Access to online resources in social sciences in Lithuania

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Abstract

Providing relevant information corresponding to end-user needs is the main goal of each library. Those of us living in the developed world do have budgets and are free to buy books, subscribe to paper or e-journals, to the variety of other on-line resources and thus satisfy user needs. Those of us living in developing countries or countries in transition face various – cultural, educational, political, financial - obstacles in getting access to the needed information. To overcome those obstacles and help libraries of such countries to deal with e-resources an independent foundation eIFL.net (Electronic Information for Libraries) was set up in 2003.

The paper describes how Lithuanian libraries, due to their participation in eIFL.net activities, had changed: they set up a library consortium, consolidated the library community in the country, started fundraising campaigns, got access to on-line resources, and provided training for librarians and end-users.

Historical background

Access to social science information might be very much restricted in countries that lack democracy. The totalitarian regime ruling such countries does not want people to have access to information. Lithuania – a small country on the coast of the Baltic sea – had been occupied by Soviet Russia for 50 years (1940-1990) and had experienced such a regime. A special censorship organization – Glavlit – had been supervising access to information not only in Lithuania but in all the former Soviet republics. No book or journal could be published, brought into the country or purchased by libraries, no databases subscribed to without strict control of Glavlit. Only the information safe to the governing regime was allowed. After the declaration of independence in 1990 the soviet regime collapsed and the newly re-established domacratic Lithuania started its life. The most wanted information was that in social sciences. The 5 biggest libraries in the country opened their so called „closed stacks". These were collections of books and journals that hold „dangerous information" for the citizens, access to which during the soviet regime was allowed for

research purposes only under strict supervision of the governmental authorities. Opening of these collections to the public was not enough – only 5 libraries had such collections, they were not comprehensive and did not manage to fill the gap of the absence of information in the social sciences. The publishing business got the right to publish whatever they want, whatever was in need, and started booming.

During the first years of independence libraries tried not to miss any important publication, but their resources were limited – there were interesting books on the shelves in the book stores, but there was no or very little money to buy them; the quality of local publishing was very low.

Due to the lack of information lots of donations from private people (especialy of the Lithuanians living abroad), foreign libraries, etc. started coming into the country. Although libraries got many interesting books and journals, today we can say that not all of those donations were valuable and most needed. Current information in social sciences was most needed but was still missing. It was available in foreign languages from foreign publishing houses – that ment not accessible for Lithuanian libraries – few people could read English, German, French or any other foreign language except Russian and native Lithuanian, and libraries had no money to buy expensive foreign books. Knowledge about e-resources was non existant, as libraries were not automated at all.

One of the first organizations starting systematically filling that gap was the Open Society Fund-Lithuania (Soros foundation). They set up a Publishing programme and the key target was the literature in social sciences. Best authors were selected, books were translated into Lithuanian, published in Lithuania and donated to various libraries. This programm not only helped to fill the gap, but also developed an even bigger need for current information in the social sciences. Special training and library automation projects were carried out by the Library programme of the Open Society Fund-Lithuania. All these combined activities started changing libraries in Lithuania.

Start of the usage of on-line resources

In the early 90-ties the biggest and most active libraries in Lithuania started using e-resouces. Most of them were on CD-ROMs, some got on-line trial access, some were using only freely available e-resources or those received as gifts. There had been no cooperation, each library was acting on its own without knowing what the others were doing.

Huge support came from the Government, which set up and funded the Academic and Research Network in Lithuania (LITNET). Due to this programme all academic institutions in the country were connected to the high speed internet and all could enjoy it free of charge – the Government still payes for connectivity and development of this network. The Ministry of Culture launched a 10-year programme „Modernisation of Public Libraries"; the Ministry of Education and Science launched a Lithuanian Academic Libraries Network (LABT), which enabled all academic libraries to jointly purchase and use the integrated library system ALEPH, Metalib and SFX.

