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Academic Libraries in Poland University of Warsaw Library as an Example of Library Transformation in Post-Communist Poland

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University of Warsaw Library as an Example of Library Transformation in Post-Communist Poland
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This article examines the complex changes that have occurred in Polish academic libraries, especially the University of Warsaw Library (UWL), after the fall of communism in 1989.Shortly afterwards, thanks to grants from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, an accelerated transformation in all library practices began. In preparation for automation, the authority file was created, introducing the process of applying international standards in bibliographic description in a new climate of interlibrary cooperation. The Library of Congress classification and access to open stacks were introduced for the first time in Poland in a newly constructed UWL building. A crowning achievement of the transformation is the first Polish union catalog, Narodowy Uniwersalny Katalog Centralny [National Union Catalog], NUKAT, launched in 2002.

Introduction

"Nothing of him that doth fade, but doth suffer a sea-change into something rich and strange" (Shakespeare: Tempest, Act 1 scene 2)

This article is an attempt to examine the complexity of the transformation of Polish academic libraries in the last decade of the twentieth century and the first decade of the twenty-first century, and explain the enormity of deep changes in their practices that have happened during relatively short period oftime. The focus will be on the University of Warsaw Library (UWL), one of the largest and centrally located academic libraries in Poland, which led the way and in many instances served as an example to the whole Polish academic library community. The author had frequented UWL in the 1980s while studying at Warsaw University, and had used its collection while working on a Masters Degree thesis. She visited UWL again, in its new building, in the summer of 2007 and winter 2008. The depth of transformation the library had undergone was stunning, and for those who remember the past truly astonishing.

The last decade of the twentieth century brought a dramatic transition to the societies of Eastern Europe. Poland was in the forefront of political and economic changes that like an avalanche swept through every aspect of society. Soon after the first democratic elections, held in June 1989, which marked the end of communist government in Poland, it became clear that political transformation had to be followed by economic, organizational, and technological changes if the new democratic system was to have a firm footing in the society.

Polish academic libraries were not immune to the situation. The sudden change in the political landscape brought them to the painful realization that, although the opportunities for cooperation with the West were now wide open, to make this cooperation feasible and successful the enormous technological gap between Western European and American libraries and those of the East had to be overcome first. They soon realized how much they suffered the lack of funds, neglect in collection development, underdevelopment in technology, and on a top of it all organizational and space problems.
The whole concept of the library, previously understood mainly as a depository and a preservation institution, had to be changed to transform it into learning institution whose main role is managing knowledge.

University of Warsaw Library history

UWL came into being in 1816 with the creation of Royal Warsaw University in the Kingdom of Poland[1], newly formed under Russian rule. The lexicographer, Samuel Bogumił Linde, author of the first large scale dictionary of the Polish language, was the first library director, and Joachim Lelewel, a well known Polish historian, was his deputy. The catalog cards with Linde's handwriting can be still found in the library's card catalog. The collection grew steadily as many institutions donated their own holdings to the library (Biblioteka Uniwersytecka w Warszawie: przewodnik 1979). In 1819 government regulation assured that the library would obtain a deposit copy of every publication from the territory of the Kingdom of Poland. Today a number of Polish libraries, UWL amongst them, are entitled by law to receive a deposit copy of items published in Poland. From the very beginning UWL was also a public library and it remains one. By 1831 the library holdings had grown to 134,067 volumes, including early rare imprints and manuscripts. After the November 1831 uprising against imperial Russia the library was closed. The collections, except Polish materials, were taken to St. Petersburg. The library reopened soon afterwards as the State Library and the deposit copy law was reestablished. Reflecting the political climate of times, mostly Russian materials were acquired. In 1862 Warsaw University was reactivated under the name of Main School and its library, the State Library also became known as the Main Library. The January Uprising of 1863 did not close the Main School or its library but put its existence in a limbo for many years, during which the tendency to collect only Russian materials increased. In 1869 the Tsar transformed Main School into Imperial University and the library fell under its control. Although dominated by Russian publications and Russian librarians, the library still collected Polish materials. Often it was given generous donations and on the eve of the First World War it had 610,000 volumes. The library had two catalogs, an alphabetical and a subject one, both incomplete. In 1894 the library had moved into a new building, gaining more storage space in magazines with walls specially designed to protect them against fire. The collections remained there until 1999.

