Central managing of serials collection in Wrocław University of Technology as a factor of effectiveness in delivering resources to the users

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Abstract
Purpose – The purpose of this paper is to provide a useful overview of the process of central coordinating in a matter of serials in various stages.
Design/methodology/approach – The case study presents management solutions in an academic library.
Findings – Central management and control has significant influence on economic policy in the whole library information system. Gathering the data about serials collection on the one hand allows the Main Library to efficiently manage the finances allocated to the library system units, and on the other, to control the real use of the serials collection.
Research limitations/implications – The data are given on the basis of official yearly reports and practice.
Originality/value – Nowadays, WUT Library is the only library in Poland organized in a centralized manner to such an extent. This kind of workflow can be a good example for other academic libraries with similar internal structures.

Keywords Library management, Academic library, Poland

Paper type Case study

I. Library of Wrocław University of Technology. Short history, major developments
There are 457 universities in Poland[1]. Of them, 18 are technical universities and Wrocław University of Technology (Politechnika Wrocławska) is the one of the largest technical university in Poland.

WUT inherited its buildings after German Königliche Technische Hochschule Breslau[2] (Kings Technical Higher School, later known as German Technical High School) whereas Lviv[3] University of Technology provided its academic staff.

Library of Wrocław University of Technology was established in 1946. At that time library staff consisted only of five people.

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Decade later the library comprised of already 68 departments functioning next to different university units (faculties, institutes, cathedrals). They were supervised by the Main Library. Still, the library had malfunctioned till the end of the sixties due to lack of the unification of the library information system. Since collections of university units were not registered in central catalogue, they were not able to gather all the data in one place which was the Main Library. However, the above had slowly changed over time as a result of the reorganization of the library information system which begun in 1968. Finally, the Main Library has taken a task of assembling and cataloguing of the whole collection. Indeed, such modernization would not be feasible without far-reaching consequences of the automation of the library system.

Library of WUT being a pioneer in automation of the library's operational system, initiated process of computerization in Poland and other libraries soon followed its example. In those times, libraries in Poland neither had their operational system automated nor were in possession of a computer. Unfortunately due to the political situation, Poland was not able to benefit from foreign technology and equipment thus Polish scientists had to entirely rely on domestic inventions. First attempts to modernize the library system were undertaken using hardware devised and manufactured in Poland (computer Odra 1325). The first IMB PC could be found in the library only in 1980.

Automation and computerization projects were feasible due to research and development team which started its activity at university in 1971 under the direction of the then library director Czesław Daniłowicz.

The team embarked on developing Automatic Scientific Information Processing System (APIN) designed to fully computerize the library operational system. In subsequent years university established a new field study: SINT (Scientific Technical Information System). Its purpose was to prepare graduates to work with a such modernized systems. Many of its graduates either later cooperated with WUT library team or became involved in developing APIN.

APIN's first elements covered such library activities as acquisition, processing and providing books and serials collection; searching and providing technical scientific information and documentation of scientific achievements (papers, articles, books etc.) of WUT employees. Gradually new modules were developed; in 1993 cataloguing, circulation and searching and in 1998 ordering books in OPAC.

APIN system did not required enormous financial investment, on the contrary it was not costly project especially that the program team worked directly in the library. Besides, it was user friendly but regardless of its merits yet it was replaced by the new system Aleph[4]. The main reason for the implementation of the new system were technical obstacles which halted further development of APIN. Nevertheless, some APIN legacy was used during the implementation of Aleph which made the process easier, e.g. APIN-MARC format gave a base for implementation of MARC II which in turn enabled creation of OPAC catalogue without impediment.

Nowadays WUT Library is the only library in Poland organized in centralized manner. So far no university in Poland was able to reach such a level of progress as far as library system is concerned. Certainly, it is a result of an early and fast, earlier than in any other academic institutions, implementation of an integrated and centralized library system.
II. WUT Library, present day
WUT Library provides its collection for scientific research as well as supports the educational process through supplying all necessary academic materials required by the field studies taught at the University.

The collection consists of books (including ebooks), serials (including e-journals services), reference works, databases and special collections (standards).

The collection also includes part of German Technical High School’s collection, especially materials related to architecture and construction, chemistry and electrical engineering, as well as large collection of doctoral theses.