Access to the first on-line database was made available to all the libraries in Lithuania in autumn of 1999 by the Open Society Institute (OSI) through their national Soros Foundation. OSI published a tender in 1999 for the provision of aggregated e-resources in social sciences on behalf of 36 countries which were part of the OSI network at that time. Social sciences were targeted instead of STM (science, technology and medicine), as that information met the greatest need to fill the information gap in post-totalitarian countries. EBSCO Publishing won the tender offering a package of 10 databases:

- Academic Search Premier;
- Business Source Premier;
- Clinical Pharmacology;
- Eric;
- Health Source - Consumer Edition;
- Health Source: Nursing/Academic Edition;
- MasterFILE Premier;
- Medline;
- Newspaper Source;
- Regional Business News.

With access to the package of 10 EBSCO Publishing databases the new era of on-line information started in Lithuania.

Although the price offered by EBSCO Publishing was much less than for the developed countries, many eIFL countries still face difficulties to pay. As the price was offered for a country-wide license (except for school and commercial libraries), Lithuanian public, special and academic libraries approached the ministries for financial support. Without such support libraries were not able to pay even a very much discounted price from their acquisition budgets, as these were too small. With the help of the Open Society Fund-Lithuania the Ministry of Culture allocated some funds in 2001, while the Ministry of Education and Science started allocating funds for on-line resources in 2003 only, since then both ministries earmark a certain amount for databases annually. It is important to know that the funds allocated by the ministries cover only part of the total payment for on-line resources. Libraries must add their portion which differs from database to database. Usually it is 20-50%. Libraries have learned to allocate special funds in their acquisition budget for on-line resources. In 2004-2006 academic libraries were spending 9,7% in average for on-line resources, while in 2007 - 13,3%. There are leaders who are spending up to 25 - 37% (Kaunas University of Medicine, one of them) of their total acquisition budget for on-line resources.

eIFL.net as a facilitator of new ideas

As described above, the initiative to start using on-line resources, as well as other useful initiatives for libraries, came from the Open Society Institute-Budapest (OSI). eIFL.net (Electronic Information for Libraries) started in 1999 as a project of OSI which grew into an independent not – for-profit organisation, registered in 2003 in the Netherlands with an office in Rome, Italy. The initial goal of eIFL.net was to bring affordable access to e-resources to the countries in its network. For this multi-country initiative, the national site license model was adopted. In return for the stated price per country, an unlimited number of libraries could register for access and an unlimited number of users could use the services simultaneously. With this model, eIFL.net not only sought to address the growing digital divide between East and West, North and South, but also to ensure equitable access within each country.

Today eIFL.net is a global coalition of 48 national library consortia in transition and developing countries. It supports the building and sustaining of library consortia and negotiates and advocates for the wide availability of electronic information in member countries. It offers 6 programs to member consortia:
- Negotiating access to commercially available e-resources;
- Supporting the creation of sustainable national library consortia;
- Knowledge sharing and networking;

- Promoting and advocating for free online availability of research literature (Open Access);
- Advocacy for Access to Knowledge: copyright and libraries;
- Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) for libraries.

All these programs and activities support eduction and research by up-to-date and comprehensive access to information across all disciplines, thus contributing to building educated and literate societies that are fundamental to the development of the country.

The role of the Lithuanian Research Library Consortium

The Lithuanian Research Library Consortium (LMBA) was set up in 2001 in order to deal with on-line resources. Having started its activities with 24 founding members the LMBA Consortium now has 47 members as of spring 2008:
- 19 university libraries;
- 12 college libraries;
- 1 national library;
- 5 special libraries;
- 5 reaserch institute libraries;
- 5 county public libraries.

Not all LMBA members subscribe to on-line resources – there are 8 members that do not subscribe to a single database, while there are 13 that do subscribe to on-line resources not only via LMBA, but via other consortia also individually. The range of the subscribed databases varies from 0 to 65 per library (not only in social sciences). The list of databases subscribed by libraries is provided on the LMBA web page http://www.lmba.lt/XLS/LMBA_db_2007.xls .

These figures reflect the achievement of 6 years of intensive work. eIFL.net helped a lot to start consortium activities by providing a grant for strengthening it's infrastructure in 2002-2003. The grant was used to train the trainers, for publishing activities, setting up the office, launching the web page in Lithuanian and English, participation in international conferences, etc.