When Russian authorities left Warsaw in 1915, they took the most valuable collections of the library with them. On August 7, 1915 the library fell under Polish authority again and soon started to serve its patrons. The library survived the Second World War and, even though the German administration closed it, a skeletal staff of Polish librarians was maintained. They illegally loaned books to schools that operated underground during the German occupation. As with previous invasions, the oldest and most valuable items from the collection were transported to Germany during the war. The library was plundered again and again. During the Warsaw Uprising in 1944, after which Germans had leveled most of Warsaw to the ground, the library, miraculously remained standing. Polish librarians worked hard to protect the collections from fires and bombs. In 1945 the library was reopened, and the collections that had not left Poland were returned to the devastated building. The library opened to the public and with the help of the government slowly recovered its collections. It started a library instruction program for students, and began to compile the central catalog. In the first few years after the war the collections grew to 350,000 volumes and soon UWL became the largest academic library in Poland, a status that it lost, due to the lack of funds, to the more fortunate Jagiellonian University Library in Krakow.

This brief history is important because it shows clearly the library's great resilience against all the odds, and foreign powers trying to destroy it by stripping it of its collections. It was mainly during the Russification era that the idea of a library as a holder of national heritage had gained special strength. The efforts to collect Polish materials in order to preserve them and then contribute to creating or recreating a national bibliography became the main goals of libraries. In circumstances that required library leaders to fend off policies of foreign powers, maintain the basic functions, preserve and enrich the collections, the practical considerations of everyday functioning of the library became less important. Operational efficiency: facilitating access, streamlining tasks were not the most important goals for libraries. This climate of "guarding" rather then "opening" took another twist during the

communist era. Information became an important control tool and the access to it was tightly monitored by the government. The presence of open stacks in the libraries was not discussed, and even the use of copying equipment was strictly regulated. The cooperation between libraries was basically nonexistent and the lack of exchanges was a reason to treat bibliographical standards rather freely.

Turning point

In 1989, the year of the first democratic elections in Poland that marked the end of communist era, and the period that followed is seen as the turning point for the University of Warsaw Library. Librarians looking for ways to modernize their institutions realized that they faced major problems which needed their urgent attention despite a lack of funds and space. The first and most obvious one was the automation of libraries – an extremely complex, expensive and time consuming process. The second was the rapid growth of the publishing industry and explosion of publications in a free market economy. The third was related to the acquisitions of electronic resources and materials in non print formats.

In general library automation in Poland followed, with accelerated speed, the route taken in the West. The attempts to automate processes in Polish libraries had started before 1989. A few libraries used the free available CDS/ISIS, system developed by United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural rganization (UNESCO). In the mid-1980s the National Library of Poland started to develop a library system called Małe Automatyczne Katalogi [Small Automated Catalog] (MAK), for small computers. MAK became operational in 1991 andwas able to support some library functions, especially cataloging and online public access catalog (OPAC) (Sadowska 2000). MAK is still used today by 1,700 mostly small libraries (Polish National Library Webpage), and the National Library uses it to create a national bibliography. It is also used by some departmental libraries of the University of Warsaw. Since MAK uses a record format developed by the National Library, the transfer of records into the online catalog of UWL and the integration of collections of those departmental libraries into one system is difficult. Other minor library systems were developed regionally. That was the face of automation that Borgman (Borgman 1997) calls in-house developed systems. This stage started in Poland late and never reached the sophistication of library systems developed in the libraries of the West.

It soon became quite clear that only acquiring an integrated library system (ILS) developed by a company well established on the market would help close the technology and information gap between Polish libraries and the Western ones in a timely manner.

In the fall of 1989, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation developed an interest in Eastern Europe. Richard Quandt, an economics professor from Princeton University with Hungarian roots, became a director of the Foundation's program to sponsor democratic changes in the region. The program's goal was to support initiatives that speeded up closing the development gap between Eastern Europe and the West. A huge element of this program, apart from funding economics and management training, was support to higher education which took the form of supporting efforts to modernize research and academic libraries. Quandt made many trips to the Eastern Europe region, mostly to Czech Republic, Slovakia, Hungry and Poland and reflects on this period in his fascinating book (Quandt, 2002). The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation was the agency that significantly helped in the modernization of Polish academic libraries. The libraries received nearly nine million dollars from Mellon during the period of 1990–2000 (Quandt 2002).

