

New Generation Library Systems as Exemplified by the E-service OMNIS Project

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Abstract. *Library systems have been undergoing transformation in recent years. New generation systems are evolving towards digital platforms intended to manage different sources of knowledge and integrate them so that they could meet the changing needs of users. The OMNIS e-service operated by the National Library in Poland is an example of attempts to implement a Polish nationwide IT system offering one access point to the collections of Polish libraries and the current publications on offer by the publishing market*

Keywords: library computer systems, digital library platforms, OMNIS, knowledge management, library technologies

INTRODUCTION

Large-scale computerization of library services in Poland began in the nineteen-nineties. It was initiated by large university libraries by implementing integrated computer systems, the most popular of which being Aleph, Virtua, Prolib, Horizon, or Sowa. At present, most of them turn out to be insufficient to per se satisfy the dynamically changing needs of users and to properly manage information resources in the libraries. A problem is also their difficult-to-accomplish integration with other computer systems used at universities (e.g. USOS, e-learning systems) as well as the lack of uniform and standardized search forms and interfaces for end users availing themselves of many libraries. The answer to these problems is to be the new generation systems.

NEW GENERATION LIBRARY SYSTEMS

The term “new generation systems” is applied to integrated library systems operating in the

cloud model. The software is prepared to work from the producer’s servers as a service, without the need for local installation. Owing to this, it is possible to dispense with server facilities, and a library can become independent of the operating system on workstations (service via browsers). The new generation system is also characterized by departure from modules for processes, which is particularly important in managing different types of collections (traditional and electronic). These systems ensure full automation of work. Owing to a built-in multibrowser they provide comprehensive information about all resources offered by a library and those available on the Web. In addition, these systems enable cataloging collections in different formats, and managing licenses; they function as link-resolvers (a linking system) and as a knowledge base. They serve the A-Z list containing information on electronic journals subscribed by the library. There are more and more new generation library systems available on the market, inter alia Alma, Sierra, OCLC Wordshare, Quali OLE (open source), Open Skies. The Ex Libris’ Alma System has been chosen to service the OMNIS project. A similar role is performed by digital library platforms. Their usefulness consists in using and making available the knowledge stored at different virtual sites, which accelerates in particular the processes of locating and gaining knowledge.

THE OMNIS E-SERVICE

E-service OMNIS is a project carried out by the National Library in Poland, its main goal being to implement the nationwide information

system with access to the collections of Polish libraries and other cultural institutions. As a result of the implementation of the project, libraries will obtain an integrated multibrowser, an e-ISBN publishing repository and the Polona Digital Library in the Cloud. The realization of the project has been planned for the years 2016 - 2019, and it was officially inaugurated by a conference on February 7, 2017. It is worth 63 million zloty and is co-financed under the Operational Program Digital Poland from the European Regional Development Fund and the State budget. When defining the objectives of the project, the National Library personnel took into account the needs and expectations of the individual user who seeks quick and verified information from reliable sources. Owing to the implementation of the multibrowser, users will have an opportunity to search publications from different cultural institutions in one place. In addition, they will receive information about their digital versions or the nearest place where a particular document can be borrowed (or will use a terminal made available in a partner library as part of the Academica system enabling online access to documents under copyright). The value of the OMNIS project lies in the creation of a uniform and universal management system for all types of libraries in Poland. Its aim is to improve the quality of metadata of libraries and electronic resources of the publishing market. The implementation of four e-services has been planned in the project:

- **Integrated OMNIS browser** – one multibrowser enabling a user to search the resources of all Polish libraries and other cultural institutions
- **E-ISBN publishing repository** – the e-ISBN service combined the database of the publishing market and enabling publishers to submit an electronic form of the obligatory copy with metadata to the National Library repository

- **Polona in the Cloud for libraries** – it will enable the storage of digital collections in the National Library repository and to create, manage and publish digital collections in the Polona, preserving their identity
- **Polona in the Cloud for Scholars** – it will allow scholars to publish their own scientific texts in Polona (Polona Scholar) and will enable communication between research teams.

The project is expected to ultimately use the potential of the resources of various cultural institutions nationwide, not only libraries but also archives, museums, and publishing houses.

CONCLUSION

Software for libraries is constantly evolving. In order to meet the changing needs of its users, it became necessary to introduce new functionalities and to strive to integrate resources of different types and from different sources. The OMNIS project is an example of the utilization of new generation systems to improve library services.

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