As it was already mentioned, EBSCO was the first deal of the LMBA Consortium. It took a few years before the LMBA Consortium signed deals with Science Direct and Springer LINK in 2002. Both were negotiated on behalf of member libraries. Starting with 2003, deals were signed both through individual LMBA negotiations and through eIFL.net negotiations on behalf of the LMBA Consortium. At the end of 2007 the LMBA Consortium had 24 licences signed for 71 on-line resource in all sciences. Out of these 25 are for universal (containing social sciences content) and 18 for social sciences resources that are listed in table 1.

Table 1. List of social science and universal databases subscribed by Lithuanian libraries.

Database	Content	Who negotiated	Total # of subscribing libraries	out of these academic libraries
Annual Review	universal	LMBA	6	4
Blackwell Publishing	universal	LMBA	12	10
Ebrary & Morgan & Claypool	universal	eIFL.net	3	3
EBSCO Publishing (eIFL.net package)*		eIFL.net	70	29
Academic Search Complete	universal			
Business Source Complete	social sciences			
Eric	social sciences			
Library, Information Science & Technology Abstracts	social sciences			
MasterFILE Premier	universal			
Newspaper Source	universal			
Regional Business News	social sciences			
Education Research Complete	social sciences	LMBA	6	5
Emerald Fulltext	universal	eIFL.net	11	9
GALE*		eIFL.net		
Business & Company Resource Center	social sciences		2	1
History Resource Center - Modern World	social sciences		3	2
InfoTrac OneFile	universal		6	6
Global Market Indicators Database	social sciences	LMBA	3	3
Integrum Techno*		eIFL.net		
Address and reference databases	universal		1	1
Library collections	social sciences		1	1
Business security	social sciences		1	1
Legislation	social sciences		4	1
Official institutions information	social sciences		1	1
Monitoring	social sciences		2	1
Journals	universal		24	6
Information agencies of RF, CIS, Baltic states	universal		2	2
Internet publications	universal		6	3
World Information agencies	universal		5	3
Regional press	universal		3	1
Central press	universal		7	1
Foreign press	universal		5	2
Statistics	social sciences		5	2
Financial and market news	social sciences		3	2
Photo archive	universal		1	0
Oxford English Dictionary	universal	eIFL.net	22	5
Oxford Journals Online	universal	eIFL.net	20	14
Oxford Reference Online	universal	eIFL.net	31	6
PsycARTICLES	social sciences	LMBA	7	6
SourceOECD	social sciences	LMBA	3	2
SAGE Journals	universal	eIFL.net	9	7
Science Direct	universal	LMBA	10	10
SocINDEX with full-text	social sciences	LMBA	10	7

Springer LINK	universal	LMBA	6	6
SpringerLINK E-Books	universal	LMBA	7	5
Wiley InterScience	universal	eIFL.net	16	12

*Listed only universal and social sciences databases

Although libraries do prefer to subscribe to databases via the LMBA Consortium (in this case they get partial governmental funding), they also subscribe to databases inidividually. Mostly these are databases that do not deal with a consortium or very specialized ones that are of interest only to very few libraries. The list of individualy subscribed databases is available at http://www.lmba.lt/db/liet/kitos.htm . These include these databases in social sciences:

- ATLA Religion Database with ATLA Serials;
- Beck-Online;
- Communication & Mass Media Complete;
- COS Funding Opportunities;
- Country Insight;
- International Statistical Yearbook;
- International Bibliography of Theatre and Dance with Full Texts;
- ISSN online;
- Jane's World Armies;
- JSTOR.

The LMBA consortium takes care of the subscriptions to foreign databases not only for its members, but for all public libraries in the country. The Ministry of Culture allocates special funds for this purpose via the LMBA Consortium. Although not all public libraries are using this possibility, the number is growing each year.

