provides a free international interlibrary loan of scientific articles published in journals to which member libraries have online access. The Department's researchers are extremely thankful for all the publications received over the developed networks EURASLIC ILL Mailing List and IAMSLIC Distributed Library Z39.50.

In September 2021 the Institute "BIOR" joined the ASFA Associated Scheme and now the Department's researchers have a great opportunity to access the ASFA (Aquatic Sciences and Fisheries Abstracts) Database. The use of advanced document search and bibliographic data retrieval is of great importance to the Library and the researchers.

The users of the Library are researchers of two main divisions: Marine Division and Division of Inland Waters and Fish Restocking. When improving Library services, emphasis is placed on an individual approach (individual consultations, conversations and discussions with researchers). This concerns the selection of new books, as well as the development of the use of electronic resources. The Library conducted many consultations with researchers in 2022, including a topical search on the ASFA Database.

The vision of the Library was stated in the perspective plan (2018) as follows "The special Library, which provides access to current information resources in natural and environmental sciences (with an emphasis on the marine and inland water environment of Latvia); in ichthyology, fisheries, fishing, production of fish resources; creates unique digital document collections and provides modern electronic information services. The Library environment is creative and usable for exhibitions and activities related to research".

Unfortunately, at the new location, the Library consists of one room instead of two rooms (library and reading room) as in the old premises. For presentations of conference papers and posters, discussions and other activities related to research it is needed to reorganise the layout of the shelves and add the necessary equipment.

With regard to recent activities, in March 2023, an exhibition “Salmonids in Library Collection” was organised in the library to coincide with the visit to the institute “BIOR” of the ICES (International Council for the Exploration of the Sea) working group “Baltic Salmon and Trout Assessment”. In addition to new books, the exhibition featured a variety of materials, including historical documents and publications by researchers from the Baltic Fisheries Research Institute.

Participants of the EURASLIC XX conference at the Research Institute for Nature and Forest (INBO), Brussels, Belgium

From left to right: Bart De Pauw, Lennert Tyberghien, Sofija Konjević, Ils De Bal, Steven Cerpentier, Tom Wuyts, Herwig Borremans, Lien Reyserhove, Heike Lust, Dimitri Brosens, Günther Hansen, Bart Goossens, Anne-Laure Achard, Małgorzata Grabowska-Popow, Marina Mayer, Maria Kalentsits, Tamsin Vicary, Christelle Van De Walle, Olivia Diehr, Stephanie Ronan.