The structure of the library information system is:

(1) Main library:
   - Book Acquisition Department.
   - Processing Department.
   - Serials Department.
   - Circulation Department.
   - Book-Storage and Conservation Department.
   - Stock Control Section.
   - Library and Information Network Department.
   - Reference Service Department.
   - Documentation Department.
   - Automation Department
   - Digital Library Section.

(2) Libraries of university units:
   - nine faculty libraries;
   - six institute libraries;
   - three study libraries; and
   - three libraries of regional branches.

Acquisition and cataloguing are centralized and are executed in the Main Library. Purchases are made based on instructions provided by particular library departments. The Main Library receives and settles invoices for foreign books which are purchased (e.g. using grant money) by academics. Every publication has to be registered in OPAC.

Regional branches of the library have separate inventories so far and are outside of the central management (statistics relating to the library are shown in Table I).

III. Serials management
Serials Department is one of the 11 departments in Main Library and performs the following tasks [of]:

   • Acquisition and cataloguing print and electronic serials publications obtained through subscriptions, exchange, gifts or purchase.
   • Together with university faculties estimate finances for the yearly subscriptions.
In cooperation with University Procurement Office puts out to tender the supply of national and international serials and databases (including periodical databases as Perinorm, ISSN Portal).

Participating in libraries consortia of e-journals (It oversees and conducts formalities related to signing license and consortia).

Updating serials database in an electronic catalogue.

Administrating e-serials module in library website.

Providing access to electronic journals services and tools (f.ex. Alphabetical list of e-journals).

Creating and updating Regional Catalog of Foreign Journals in Wroclaw and Opole libraries.

Providing professional training of e-journals (“E-journals Training” annual course).

1. Acquisition and processing
Simultaneously with a launching of the library information system at WUT, the authorities of the University set directives on mutual relations between the Main Library and its departments[5].

Significant part of library collection constitutes serials collection. Primary method of securing permanent and regular supply of serials collection is subscription. Another opportunity to obtain desired titles delivers a membership of the library in Association for Information Management (ASLIB)[6]. It grants the library three printed journals per month as well as access to the Emerald Management First Database and Current Awareness Abstract Database. All the matters related to serials in WUT are regulated within Serials Department. Another methods of acquisition are gifts and exchange.

2. Subscription, gifts and exchange, discarding
Printed serials are requested according to the needs of academia. As soon as they are delivered, they are catalogued, placed in OPAC, transferred as the Main Library deposits to the libraries of university units or regional branches, and in the end made available to users. Serials on interdisciplinary subjects are located in the Main Library. Each faculty within the University regulates its expenses for serials subscriptions. In case of any additional subscription a faculty is obliged to declare that it possesses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of users</th>
<th>FTE: 36,878 users</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff in Main Library</td>
<td>96,25 full-time employments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of staff in libraries of library-information system</td>
<td>68 full-time employments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of print books</td>
<td>614,325 volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of ebooks (licences and ownership)</td>
<td>4,528 books</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of print periodicals</td>
<td>3,828 (803 current including 217 foreign and 586), 226,247 volumes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of e-periodicals</td>
<td>29,332 (foreign full-text journals), 1,349 (Polish full-text journals)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of databases</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table I.
Library facts and figures
necessary finances as well as it is aware of its own financial responsibility[7]. Acquisition of serials and databases are subject to Public Procurement Act of 1995 which governs disposal of public funds. At this juncture some difficulty might be encountered since according to the Act (subsequently amended) national and foreign subscriptions must be conducted in accordance with specific procedures and put out to tender[8]. Whole process must unfold with the cooperation of Public Procurement Office (PPO) situated at the University.

Serials Department takes part in preparing documentation (financial calculation, order specification, draft of the agreement etc.) whereas PPO is responsible for legal aspects of the tender (documents, compliance with provisions of the Act). Tender is organized once a year therefore it is very important to submit a subscription by the Serials Department in due time. This may be inconvenient for the users but in general employees of libraries who has decisive voice follow the rules.

Department controls whole process of acquisition of serials; from its initial stage which is sending subscription list to Deans of the Faculties who has to approve the list till its final phase of delivering materials to particular libraries. Close cooperation between Serials Department, other unit libraries and Deans of the Faculties is the key for successful acquisition process. Librarians of particular libraries play important role in this process; they gather information about the interest of the users in new and already existing (from previous subscriptions) titles.

