

**To Russia with love.  
Copeter: a European Union project in St. Petersburg for library co-  
operation in general, ILDS in particular.**

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Russian libraries suffered greatly from the big changes after 1991. It took some time before new organisational structures and new types of library co-operation were established. The European Union and other organisations such as the Open Society Institute/Soros Foundations Network, the World Bank and the Mellon Foundation (USA) have tried to be helpful by direct funding and by the transfer of know-how. The European Tempus project line is intended to develop higher education systems through co-operation and the Copeter project is a good example thereof. Copeter wants to improve the union catalogues, the interlending and document ordering and delivery system (ILDS) and the supply of full text information in three major university libraries in St. Petersburg (Russia).

## **Tempus**

### **A European Union project line**

Tempus is a European Union programme for the development of higher education systems through co-operation (partnership) in three specific regions of Europe<sup>2</sup>:

- CARDS      The Balkan countries
- MEDA      The Mediterranean countries
- TACIS      Eastern Europe and Central Asia

The content of Tempus projects is quite varied: from the creation of new courses, to support for reform policies in the transition process to actually providing material aid.

### **Tempus grants**

There are three sorts of Tempus grants.

- Joint European Projects (JEP).
- Structural & Complementary Measures (short projects)
- Individual Mobility Grants for staff and students in higher education.

Joint European Projects, being transfer projects of know-how, always include a minimum of two partners from the European Union and at least one partner of the CARDS, MEDA or TACIS countries. Projects last for two to three years with budgets ranging from a maximum of 300.000 euro for a two years project and a maximum of 500.000 euro for a three years project. This is to cover such expenses as staff (maximum 30% of the total grant), overheads (7% of the total grant) and mobility, which takes up the bigger part of the project budget.

### **Competition**

The competition is fierce, especially in Russia where many universities have set up a TACIS-office in order to take full benefit of the European Union opportunities. Of the 500 project proposals of December 2002 no less than 140 (28%) came from the Russian Federation.

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<sup>2</sup> Tempus  
See: <http://www.etf.eu.int/tempus.nsf>

## Library co-operation in Russia (1991-2003)

Since the end of the Soviet Union in 1991 libraries and library co-operation have changed dramatically in Russia. At first the former central organisational structure disintegrated. This was the case for the union catalogues, the acquisition of foreign literature and the ILL-structure. This was partly due to structural and economic reasons and partly to the very fact that the former structures left no room and created no motivation for exploring new ways and new organisational models. To a certain extent the Open Society Institute/Soros Foundations Network<sup>3</sup> and the Russian Foundation for Basic Research<sup>4</sup> made up for the fall of the former central structure. However, Russian libraries went through a very difficult period: nearly no support from Moscow and due to lack of budget no priority in the institutions they had to serve.

The Open Society Institute was the first to stimulate renewed library co-operation by setting up the Library Automation Program (1998-2003) for the creation of a common library information space. At level 1, the national level: standards and rules and high quality bibliographic records for downloading are established. Level 2 is the level for the library consortia grouped geographically or by subject. Level 3 is the level of the local libraries, relying as much as possible on national and consortial resources and services and adding their local records to the union catalogues. An almost ideal picture.