Other providers of on-line information

As the LMBA Consortium is dealing with subscription to foreign databases only, libraries need to take care of national databases themselves. The most popular local databases in social sciences (available for subscription) are:

- Verslo žinios (Business News) – available with subscription to a daily *Verslo žinios*
- LITLEX-Internet (Lithuanian legal database)
- INFOLEX praktika (Lithuanian legal database).

The Lithuanian National Library is taking care of the subscription to LITLEX-Internet and INFOLEX praktika for all public libraries. The Ministry of Culture is covering full price of this subscription.

Five Lithuanian libraries: Mykolas Romeris University Library, the National Library of Lithuania, Vytautas Magnus University Library, Library of the Seimas of the Republic of Lithuania and Vilnius University Sauletekis Information Centre are members of the international Consortium of Legal Resource Centers and Legal Information Specialists and through this consortium they are subscribing to law databases:

- HeinOnLine;
- Westlaw International.

The Ministry of Education and Science is subscribing to ISI Web of Knowledge databases for 2 universities (Vilnius University and Kaunas University of Technology):

- ISI Journals Citation Report;

- ISI Essential Science Indicators;
- ISI Proceedings;
- ISI Web of Science.

Although ISI databases are in high demand by all universities, none of them can afford these databases, while the ministry can afford them just for the 2 biggest universities only.

Monitoring of usage

The activities of the LMBA Consortium, such as it's on-going fund-raising cámpaigns helped the Government of the Republic of Lithuania to acknowledge access to on-line resources as a high priority. By alloting funds for on-line resources, the Government wishes and needs to monitor how these resources are used. LMBA Consortium as well as individual libraries collect and analyze usage statistics. The usage of nearly all on-line resources is constantly growing. We provide usage of several most pupular on-line resources in social sciences in Lithuanian libraries in charts 1 and 2.

