

The Czech National Bibliography: new steps to completeness

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Abstract:

The contents of the Czech National Bibliography (CNB) changed more times during more than 90 years of its history. The first issues covered just printed monographs, the records were prepared according to older Czech cataloguing rules. Later it was possible to observe newly added (or withdrawn) types of documents, new cataloguing rules – they changed five times during the CNB history – or temporal efforts to provide a bibliography of component parts (articles from newspapers and journals). An intensive endeavour was exerted in the last years to complete the CNB, not only to find and catalogue publications the National Library of the Czech Republic did not receive as a legal deposit, but also to fill gaps in regulations of legal deposit or to complete elements of bibliographic description that were found essential for availability of resources.

Keywords: national bibliography, electronic publications, legal deposit laws, cataloguing rules.

The Czech National Bibliography (CNB) has been published by the National Library of the Czech Republic (NL CR) since 1923. The NL CR was the only originator of the CNB for many years. Now it is a result of cooperation:

- The Legal Deposit Shared Cataloguing Programme based on an agreement among three libraries with a full legal deposit (NL CR, Moravian Library in Brno and Research Library in Olomouc) since 2005. These operations enable to approach completeness and timeliness of the records for newly published resources in the CNB.
- The cooperation with other large libraries with the regional legal deposit and a full level cataloguing sending their records to the Union Catalogue of the CR. (These records are compared with the CNB monthly and if not found in the CNB they are added as the provisional records until the records from shared cataloguing of three libraries do not replace them.)

Both the forms of cooperation were started with an intention to publish records in the CNB faster, the CNB serves as an important source of quality records for copy-cataloguing as well as information on published resources for users. The cooperation should compensate the growth of publication during the last years (e.g. in 2000 ca 13 000 books per year, in 2014 it was 19 000 books per year) and quite a long period in which publishers deliver legal deposit (up to one month according to law, but often later).

Concerning to the older resources, during the last few years the number of records from the retrospective cataloguing that became also part of the CNB, was growing. That was a side result of massive digitization projects in the NL CR, regional research libraries or specialized libraries, supported from national and international sources. An arrangement has been accepted that it is mandatory for the public libraries to register information about digitized Czech publications in the Digitization Register, maintained by the NL CR. The aim of the register was to create the national database of digitized documents, which would serve to control the digitization workflow of individual institutions, to avoid duplication and to facilitate sharing of processing the results of digitization. The National Bibliography Number is used as an unique identifier for the register so a side effect of the digitization is an improvement of completeness of the CNB – libraries have to ask for the CNB numbers (and records) when they want to digitize publications absent in the CNB. Many publications of this group were published in the regions that were incorporated to the Sudetenland during the World War II, but there is almost the same number of publication just not delivered as legal deposits, so hundreds or thousands of records are added to the CNB according to the region.

Although the gaps in the CNB are fill in gradually, the new gaps came into being due to a deficiency of legal deposit law for new types of publications. The existing legal deposit legislation (there are two separate laws for monographic and continuing resources in the Czech Republic) is traditional, based on physical media, and it does not include newly published electronic publications although situation in this area dramatically changes. For example, from 2010 to 2014, the Czech National ISBN Agency registered ca 25 000 ISBNs for e-books, the number was growing during this period, in 2013 and 2014 stabilised on ca 11 000 ISBNs for e-books per year (ca 8 000 titles, many electronic publications are published in more formats). This production is not processed for the CNB now but CNB aspires to completeness and wants to treat electronic resources published by Czech publishers.

The first steps leading to a solution (both legal and technical) were made. In 2011, the pilot project EDpilot mapped changing conditions in the area of electronic publications. In 2012, the project “Management of electronic publications in the network of Czech libraries” was started, with three main goals – to prepare a proposal for a change of the legislation, to establish technical tools for management of electronic publications (acquisition, cataloguing, archiving, access) and to implement new cataloguing standards. In 2015, it is possible to summarise the achieved results.

In the area of legislation there were more proposals at stake. The first one, for example, proposed an independent law for electronic publications (both monographic and continuing resources) and to join legal deposit with web-harvesting. After many analysis and negotiations of librarians and lawyers, who took part in the procedure trying to formulate the conditions under which the electronic legal deposit should be treated by recipients and users, a final version was chosen among the proposals in April 2014. This proposal is built on the existing laws concerning to the legal deposit and extends their contents. Both the legal

deposit laws, The Law on Non-periodical Publications (1995) and The Press Law (2000) were proposed to be redefined; the proposal of the change of the laws is now consulted with publishers and processed by the Ministry of Culture for negotiation of the Czech government this Summer/Autumn. According to the proposal, the NL CR should be the central receiver of the electronic legal deposit, other libraries (with a full or a partial legal deposit now), should possess restricted duties and rights. The proposals are intended to cover the electronic publications with standard numbers and/or commercial electronic publications. Electronic versions of printed publications are not subject of the proposal.