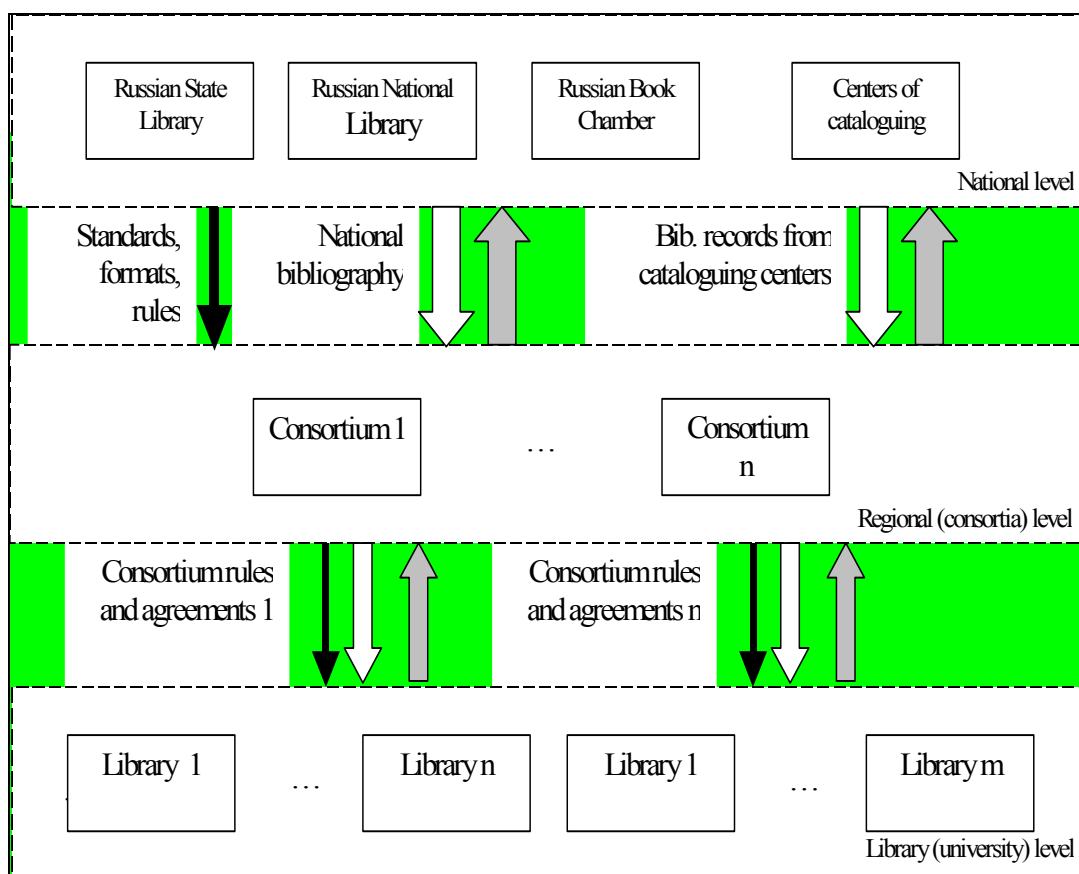


Fig. 1. The Russian Library Automation Program (1998-2003)

<sup>3</sup> Open Society Institute and Soros Foundations Network  
<http://www.soros.org/>

<sup>4</sup> Russian Foundation for Basic Research  
<http://www.icsti.su/eng/ois/inforesources/National/russia/rffi.asp>

The realisation of this ideal picture has not been easy. There were not enough standards for the libraries in the electronic age. Few libraries use RUSMARC (the Russian version of the UNIMARC format). Local authority records and thesauri prevail. Original autopsy cataloguing is still today the standard in most of the Russian libraries. The main contribution of the Library Automation Program so far is the creation of a set of mandatory standards for libraries willing to take part in the so called “competition projects”, projects funded by the Soros Foundation for which proposals could be submitted. One of these project lines was about the creation of library consortia in Russia. This project line nowadays groups ca. 200 libraries from 47 regions in Russia into 14 consortia. The consortia presently provide access to ca. 22 million bibliographic records. One of them is RUSLANet, the Consortium for the North-Western region of Russia of which the centre is St. Petersburg, the second town in Russia and one of the former capitals (1712-1918). This consortium started up a series of services based upon the regional union catalogue:

- Copy cataloguing
- Electronic document ordering
- Electronic document supply
- E-library services

ICLIS, the Institute of Consortium Library Information Systems of the St. Petersburg State Polytechnic University (STU) is the core of the library co-operation in the North Western Region of Russia. STU is the Russian co-ordinator for the Copeter project.

### **Co-operation no good in se**

Libraries and librarians worldwide have been co-operating intensely for many decades in a variety of ways. Are they doing the right thing? That is the question put forward by such an eminent authority as Maurice Line, the former director of the British Library Document Supply Centre under the title: *Co-operation: the triumph of hope over experience.*<sup>5</sup>

He ends his article by listing six principles for co-operation.