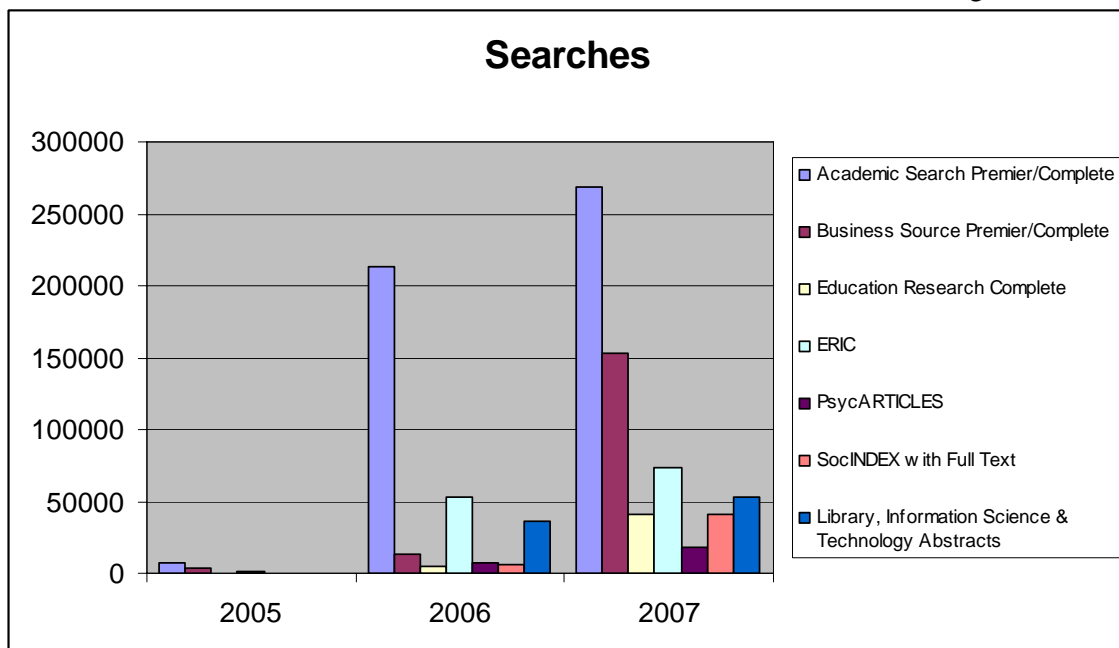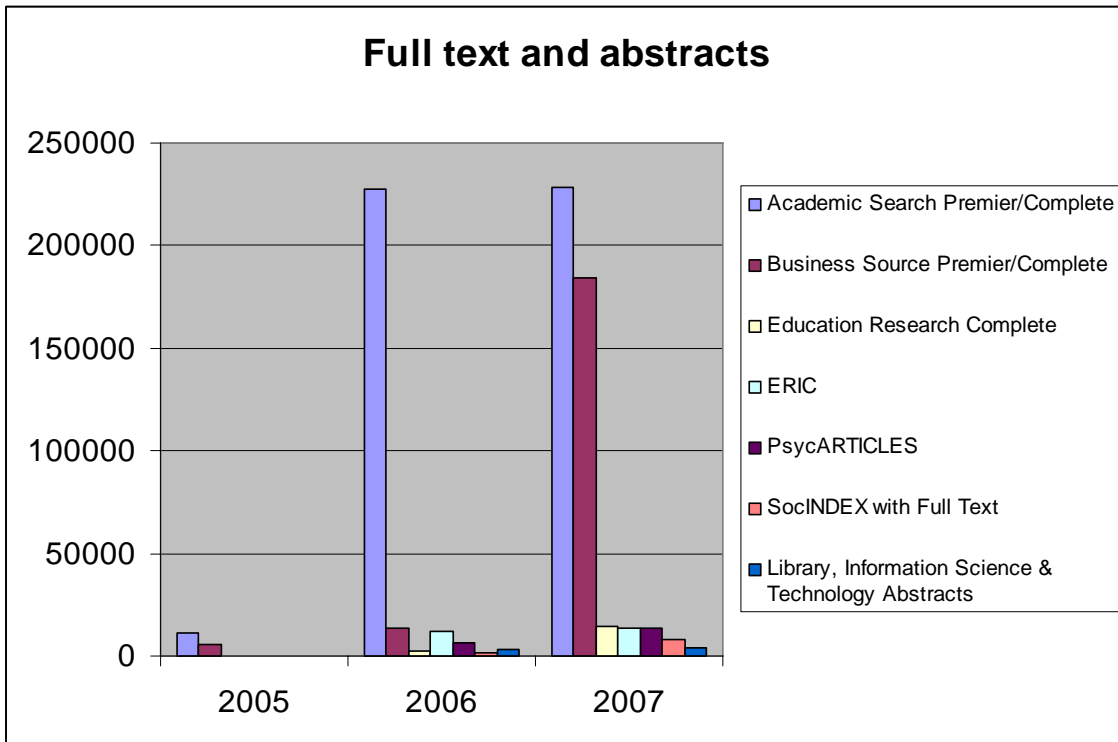Chart 1. Number of searches in some databases accessible via EBSCO Publishing

Chart 2. Number of full text articles and abstracts requested in some databases accessible via EBSCO Publishing

Full text and abstracts

We are glad that Lithuania is one of the leaders in using on-line resources amongst eIFL.net countries. The usage statistics for on-line resources subscribed via eIFL.net is available for its members on the eIFL.net website in the members only section.

As the price for on-line resources is going up, it is important to analyze the correlation of the usage and the price. In case of low usage it might be better to choose a document delivery service instead of subscription. For this reason LMBA Consortium cancelled subscription to Cambridge Journals Online. The deals with some other databases are under the consideration.

A very important figure is the price per article. Although the price per article might differ a lot from library to library, as the usage is different, each library must calculate these figures itself. LMBA Consortium is calculating these figures for the whole Consortium and very often uses them for lobbying purposes. In the table 2 we provide the general price per article for all subscribing libraries for a particular database in Lithuania in 2007.