Each year during this decade Poland was the recipient of multiple grants from this Foundation and from other foundations, with grant-making activity peaking in the period of 1991–1996. Altogether Poland received 88 grants from Mellon alone. Between 1990 and 1994 academic libraries in Eastern Europe took 32.5% of the whole amount of grant funds dedicated to facilitate change in the region.

Automation

Automation is a short word for a complex transformation that took years in the United States or Western Europe. In 1989 Poland, the amount of innovation needed in the libraries was massive, complex, and had to happen simultaneously. Although automation was the only logical and inevitable step on the way to modernization, to conduct it with a clear or defined plan was unfeasible. The questions of the repercussions of automation for libraries, and what automation Academic Libraries in Poland should actually accomplish for them, were asked during the study conducted by Christine Borgman (1996). She aimed to take a closer look at the unusual Eastern European situation where all the changes that had taken decades in the West were happening in a short span of time. In the survey undertaken by Borgman, the respondents listed access as the most important reason for automation, access meaning the online catalog and faster cataloging, but not necessarily connecting it with the introduction of standards, interlibrary cooperation and development of user services. "In sum these libraries have general goals for automation that are being refined through experience" (Borgman 1996, 290).

Henryk Hollender (2000, 335) writes that "implementation of an automated system involves arduous, multiphase, and multilayer process." He offers interesting observations about the automation process, often too simplistically understood by library managers. For many of them the most visible aspects of automation, like OPACs available to users, were the single priority since launching them might secure further funding. The "integrated" aspect of library systems was often overlooked, or may even not have been understood, in favor of more immediate results.

The same notion of learning while making decisions, learning in the process, is hinted at in Quandt's summary of his experiences when he describes three large automation grants awarded in 1991 to three university libraries, University of Warsaw Library, Jagiellonian University Library and University of Gdańsk library. He comments that those grants were "largely fortuitous" (Quandt 2002, 224). He admits that his own priorities played a large role in granting money to the libraries which applied for grants before selecting the system they were going to implement.

In January 1991 the Committee for Scientific Research was created. This body played an essential role in funding further projects and further phases of projects initiated with funds from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. In the same year the VTLS consortium was created: four large academic libraries (University of Warsaw Library, Jagiellonian University Library, Gdańsk University library and later the University of Mining and Metallurgy library) selected the same system, Virtua, an Integrated Library System created by American based VTLS, Inc. (Porozumienie Polskich Bibliotek Stosujących System VTLS 2008). Even more important was their decision to cooperate in order to facilitate its implementation and increase their negotiating power. Later many libraries join this ad hoc organization, but its novelty cannot be overlooked. This was the first of this kind of cooperation on such a large scale in the Polish library world.

This consortium was later officially recognized. By an agreement of University Rectors on February 10, 1993 the Interuniversity Coordinating Committee for Implementation of VTLS was formed. Immediately, in the summer of 1993, the consortium organized the first large scale training for librarians in University of Warsaw Library under the direction of Anna Paluszkiewicz. Other academic libraries also applied for grants and the VTLS group grew steadily. This Committee is active today and its main goal is coordinating and planning strategies for future developments and effective financial strategies for the whole group for upgrades of the system and standards (Interuniversity Coordinating Committee website).

Apart from the VTLS group there were other groups of libraries which selected other systems such as Dynix/Horizon, and Aleph from ExLibris. Soon, following the example of the VTLS group, consortia based on locality (like in Kraków and Poznan´) or based on the same library system were created throughout Poland. Consortia, regional or based on using the same system, were organized to realize the specific goals – like ILS implementation. With time their operations grew into more areas of

cooperation. In Poznań, libraries using the Horizon system, created in 1997 a consortium called "Library with a Horizon" (website 2009) to have a stronger position during negotiations with a vendor, cooperate during implementation of ILS and organization of training program for librarians and system librarians. Then they cooperated in creating a shared cataloging environment and in organizing conferences and meetings. One of the most important initiatives of this consortium, the Katalog Rozproszony Bibliotek Polskich [Distributed Catalog of Polish Libraries] (KARO), a searching tool that using Z 39.50 protocol allows conducting searches of catalogs of selected member libraries, was created in 2000. It is housed by the Mikołaj Kopernik University in Toruń and complements NUKAT, Polish Union Catalog (KARO website).