Deans of the Faculty plays decisive role in creating a subscription list, nonetheless its content usually is discussed with librarians as well.

Users of the library any time during the year can request for a new journal to the Serials Department. Each appeal is examined individually and user is made aware of the prospects for a delivery of receiving the demanded journal i.e. whether there are potential obstacles for an execution of the request. Serials Department first gathers all the data about proposed journal, such as price, publisher (this is important because of library’s participation in consortia) as well as it checks its online availability (it happens user doesn’t realize that title is already available in electronic version).

In addition central management forms liaison with a contractor/supplier in order to control whether subscripted journals are delivered regularly and if necessary issues a complaint via contactor’s web site. This procedure also applies to individual electronic journals (those which are not available via participation in consortia) (see Table II).

Gifts and exchange are another methods of acquisition. Main Library sends serials, conference proceedings etc. published by University Publishing Office to our contractors and receives in return many interesting publications. Currently the library cooperates with 69 contractors who supply the institution with serials. However the amount of printed journals received from the exchange decreases year by year. This is linked with the fact that increasing number of journals, published by university

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Faculties</th>
<th>National Subscription</th>
<th>Foreign Subscription</th>
<th>Titles National Gifts and Exchange</th>
<th>Foreign Gifts and Exchange</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Units libraries</td>
<td>223</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>449</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Main Library</td>
<td>182</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>405</td>
<td>150</td>
<td>181</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>803</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table II. Location of serials in WUT Main Library and library-information system
publishing houses, are placed in open depositories and digital libraries free of charge for everyone. Gifts constitute smaller source of the acquisition, nonetheless significant. In recent years most gifts from abroad has been received from Pennsylvania Partnership Abroad and Polish National Library. Gifts from Polish institutions have been received mainly from Library of Wroclaw University which is one of Polish libraries authorized to receive legal deposit.

Disposition of unneeded serials takes place in centralized manner too, it can initiated either by Serials Department or by particular library of library information-system. Decisions concerning problematic positions are taken in conjunction with academics from the relevant field of study and employees of the library. Consulting role of the librarians and their opinion is crucial in final decision. After official approval of the selection by the Selection Committee (its members are employees of Main Library and its vice-director), Stock Control Section makes necessary changes in copies of serials statuses in Aleph system. Meanwhile Serials Department offers journals to other Polish academic libraries thus they can complete their own collection. Finally, list of disposed titles is posted on the library web site and distributed free of charge to the users.

3. Cataloging
Library collection is catalogued using MARC 21 format and shared via NUKAT – (National Universal Central Catalogue). While this cooperation does not apply to the serials collection at the moment, plans are made to include them in the future cooperation.

Serials Department is responsible for creating and managing of bibliographic records. Tasks cover generating records of printed journals, creation of links to electronic version of the titles (856 Field) and making record of e-only journals (applies to individual electronic journals and position with perpetual access). The latter is relatively new practice but in the future it will encompass larger number of positions (possibly by importing records from WorldCat or from the Publishers).

With support of IT team additional, electronic fields are created for serials. This allows for separation of larger groups of record in terms of the method of their acquisition as well as it makes possible to detach electronic records from the rest.

Without approval of the Serials Department, no library of any university unit is allowed to undertake changes and record modifications. Besides there are created individual record instructions for ordering and numbering volumes and are related to notes in computer system, concerning journal supplements.

4. Library consortia
Over past ten years changes have occurred in expenditure on certain type of collection; mainly printed journals which decreased in numbers. This is a consequence of the participation in library consortia and financial disadvantage of buying double version of serials.

WUT Library is member of most national consortia, mostly coordinated by Interdisciplinary Center for Mathematical and Computational Modeling (interdepartmental unit of Warsaw University) and Poznań Library Foundation (institution founded on the initiative of rectors of Poznań universities). Large part of serials e-resources are financed by Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education. In 2012 the Government funds has also covered the expenses of using services of: Elsevier, Springer, Wiley-Blackwell, EBSCO, Nature, Science, Web of Knowledge and
SCOPUS. They are all available, free of charge, for every academic institution in Poland.

Additionally for all interested, the library purchases specialist e-journal platforms such as American Chemical Society, Royal Society of Chemistry, Institute of Physics.

Table III illustrates number of electronic journals services which have been bought by WUT Library in 2011.