Table 2. Price per downloaded full text article in 2007

Database	Price per downloaded fulltext article in USD
Annual Reviews	2,69
Blackwell	1,68
EBSCO Publishing (eIFL.net package)	0,34
Education Research Complete	2,81
GALE	4,23
Oxford Reference Online	0,43
Oxford Journals	0,47
Oxford English Dictionary	0,75
PsycArticles	4,63
SocINDEX with full-text	7,01
Wiley InterScience	14,37

Lithuanian libraries value participation in eIFL.net. We save not only time in negotiations, but also money. Savings via eIFL.net amount from 90 to 99% of the total cost (compared to the list prices):

Table 3. Savings via eIFL.net

Database	% saved via eIFL.net deal
Oxford University Press	99
Gale	98
Sage Journals	98
Wiley Interscience	99
Emerald	90
EBSCO package	98

Creation of local databases

It is important to provide access not only to the subscribed material, but to create and compile local databases in order to provide users world wide with Lithuanian content. Lithuanian research libraries are active in promoting open access. Libraries are compiling various databases, none of which are specialised in social sciences only, but many of them contain social sciences material. Several databases that are freely available for users world wide can be listed:

- ETD - Electronic database of Theses and Dissertations;
- eLABa - Electronic Lithuanian Academic Library;
- Lituanistika – the database in humanities and social science in Lithuania;
- LiDA – Lithuanian humanities and social sciences data archive;
- Aruodai – electronic database of the sources of Lithuanian culture.

All Lithuanian libraries use integrated library systems and compile catalogs and other databases of local significance which are not mentioned in this article.

Conclusion

Less than a decade ago on-line resources were non-existant in Lithuanian libraries. Although libraries had very little budget for new material, the acquisition process was carried out without proper cordination or co-operation. Lithuanian participation in eIFL.net opened access to affordable on-line resources for Lithuanian researchers, students, and the general public. We – librarians – have learned to work in a team; in partnership with eIFL.net we set up a Lithuanian Research Library Consortium which has great power today. We have learned to fundraise and managed to persuade our Goverment to allocate funds for on-line resources annually; the libraries have learned to allocate special budget for on-line resources. Expenditure for on-line resources is included in annual statistics and the evaluation of libraries (especially the academic libraries) also take these figures into consideration. Librarians are becoming not only information providers, but information compilers and teachers on how to retrieve and use on-line resources. Although this is a difficult task, we have several projects running on how to improve our professional skills. eIFL.net has been and still is one of our most important partners and the biggest supporters of our activities. As eIFL.net grows to meet the evolving challenges of electronic resource acquisition and management so the Lithuanian Research Library Consortium member libraries grow its range of activities in partnership. Last but not least, we are proud that our consortium is now able to give back and contribute to eIFL.net's activities in other countries, that are in need of expertise and support. This is the strength of both the Lithuanian Research Library Consortium and the global eIFL network – we help each other to help ourselves.

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Web pages mentioned

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Academic and Research Network in Lithuania (LITNET) - http://www.litnet.lt/
Lithuanian Research Library Consortium (LMBA Consortium)- http://www.lmba.lt/
eIFL.net (Electronic Information for Libraries) - http://www.eifl.net
Consortium of Legal Resource Centers and Legal Information Specialists - http://www.lawconsortium.lv/
Lithuanian Academic Libraries Network (LABT) - http://www.labt.lt/
ETD - Electronic database of Theses and Dissertations http://aleph.library.lt/F?func=find-b-0&local_base=ETD04
eLABa - Electronic Lithuanian Academic Library http://aleph.library.lt/F/?func=find-b-0&local_base=elb01 .
Lituanistika – the database in humanities and social science in Lithuania http://aleph.library.lt/F/CA9K5RRM52G86D4Y22IFDNTPDCSU88CMYT5NY7BSUM98ID4J1Q-00081?func=find-b-0&local_base=LITLI .
LiDA – Lithuanian humanities and social sciences data archive http://aleph.library.lt/F/CA9K5RRM52G86D4Y22IFDNTPDCSU88CMYT5NY7BSUM98ID4J1Q-00452?func=find-b-0&local_base=HSM01
Aruodai – electronic database of the sources of Lithuanian culture http://aleph.library.lt/F/CA9K5RRM52G86D4Y22IFDNTPDCSU88CMYT5NY7BSUM98ID4J1Q-00732?func=find-b-0&local_base=MAB03