A more and more important role for library consortia is negotiation of licenses for access to electronic resources. The "Library with a Horizon" group began international cooperation by participating in a project initiated by Electronic Information for Libraries (eIFL), a foundation initially established by the Open Society Institute. The project goal was to provide access to electronic resources for reduced prices to member libraries. The consortium works now on the digitization projects and on creating digital libraries, one that would provide access to heavily used textbooks and educational materials for students, and another that would contain the most valuable works of Polish literature held in member libraries (Nikisch 2000). The organization, goals and responsibilities of consortia are still being tested in Poland. It is expected that consortia would not only formulate strategic developments plans for their member libraries, but also play a pivotal role in facilitating, funding and conducting comprehensive research in an area of library and information science. (Piotrowicz 2002)

University of Warsaw transformation

In 1989 the University of Warsaw Library was cramped in a beautiful but small building in the center of the old Warsaw University campus. The collections, mainly printed materials, were kept in closed stacks and organized by accession number. The card catalogs could be searched by author, title and subject. Catalogers typed cards following house rules published in 1980s (Lenartowicz 1983). Patrons requested materials by filling out a paper form, submitting it to the receiving window. They waited for books to be delivered to the collection desk. Materials requested in the afternoon were ready for pick up the next day. Cataloging backlogs due to lack of space were huge. The departmental libraries of the university functioned independently. As in the rest of the country libraries did not really have reasons or incentives to cooperate. They did not work in a shared cataloging and data environment so maintaining standards of bibliographic description was not at all important.
 In 1990 by the decision of the first Polish noncommunist government of Mr. Mazowiecki, the Foundation of Warsaw University, created in 1988, was to obtain funds from the rental of the headquarters of the Communist Party – a large office building in the center of Warsaw – and use them to fund the construction of a new library building.
In 1993 the competition for the design of a new building took place and the task was awarded to a team of architects, Marek Budzyński and Zbigniew Badowski. In 1995 construction began. By December 15, 1999 the new library was open (University of Warsaw Library website).
The library complex of steel, glass and concrete smoothly harmonizing with surrounding city is an excellent example of a comfortable space devoted to studying and learning. The green copper façade of the building is constructed in the form of eight open panels. On which quotations from different languages in various alphabets, or special code of science, or notation of music are inscribed. An open book with a Latin phrase Hinc Omnia [from here everything], the symbol of the library is located at the top of main entrance. Like an open door it symbolizes availability and access to everyone. Visitors enter into spacious hall with card catalogs and computers on both sides. A visual information

system with large, clearly visible panels informs visitors where the subject areas are located (Budzyński 2000).

Bibliographic description and authority file

While the new building was being erected the very important work, the foundation for a future authority file was in progress. In 1991 work started in the University of Warsaw Library to develop a Polish version of the MARC format for book and serials. The work was conducted thanks to a grant from State Office for Scientific and Technological Development and its result was a creation of a series called Formaty Kartoteki [Formats of Catalog] (FOKA): bibliographic formats in Polish based on UNIMARC and MARC21. Formats for other types of materials are still being developed (Paluszkiewicz 2000).

A librarian from University of Warsaw Library, Anna Paluszkiewicz [2], helped others to realize that, once converted into online environment, the data should be standardized in order to maintain value through all future changes and inevitable upgrades of systems. She was a singular force in this pioneering work of designing the country's first authority file. This work was going on simultaneously with work on FOKA formats. At first the team led by Paluszkiewicz prepared the guidelines for Academic Libraries in Poland creating name authority headings, and corporate name headings following International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA) guidelines (Paluszkiewicz 2000). The manual file was initiated in 1991. By 1993 the authority files of four Polish VTLS libraries were combined and by March 1994 the authority file was available through the internet to all four users. In the meantime, in 1993, a large training program was organized at UWL for librarians to demonstrate how to create and load headings into the authority file.