E-journals are accessible in university computer network but also at home via proxy server. Serials Department manages e-journals module at library web site. It is vital to monitor contents for updates and level of usage of electronic services. To control large quantity of resources it is necessary to cumulated them in one place, alphabetical list A-Z of all resources as well as recently purchased EDS (EBSCO Discovery Service-multisearch engine) serve this purpose.

IV. Different kinds of serials management in academic libraries in Poland.

Case studies

Analysis of serials management in WUT Library served as reference point in similar study of management in other libraries. Task of serials management was examined in following libraries: Wrocław University Library, Main Library of Wrocław University of Economics, Library of Technical University of Łódź, Main Library of Warsaw University of Technology.

The main criterion for their selection has been a similarity in their internal structure i.e. division of their units into a main library and subordinate libraries. Furthermore these libraries serve large universities, are financed from the same source and are subjected to the same law. Wrocław University Library is an exception; since it receives legal deposit, serials management is performed in different manner.

The purpose of this exercise was a general overview, rather than comprehensive research, on how serials are organized and administered in large Polish academic libraries.

Most academic libraries in Poland does not possess separate department dedicated only serials publications. Tasks of serials collection is performed by different

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service designation</th>
<th>Number of full-text journals</th>
<th>Time coverage of archive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACM</td>
<td>148</td>
<td>1950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACS</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>1879</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APS/AIP + PROLA</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>1893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cambridge STM</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald Engineering</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emerald EMX</td>
<td>215</td>
<td>1994</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IEEE</td>
<td>359</td>
<td>1884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IOP</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>1874</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Oxford STM</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>1996</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSC</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>1841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAGE</td>
<td>568</td>
<td>1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SIAM</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Taylor &amp; Francis S&amp;T</td>
<td>336</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wiley-Blackwell</td>
<td>1,458</td>
<td>1997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,613</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table III. Electronic journals in WUT Library
departments (in most case it is acquisition and processing department). However, the existence of Serial Departments in an academic library does not equal with central management. This condition applies to the most examples below. In fact, there are serials departments in these libraries but tasks they conduct different from WUT library.

The libraries differ from WUT Library not as much in general rules of the process of the acquisition but in its methods.

First of all national subscription is overseen by particular libraries hence all the expenses are the matter of regulation between library departments and particular faculty.

For that reason the main library is not able to enforce monitoring the finances either of library departments or the whole of the library-information system. Finances for foreign subscriptions are more under control. For single reason only; to prevent purchases of the same expensive title twice, departments consult their expenses by providing titles of the obtained materials with Main Library. However, there is no supervision over the amount of money spent on foreign subscription by individual faculties.

Libraries put national and foreign subscription out to tender but this does not apply to all the titles. National journals are ordered by library units without knowledge of the main library. There was a case of one faculty putting subscription out to tender on its own. This is a mismanagement; as a result neither data on inventory is provided nor users are able to receive information about available resources. This high degree of autonomy as far as decisions on ordering serials are concerned causes that is almost impossible to retrieve data like the value of the library’s asset (an actual number of volumes possessed and its value) from the one place.

Management of electronic journals does not always take place in Serials Departments. The libraries which have been mentioned above established separate section dedicated only to this purpose. Some aspects of management are often divided into methodological and financial matters within separate departments.

Orders for foreign subscriptions are closely related to electronic access of serials i.e. it is necessary to check whether titles are bought for ddp price and are not duplicated. It is also vital to control the level of the usage (of the electronic serials) however to apply such division/separation is very difficult to achieve. The above raises the question whether such status quo contributes to efficient flow of information in whole library information system.

Usually the main library is allowed to enter bibliographic records and to give detailed description of specimens. In case of inefficiency of the information system, serials data processing might suffer serious setback. The libraries of university units are not permitted to enter into the system any bibliographic records. Only in one case, library of regional branch is authorized to conduct changes in OPAC i.e. enter their records to the catalogue. However this policy is inconsistent since other libraries do not possess such privilege. Just one, from the libraries described above was allowed to do so.