In the area of technical solution, the project aims to:

- Collect e-books and electronic continuing resources as well as electronic forms of printed books and printed continuing resources.
- Create tools for sharing and making accessible this kind of content within the library network of the Czech Republic.
- Long-term archiving and preservation of this kind of content within system built in the National Digital Library project.

This part of the project was divided into three stages. During the first stage (March 2012 to December 2012), the current situation was analyzed. During the second stage (January 2013 to December 2014) the application for collecting and processing of electronic publications – called E-deposit - was developed and works continued in the area of preparing electronic publications for archiving and access. During the third stage (January 2015 to 31 December 2015) tests and pilot services have started.

The application enables the publishers to announce ISBN of the e-book as the first step. It is not a new possibility, the Czech publishers can announce ISBNs using a web form for more than 10 years, the E-deposit enables to use a familiar form as a starting point to deliver data or to be harvested etc. The E-deposit system now enables registered publishers not only to announce ISBNs using a form very close to that they used before (it was an intention to retain run-in processes, although a list of information provided by publisher is broader, new optional information can be download by the publisher, e.g. summary of book). After this routine work, the possibility to add the electronic publication or the electronic version of printed resource is offered. Then the E-deposit checks the format and metadata quality and the publisher is informed about results. Next steps are coordinated with the NL CR library system: the E-deposit informs staff of the domestic acquisition department about a new electronic publication, later informs cataloguers about a newly acquired resource. Finally, it send processed data to National Repository as well as make them available (in accordance with the license) for users via Kramerius Digital Library.

There is a difference how different formats are treated. Two formats of electronic publications are accepted for a long-term preservation, PDF(A) and EPUB. The electronic publications need to be without protection (DRM). The original formats are preserved in their original form, it will be possible to migrate formats if needed in the future.

The electronic publications are catalogued in the library system, newly (May 1st, 2015) according to Resource Description and Access (RDA). An implementation of RDA is the next part of the project “Management of electronic publications in the network of Czech libraries”, the new methodology is used generally, not only for purposes of electronic resources. The Anglo-American Rules 2nd Ed. used in the Czech Republic since 1995 were

superseded by RDA. The Cataloguing Board and working groups decided to work with the English version of RDA but the NL CR plans to translate the rules in the future. The RDA is implemented with regard to their implementation in other countries, an experience of other libraries and recommendations that could assure the possibility of smooth copy-cataloguing were followed. And it is possible to repeat the word “completeness” again when talking about completeness of bibliographic description. With regard to the future use of records, recommended level of record was established for large Czech libraries, cooperating on the CNB, with an intention to offer more access points - authors, uniform titles, subject access points etc. More personal and corporate access points became mandatory even on the minimal level – e.g. access points for all authors (not only three of them etc.), translators and illustrators were added. This change is often more difficult for libraries than the change of cataloguing rules themselves. The necessity to use more persons etc. is not connected primary with the new cataloguing rules, it was strongly demanded by colleagues from library services, and also from users – both individual and collective (royalty agencies, association of translators, etc.). It was necessary to prepare all of recommendations together with cataloguers from other Czech libraries and to explain necessity of authorized access points generally, particularly in case of the uniform titles.

A survey was conducted to estimate a number of newly added access points, a strong impact was expected in cataloguing departments. Different samples of publication were tested during 2013 and 2014, the results were different, e.g. the autumn/winter production generated more access points for illustrators and translators, the spring production included a lot of publications that served as an output from research projects and these publication bring more access points for authors, they were mostly collective monographs. But although the contents differ, the number of added access points was similar. The new practice brings together necessity to multiply the access points for authors, translators and illustrators, as well as authority headings for these persons or corporate bodies. It was important to analyse this numbers before the matter was settled. The calculations were examined by cataloguers as well as staff of the National Authorities Department. The national authorities are result of cooperation as well so more libraries had to consider possibility of authority file raise. All these tasks were matter of discussions of the Central Librarian Board and other professional bodies, it was necessary to grant the same (or better faster) time of cataloguing. Management of libraries had to accept that better access points can demand an expansion of staff in cataloguing and national authority departments (especially in libraries participating on the CNB).

The steps, the NL CR and other Czech libraries made with an intention to improve coverage and contents of the CNB, will be examined by daily practice now. A daily round will reveal whether the plans how to complete and to improve an accessibility of resources is sustainable in the era of savings. Or, in the future, whether the definition of legal deposit for electronic publication was adequate.

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