In 1990 it was also decided to abandon use of the subject headings used up to that point by UWL and to create a new subject authority file based on the French national authority file Re´pertoire d'autorite´-matie`re encyclope´dique et alphabe´tique unifie´ (RAMEAU). The choice was dictated by the idea of using a compatible multilingual subject headings system popular in European environment. An additional benefit was the establishment of a connection with the two most widely used subject headings systems, since RAMEAU is also based on Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH). It was also felt that the French subject headings system and the rules for creating headings represented closer reference to the Polish environment than LCSH. From 1992 the authority file was used by other libraries and became known under the name Katalogi Automatyczne Bibliotek Akademickich – Automated Catalogs of Academic Libraries (KABA) [3]. Two groups were formed in UWL: One working on the name headings and the other on subject headings. The authority file is multilingual – the equivalent headings in French, English and Polish can be searched in participating library catalogs.

Subject cataloging is done according to KABA. New subjects headings are submitted to the Center for Formats and Authority Files – Centrum Formatów i Kartotek Haseł Wzorcowych (CFiKHW), go through the acceptance process, and after approval they can be used. At the beginning the process of creating new headings was really slow since almost all entries needed approval from France, where their compatibility with RAMEAU was verified. Later in the process this practice was somewhat relaxed since the center in UWL acquired more independence. KABA headings are now widely used in the union catalog Narodowy Uniwersalny Katalog Centralny (NUKAT), and academic libraries contributing to it also propose new headings that are approved by the Center for Formats and Authority Files.

The Center for Formats and Authority Files –Centrum Formatów i Kartotek Haseł Wzorcowych (CFiKHW) was created in 1996. The accomplishments of the team working on authorities were finally recognized, and the Ministry of National Education decided not only officially establish the Center but also to fund it. The Center is housed at the University of Warsaw Library. It maintains the authority file, coordinates library cooperation, works on methodology of formats, and trains librarians.

Open stacks

The debate about the benefits of closed versus open stacks started in 1989. Open stacks, common in American and Western European libraries, were not present in Polish libraries. The space considerations, and the model of a totalitarian society in which access to information was strictly regulated, were the two most important practical and ideological reasons why open stacks did not exist. The debate began as the move to a new UWL building, in which the space would no longer be an issue, was planned. The proponents of open stacks, Henryk Hollender, then library director, and Ewa Maciuszko his deputy, encountered much opposition to the open stacks idea. The usual worries were voiced regarding the problems with inevitable misplacement or possible theft of materials. Library leaders managed to overcome the opposition, and decided that the Library of Congress classification scheme would be used to organize the open collection. The planning of the new building included space for about 500,000 books in open stacks. The whole collection of the UWL library was too extensive to place all of it on the shelves, so a set of criteria was developed for the selection of open stack materials.

The new classification section was added to the technical services structure. Every newly acquired book that goes through descriptive and subject cataloging is sent to the classification section where the call number is assigned. The staff uses ClassificationWeb, a Library of Congress online tool to classify materials; they also use LC catalog and the OCLC WorldCat to check classification numbers already assigned by other libraries. Numerous Polish publications are not available outside the country so the catalogers in UWL assign call numbers to them and then, through NUKAT, make them available to the rest of libraries. LC classification was invented for an American library and developed by many different subject teams so its adaptation to different reality required invention and flexibility. Some subject areas are simply not represented in the Library of Congress' large collections and some have been assigned very narrow range of numbers or small number of special topics. In UWL classification schemes had to be sometimes stretched to fit locally specific topics. In case of narrow topics that refer to the specific industries, local cultural events, regional geography or history, the catalogers modify the LC classification scheme by creating their own tables that fit into larger schedules.

A librarian from Rutgers University, Roman Frąckowski, went to Poland to train a group of UWL librarians in LC classification. His trip was funded by the United Nations Development Programme and organized by Henryk Hollender. The training was conducted in Polish, because the trainer and trainees knew Polish, but all the tools used (the newest edition of LC classification schedules, free floating subdivisions and LC Subject Headings) were in English. At the time of the training only one computer was available to staff members from UWL, through which they could access the LC catalog to check the assigned call numbers. Knowledge of English became one of the requirements for academic librarians in Poland.