1. *Co-operation must serve a clearly defined purpose; it has no virtue in itself.*
2. *Other means of achieving any desired objective should be explored.*
3. *The justification of any means chosen must lie in its cost-effectiveness.*
4. *Co-operation should not be undertaken unless it is likely to produce better results than would be achieved by other means.*
5. *Co-operation should be looked at in a global context.*
6. *Over-planning should be avoided, and top-down planning is almost always undesirable. In a rapidly changing world, not only may the old answers no longer suffice: the questions may be changing.*

Prof.dr. E. Häkli, the former director of the Helsinki University and National Library, is the architect of the present-day Finnish library co-operation. In line with Maurice Line he created the four musts for any library co-operation.<sup>6</sup>

1. *Create a common will.*
2. *Develop common goals, simple and convincing also for the paymasters.*
3. *Find out organisational structures which help in crossing the administrative boundaries.*
4. *Develop and agree on an efficient agency, or possibly agencies.*

In designing the Copeter project the consortium has tried to take into account the experience and wise lessons of Line and Häkli.

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<sup>5</sup> M. Line. Co-operation: the triumph of hope over experience, in: *Interlending & document supply*, 25:2 (1997), pp. 64-72.

<sup>6</sup> E. Häkli. Libraries in a common electronic space: about the Finnish experience, in: *Entre réel et virtuel: la coopération entre les bibliothèques de recherche en Belgique*, Brussels, 2002, pp.15-28.

## **The Copeter project**

### **Partners**

The Copeter<sup>7</sup> partners are:

Russian Federation

- STU, St. Petersburg State Polytechnical University, project co-ordinator<sup>8</sup>
- ETU, St. Petersburg Electrotechnical University<sup>9</sup>
- FINEK, St. Petersburg University of Economy and Finance<sup>10</sup>

The European partners are:

- UA, University of Antwerp (Belgium), project contractor to the European Commission<sup>11</sup>
- UM, University of Maastricht (the Netherlands)<sup>12</sup>

### **Run time of the project**

From April 2002 to April 2004 (a 2 years Tempus grant).

### **Funding**

The European Commission funds the project with 266.000 euro. The project partners are expected to co-fund the project by extra staff inputs.

### **Project objective**

The Copeter project is built along 5 tracks.

1. Consortium building
2. Library and consortial management
3. Union catalogue
4. Electronic document ordering
5. Electronic document supply

### **Realisations**

#### **The consortium agreement**

A consortium agreement for library co-operation has been signed between the three Russian universities participating in Copeter. This is no small achievement in the Russian environment, not yet used to such formal contractual arrangements. This contract stipulates the rights, duties and tasks of every one of the participants. The involvement of the highest university authorities in the Copeter project is one of the key factors for the success of the project.

#### **Library management**

Under the former regime, with instructions mostly coming top down from Moscow, and after the very difficult period of the nineties of the former century, Russian libraries lack organisational and management skills both for local and for consortial management. Part of the project time and money has been used for improving these skills through visits and presentations about library and co-operative library management in the Netherlands and Belgium.

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<sup>7</sup> Copeter web site

<http://www.ruslan.ru:8001/copeter/>

<sup>8</sup> STU

<http://www.unilib.neva.ru/>

<sup>9</sup> ETU

<http://www.eltech.ru/english/>

<sup>10</sup> FINEK

<http://www.finec.ru/eng/>

<sup>11</sup> UA

[http://www.ua.ac.be/main.asp?c=\\*ENG](http://www.ua.ac.be/main.asp?c=*ENG)

<sup>12</sup> UM

<http://www.unimaas.nl/default.asp?taal=en>

## Union catalogue

A prototype of a union catalogue was already operational before the start of Copeter. It is a Z 39.50 based virtual union catalogue ([ISO 23950:1998](#) standard for information retrieval: Z 39.50). This prototype has been enhanced during the Copeter project. The present Z 39.50 client is able to support the following online operations:

- parallel search and retrieval of bibliographic and authority records in external sources accessible via the Z 39.50 protocol;
- converting on the fly USMARC-RUSMARC and vice-versa;
- remote updating & deleting operations in the database by users having rights to execute the procedure.