Only disposal of serials is managed centrally in the libraries (in one of them it is not specified yet since new organization structure is under way)

Decentralized control over the information on resources in these universities is not caused by the faulty internal organization. Mostly, it is rooted in external factors such as high autonomy of [university?] faculties and branches which are reluctant to give away their independence in decision-making. Such stance proves little understanding of benefits coming from such cooperation.
V. Central managing of serials collection as a factor of effectiveness to satisfy user's needs

What are the results of the coordination of labor in Serials Departments in terms of providing information to the users? There is a strong correlation between the methods of management and the level of user satisfaction. First of all central-decision making of all aspects of serials management has significant impact on the content of the information provided to the users. Central decision-making gives benefits of access, by the users, to the complete information about all serials all the time. What is more it allows to define the amount of money spent by particular faculty. Awareness of the needs and usage of titles helps to determine the expenditure i.e. it gives an idea what serials are most often used and needed to be purchased. This acquires significance while faculty replaces old subscription by new one especially that it occurs in the context of decreasing space with simultaneous digitalization of the collections. On the other hand central control of the finances within central managements allows for quick tracking of the physical location of serial recourses.

All these processes would not have been possible if not for efficient flow of various types of the information in the library’s network (especially in relation to the Main Library instructions) Proficient communication between the Main Library as well as compliance with the existing rules allow for complete implementation of the (serials) central management.

Decentralized management has significant impact on quality of information which covers OPAC Catalogue. If OPAC catalogue would not have included the complete information about the collection, its existence would have been undermined (since its sole function/role is providing the information).

VI. Future of the library, future of serials

Library of Wroclaw University of Technology Since its establishment has not had its own, separate building. Twice in its history attempts were made to build it – in the 1970s and in 1995 construction projects were designed but for various reasons were never completed. Now with help of EU funding new library building is under construction, and it will be completed by 2013.

Changing building and localization means also that the library will modify its internal structure, even its name, what will be the most important change. EU legal requirements towards applicants did not correspond exactly to the University needs i.e. funds could not be spent only on building the library. In the new building will be located Regional Library of Life Sciences and Technology for Innovative Economy but also Wroclaw Centre for Networking and Supercomputing. Additionally, the new center will give opportunity to establish new departments within structure of the Library of which the most important is Lower Silesian Center for Scientific and Technical Information.

All printed collection as well as Circulation Department, Book-Storage, Conservation Department and Stock Control Section will not be transferred to the new building. This separation of printed and electronic resources is a new idea in Poland.

Only electronic resources and information services will be provided in the new building. It is now difficult to foresee how the new structure will affect serials management. Since formation of the new internal structure implies digitalization, certainly methods of serials dissemination will be also modified. Doubtless, such
change carries opportunity to provide wider access to electronic serials collections and promote training for the user. Info points offering variety of help are on the agenda. In such circumstances collection of bibliographic or factual information in one place will be an imperative. Certainly, management of some resources will continue to operate in the changing environment.

To meet the challenges of the era of information, academic library needs to evolve. Direction of the changes should take the route, and the fastest methods to achieve it, towards elimination of the mediating role of the librarians in a process of research (by users). Enormous and growing electronic resources which the library offers causes certain level of confusion. Often, users despite of being aware that the library is in possession of the materials are not able to find desired information. Thus the role of a librarian should not only be confined to helping in research. Users should be introduced to the library’s information system and gain thorough knowledge about its workings in order to be able to locate all necessary information in this type of collection. Type and quality of the resources used in research, inventions and discoveries, in other words human progress depends largely on how librarians prepare these academic, scientific sources and make them accessible.

Centralized management plays a key role in this process. The role will be even greater in the context of the new library where the emphasis will be placed precisely on electronic resources. Final accomplishment of such policy goals with respect to customers is serials collection which corresponds to their needs.

Notes
1. The number includes all higher education institutions.
3. Lviv was situated before the Second World War on Polish territory, after till present day in Ukraine.
4. System Aleph was bought in a consortium with other’s Wroclaw libraries participation. Nowadays it is used 18th version of the system.
5. Internal Ordinance Nr 22/200 on the principles of cooperation between deans of the faculties and Director of Main Library on a matter library-information activity.
6. ASLIB was founded in 1924 as Association of Special Libraries and Information Bureaux. ASLIB’s mission is among others to support libraries and other institutions with provision of comprehensive resources, training, communities of practice.
7. Exceptionally, faculty can order new title in exchange of cancellation other title from the subscription list.
8. Exception: when publisher has exclusive rights to distribute his journals and does not allow to open distribution.

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