With open stacks, a new staff category – subject librarians – was added to the UWL personnel structure. Subject librarians can be defined as a cross between bibliographer, reference, collection development and subject cataloger librarian. They are intended to be a direct link between user (student and faculty) and a collection. They help locate materials on shelves and assist with using electronic collections. They also provide subject headings for bibliographic records and recommend new titles based on their expertise and their cooperation with respective university departments. Bednarek-Michalska provides a valuable insight into new position's responsibilities, stating that subject librarians should spend less time behind the scenes providing subject headings and more with advising users about holdings and sources. Subject librarian position might be defined slightly differently in various academic libraries, and further research about their actual impact still needs to be conducted (Bednarek-Michalska 2000). In UWL they supervise the collection of their subject area, and make a recommendations regarding collection development and open stack placement of sought after titles (Hakim 2000). Their stations are located among open stacks, right at the areas of their expertise, so they

can provide best direct assistance. The research about their interaction with users and an impact of their work on user satisfaction awaits to be conducted.

The LC classification scheme was adapted with some modifications. The titles were not arranged on shelves in A to Z order dictated by call numbers. The open stacks collection was divided into eight wide subject areas marked by clearly visible signs hanging over the shelves. This division into knowledge disciplines rooted in the European tradition, was not fully compatible with LC classification. Hence some of the LC classes were scattered into few subject areas. For example Class G is divided as follows: Archeology (GN) is placed with historical sciences and Anthropology (also GN) with social sciences, and Geography (G, GR) located with sciences. The discussion about the rationale of this kind of division versus placing books on shelves according to LC number in A to Z order could probably last forever. The truth is that the library management had to make their decisions fast and was trying to find the middle ground between old and new order. This division seemed like a good compromise between a new classification scheme and what is traditionally conceived as a division of knowledge. Since the UWL opened its stacks in 2000, other academic libraries had followed suit and open access to shelves is currently a common practice in Polish academic libraries

Electronic resources

In 2000 the separate position of Main Specialist for Network Resources and Consortia was created in order to take responsibility for negotiating contracts for database use. The first database was bought from Elsevier in 2000. The biggest challenge in keeping and updating electronic resources is, as everywhere else, adequate funding. The selection of databases occurs after a presentation by the vendor to the interested representatives of the university departments. The UWL subscribes to a large selection of the databases that are available in many academic libraries in the world. Databases of Academic Libraries in Poland strictly Polish materials and of Polish journals have yet not been created.

In 2007 much-awaited proxy servers were introduced for University of Warsaw users. Since the use of the network resources in the library was restricted to 40 minutes per user because of demands on available equipment, the possibility of using the electronic resources from home without a time limit was welcomed by community. In a conversation with the author in June 2007, Mr. Gasiorowski of the UWL stated that the use of electronic serials had increased significantly, up to 30%.

With presence of electronic resources the need for one-stop searching is even clearer. The UWL, as many libraries in Poland, maintains many points of access to its collections. The databases are searchable through their vendor sites; the online catalog contains the materials form 1980 to present; and the older materials can be found in the card catalog. An implementation of a meta-search mechanism is still in the future.

NUKAT

Richard Quandt wrote: "As early as 1996, I thought that it would be a crowning achievement of library automation if all the Polish research libraries could pool their resources and efforts and create an all-Poland union catalog. The realization of this idea would represent a major step towards shared cataloging, merge the databases of the largest research libraries, and provide a single computer interface for access to Polish materials, unify bibliographic standards, and speed up interlibrary loans" (Quandt 2002, 244). The debate about the features of union catalog between VTLS group and libraries that implemented different systems was heated and lasted many months. The UWL and its CFiKHW insisted on maintaining firm standards, and creating authority records before bibliographic records. Finally the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation received a grant proposal and in January1999 awarded University of Warsaw a grant for the purpose of planning and implementing the union catalog. The NUKAT – Polish union catalog – was finally inaugurated in 2002.

On January 23– 25 2008 Richard Quandt was an honorary guest of a conference at University of Warsaw Library that marked the fifth anniversary of NUKAT. The conference was organized jointly by UWL, NUKAT Center, and Research Libraries Division of Polish Librarians Association (NUKAT Conference 2008). During the conference the head of NUKAT, Maria Burchard, gave an overview of NUKAT's history and some statistics about its current state (Burchard, 2008). NUKAT was launched on July 5, 2002, starting with 23 university and research libraries. Currently 90 libraries use the union catalog and 68 of them are contributing records. (NUKAT website, 2009) During the conference NUKAT received its millionth bibliographic record, which was a nice round number to sum up its achievement. The University of Warsaw Library is the library contributing the largest number of records, but other academic libraries are not far behind. All the current Polish publications are input into NUKAT and, with the possibility of copying records, more and more libraries have time for retrospective conversion. Hopefully, older materials will soon find their way to the online catalog.