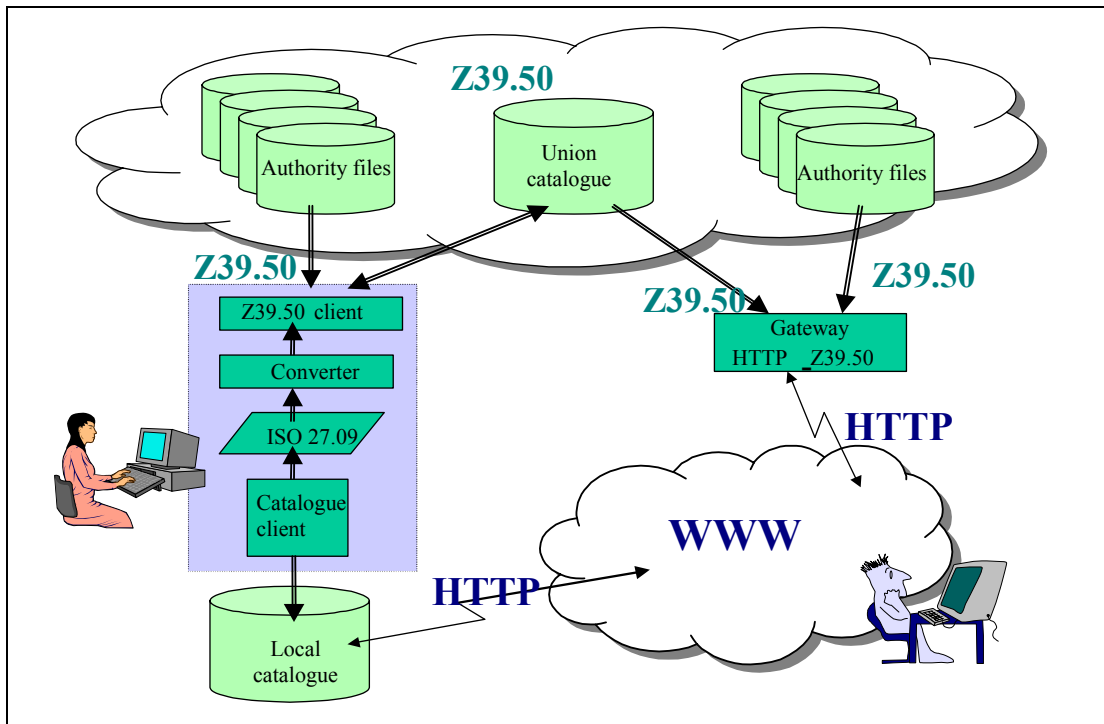


Fig. 2. The union catalogue implementation in RUSLANet

At the start of the Copeter project 6 libraries were participating in the union catalogue, among them the 3 Copeter libraries. Presently the union catalogue serves 12 libraries. The growth of the number of consortium members as well as the desire of some of them to install their own Z 39.50 server created new challenges.

- The creation of match and merging software in order to eliminate duplicate records.
- The creation of parallel search facilities in remote Z 39.50 consortium servers.

In the participating libraries 80% of the retroconversion process of the card catalogues was done through downloading of records from the databases. Copy cataloguing for new books sits already between 30 and 40%. And on top of that the union catalogue is the main vehicle for interlibrary lending and document supply.

## ILDS

Electronic document ordering and supply was the first service to be organised in RUSLANet. Open standards have been chosen.

- The item order server of the Z 39.50 protocol.
- ILL standards [ISO 10160:1997](#) (Service Definition) and ISO 10161:1997 (Protocol Specification).
- [ISO 17933:2000](#) GEDI - Generic Electronic Document Interchange.

- The draft [ISO 23950:1998](#) project for Information and documentation -- Directories of libraries and related information is being studied.