NUKAT was launched to provide comprehensive information about collections in Polish libraries, to enable cooperative cataloging, and to speed up and lower the costs of cataloging. The database contains bibliographic and holdings information for printed materials, music sheets, sound recordings, and electronic documents. The NUKAT center, in cooperation with the Polish Librarians Association, creates MARC format documentation adjusted to the Polish language, and maintains a website with helpful documents and instructions for participating catalogers.

During five years of NUKAT's existence its structure has changed and is still changing as it adjusts to arising needs. One department oversees the Authority file, and the one devoted to the control of bibliographic data grew about 50% since the catalog launch. The number of input records is rapidly growing with a growing number of participating libraries so quality control becomes a great challenge. NUKAT joined OCLC in 2006 and since then many sets of records, 443,000 by July 2007, were loaded into the WorldCat (Burchard and Kasprzyk 2007). Those records are great source of information about Polish materials in other parts of the world. By the time of the conference 23,000 records had been copied to local catalogs in Europe and in the United States. Since 2006 NUKAT has partnered with Google Scholar and records available through this search engine serve as information about local holdings.

The challenges that NUKAT still faces are not small. It seems that quality control is NUKAT's most immediate and biggest challenge. The need for automated quality control is well understood by NUKAT leaders as they search for the best solution to this problem. For now only the fixed fields are controlled automatically, the reminder of the bibliographic record has to go through manual control, which takes staff time away from other tasks. The preparation for the implementation of full record automatic control is in progress. Since 2007NUKAT has become part of the organizational structure of the UWL, but as a separate center is not financed by the library. The financial situation of the enterprise is quite unstable, but hopefully will be resolved soon. The NUKAT staff that stand on the forefront of librarianship in Poland feel that the full potential of NUKAT is yet to be reached, and the information about the benefits of its use still needs to be promoted among the many libraries that do not participate in it. More comprehensive discussions about the possible uses of NUKAT should take place among Polish librarians on many different forums.

Without a doubt NUKAT is a great achievement of Polish librarianship. It helped to break the isolation of Polish libraries, forced implementation and use of international standards, and placed Polish publications on the map of the world, thus becoming an example for other Eastern European countries.

University of Warsaw Library now

During visits to the UWL, during the summer of 2007 and in January 2008 for the conference dedicated to NUKAT, the author found the library comfortable, modern and full of students. Interesting conversations with many librarians who shared their experiences helped the author to realize how

extraordinary was this team effort that helped to close the gap between Polish and Western libraries. Now the challenge is to keep up with all the rapid changes that are affecting the library community everywhere.

Obviously the cataloging practices were the most immediately and deeply transformed by automation and by adding the classification section. Monograph and serial sections of technical services had to be in the forefront of introducing new standards starting with creating the authority file in catalog cards before computers arrived in 1994. The formats developed by the Center for Formats and Authority File, which replaced in house cataloging rules developed in the 1980s, were tested and used there first. Librarians from UWL on a regular basis train librarians from departmental libraries in new formats. The serials section especially has dealt with a real explosion of publications since 1989. UWL did not acquire an acquisition module, so the serials are checked in through an MS Access database, developed by university programmers and, although it functions beautifully, it does not promise to be a lasting solution since it has limited capacity and the number of materials can only be expected to grow. Formats for non-print materials are still being developed and tested, so the records for them are scarce.

The University ofWarsaw Library has still many problems that await solutions. There are too many access points to its collections: the online catalog; a card catalog for older materials that are being input slowly into online catalog, and divided into name and subject catalogs; a card catalog of serials not integrated with the monographs catalog; catalog of microforms; and the list of databases on the library website. Reconverting all those card records to electronic form is going to take a long time. The library does not have a significant number of materials in non-print formats in its general collection, and this gap needs to be filled. The cataloging formats for moving images and sound recording are being still developed. The reference services are in the process of being reformulated, and information literacy programs are being developed. The library needs to build a stronger university library system with the numerous departmental libraries, which are funded by their departments and often technologically much behind the main library.