The ISO ILL standard is a rather complex one and will be realised step by step. End users in RUSLANet have been given no right to send ILDS requests to other libraries. So far it remains a mediated service operated by the consortium libraries.

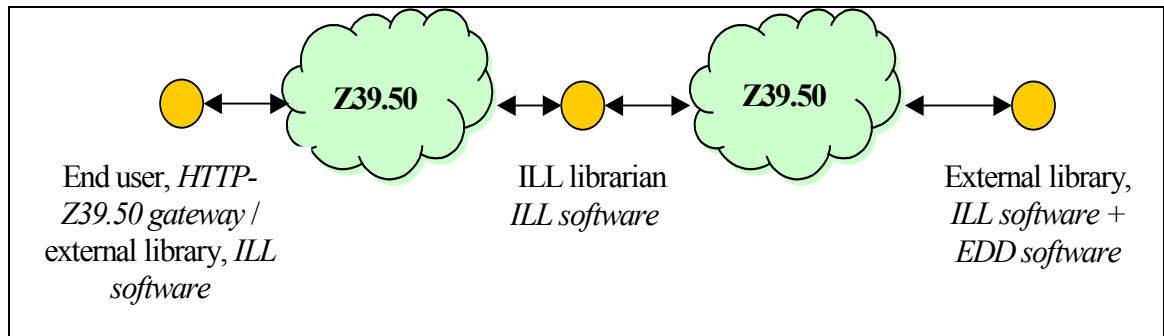


Fig.3. Document ordering and supply in RUSLANet

Each consortium library installs locally the ILDS client software, which supports both the document request and supply activities. Most libraries in RUSLANet have acquired the Ariel software for scanning and for sending the scanned document to the requesting library<sup>13</sup>. A link between the ILDS software and the Ariel software is nonexistent. Such a link could improve the efficiency of the entire procedure.

The use of the electronic document ordering and delivery service so far is low. The main obstacles are the absence of a proper ILDS budget and the tradition of sending paper requests to the two major national libraries in St. Petersburg, not part of RUSLANet.

- The Russian National Library
- The Library of the Academy of Sciences

The third reason for the limited use of the electronic ILDS systems is the poor success rate of 30%. This is partly due to the incompleteness of the union catalogue (lots of retrocataloguing still to be done) and the huge discrepancy between demand and availability due to the low acquisition rates of the past 15 years.

A promotional activity for the renewed service and access to libraries and document suppliers in Western Europe might enhance substantially the ILDS supply. For the time being the budget therefore is available through Copeter.

#### Access to full text databases

Copeter has included access to full text databases in its program for the second year of the project.

- Locally stored texts (ETD-projects and grey literature).
- Access to quality certified books and journals freely available on the web.
- Access to the EBSCO baskets of electronic journals.

#### Survey

A survey among the users of the three Copeter libraries is to conclude the project. This is also quite innovative in the Russian academic library scene.

<sup>13</sup> Ariel  
<http://www.infotrieve.com/ariel/index.html>

### Dissemination

A series of dissemination activities are to make known the results of the Copeter project throughout the Russian Federation. These activities started in June 2003 in St. Petersburg and will be continued during the LIBCOM Conference in Moscow in 2003, and in 2004 again in St. Petersburg and on the Crimea Conference.

### To Russia with love

Sustainability is a big question in any donor programme. Will the realisations of the project survive once the external help both in terms of money and know how stops? There is evidence which leads us to believe that the European Union input in Copeter is going to last after the end of our assistance. Firstly, the economic situation in Russia improved substantially in the past two years. This has a direct impact on the funding of Russian universities. Secondly, libraries still have a high profile in the Russian universities. Thirdly, Russian colleagues are highly competent classical librarians. They can rely on ICT-support of outstanding quality and are hard working, though not always in well organised and managed libraries. That makes us confident that the Copeter ideas, products and services will continue long after the end of the project in April 2004, just six months from now. That belief in the sustainability of the project results inspired me for the title of this paper: *To Russia with love*. It is a mere paraphrase of Ian Fleming's book and the James Bond film starring Sean Connery, as James Bond and Daniela Bianchi as Tatiana Romanov.

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