Automation and change do not happen without people. Their vision and determination often pushed this transformation forward. The author can only name a few individuals and that won't do justice to the rest, since bringing UWL into the twenty-first century was truly a team effort, but nevertheless at least those few should be named. Henryk Hollender, UWL director in an eventful period of 1992–2003, and Ewa Kobierska Maciszuko, his deputy and current library director, oversaw the construction of a new building, the library's move to its new location, planned the open stacks operation from Academic Libraries in Poland first securing the space for it to selecting classification system and organizing training for the librarians. They took part in many negotiations about automation procedures and most of all consulted about their vision of modern library with the rest of the library community. UWL still keeps its position as a leader in the library community by organizing numerous conferences and trainings, often related to its hosting the NUKAT center and Center for Formats.

Richard Quandt, already mentioned in the text, has to be named again since his devotion to the libraries and tireless advocacy of modernization and automation, while giving people plenty of time to make their own choices, proved to be a great strategy for a successful program. Maria Burchard, the librarian at UWL who has so successfully headed NUKAT from its beginnings, and the late Anna Paluszkiewicz who created the nucleus of the Authority file and gave a right direction to the automation must also be named. The list is long, and it is impossible to name more individuals. The UWL, thanks to them all, is a modern, welcoming place of learning, full of students at all times of the year.

Conclusions

The UWL transformed itself from a library operating in a nineteenth century mode to a library of the twenty-first century in a remarkably short time. From a library that in 1994 had one computer with

limited access to the Internet, it went to an institution that has 305 workstations loaded with software and connected to peripheral equipment suitable for a library (UWL 2008). Changes can be summarized as follows:

1. Collections and access:
a) From a typed card catalog with very limited searching possibilities to an online catalog with numerous searchable indexes.
b) From a library that kept its collections locked up to a library that opened its stacks for users allowing them shelf browsing.
c) From paper library cards to automated circulation.
d) From a library of print materials to a library that offers onsite and distance access to its numerous electronic collections.

2. Bibliographic description and classification
a) From a library that used in-house rules developed in the 1980 s for bibliographic description to the library that implements and promotes international standards.
b) From a library without data input standards to the library that houses and maintains the first Authority file in Poland in files of the Center for Formats and Authority.
c) From a library that organized its materials by accession number to the library that implements the LC classification scheme.

3. Cooperation
a) From a library that was standing alone to the library that operates as a center of a shared cataloging environment.
i. The library that houses now the NUKAT – the first Polish union catalog.
ii. The library that is now a center of training and professional development for the whole library community.

Some of those achievements might not seem that impressive to the Western European or American user. After all, the UWL has only reached the point at which many of the libraries that they frequent had already arrived. But it needs to be acknowledged that the changes in Polish libraries have happened in an unusually short time, simultaneously, and immediately after the opportunity for them to happen had arisen. Librarians making decisions about the direction in which to move the library did not have time to test them. The grant funds were available only for a short while. Libraries' operations and libraries as institutions were redefined and modernized quickly and efficiently in so many aspects that this is quite unprecedented. It also poses interesting questions and promising ground for future research about library staff attitudes toward change in general.

Notes

1. The Kingdom of Poland was formed as a result of the Congress of Vienna, 1814–1815. The 'Final Act' of the Congress confirmed a series of Treaties between the European States intended to settle issues arising from the French Revolutionary Wars, the Napoleonic Wars, and the dissolution of the Holy Roman Empire, as part of which Russia was given most of the Duchy of Warsaw (i. e. Poland).
2. Anna Paluszkiewicz (1941–2004) was a computer scientist who devoted her career to information science and, following her employment in University of Warsaw Library in 1990, to automation of libraries. She oversaw the implementation of VTLS from the data standards point of view in consortium libraries.
3. KABA: Katalogi Automatyczne Bibliotek Akademickich or Automated Catalogs of Academic Libraries. KABA originated from three subject headings systems LCSH, RVM (Canadian Re´pertoire de vedettes-matie`re), and the French RAMEAU, the last being the primary source.

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