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**Libraries and Library Collections in Russia: what they will be like in 2005****Introduction**

First, before I begin my presentation, I wanted to thank the sponsors of the Oxford 2000 Conference, Katina Strauch and Becky Lenzini, for inviting me to speak about the Russian library marketplace and about Russian libraries. As a Director of a State Department, formerly the USIA, Information Resource Center in St. Petersburg, it has been my task to serve as a go-between for American and Russian libraries and librarians. It is also a pleasure to speak to a mixed American/ European audience because ultimately Russia should become a part of the European Union.

Second, I wanted to explain that speaking about a country as large as Russia and its marketplace and libraries is a daunting task. One has to be careful about describing what is happening in Russia, a country, which Winston Churchill described as a "riddle wrapped in a mystery inside an enigma". My aim is simple. It is to give you an introduction to the Russian library marketplace and encourage your interest in learning more about Russian libraries so you can work with them in the future.

**Libraries in 2005**

What will be the likely shape of libraries in Russia in 2005? It is hard to predict, chiefly due to significant disparities in libraries' growth and the huge amount of funds needed for their

modernization and serious collection development. The current disparities bring specialists to two opposite conclusions on the future of Russian libraries: 1. Libraries are perishing.  
2. Libraries are experiencing intensive development.

According to the latest statistics, fully presented and analyzed in Eugeniy Kuzmin's book The Library World in Russia between two Millenniums, the difference in collection development within one category of libraries may be very big. And there are even greater disparities in different types of libraries.

For example, Rostov-on Don Regional Library, which has funds due to gas and oil revenues, has a collection of 5,100,000 volumes, Samara and Nizhniy Novgorod have 4,000,000; but 42 regional libraries have collections much less than 1,000,000. In 1997 Saratov Regional Library purchased 81,000 books, Tula purchased 2,300 books and the last in the list, Northern Osetiya, obtained 1537 books. The index of the difference in acquisitions for public libraries was 148% for the year 1997.

Still, the library world in Russia is remarkable in terms of number of libraries, their collections, the organizational structure of library systems and national policy in the field of librarianship. The total collection of all public libraries in Russia is at a level of 1 billion volumes. 12,500,000 are rare books and manuscripts, and books of a "special value", e.g., art books, fine printings, and books with significant illustrations. Collections of rare books and manuscripts of the largest national libraries are equal in number to those of public libraries, with 80 % of them centered in the two libraries: the Russian State Library (Moscow) and the Russian National Library (St. Petersburg).

The land of Russia is covered with libraries. We have one public library per 3,000 citizens. There are libraries in all research and academic institutions, industrial and commercial enterprises, military regiments, and government authorities. Each village or township with 3000

residents has a library. The number of books is impressive both in total and "per person". At the same time, this number has to be corrected. As a result of Soviet acquisitions policy, 50% of the current national collection currently include books, which are not circulated, or, as we say, have become "morally obsolete". The remaining 50%, due to a dramatic shortage of new acquisitions, are heavily used and are in very poor physical condition. In 1999, public libraries obtained three times fewer books than in 1990. There were years, after Perestroika, when many school libraries, small village libraries, even academic libraries did not get any funding for collection development at all.

Foreign acquisitions were dramatically reduced in 1990's. In this respect, the situation now is much worse than in Soviet times. It was never good: in the best years of the Soviet era, Russia bought only 5% of books published abroad, and it was mostly books on science and technology (50% of total foreign purchases). Foreign books were not disseminated equally among libraries in the USSR, mostly ending up in the collections of the largest libraries in two capitals: Moscow and St. Petersburg. The situation got worse in 1990's, when libraries had to reduce significantly foreign periodical subscriptions and purchasing of foreign books. International interlibrary loan, which could help Russian libraries in providing foreign books for patrons, is minimal due to financial problems. Libraries can not afford shipment of materials. The same applies to international book exchanges.

Dramatic problems in collection development contrast with a very positive occurrence, which Perestroika brought - libraries obtained the long sought freedom to select foreign books and foreign partners. A few words should be said about sponsors from many countries, who helped Russia in its striving for new books. Among those sponsors are: foreign cultural centers, such as the Goethe Institute (Germany), the British Council (United Kingdom), the Dutch House (the Netherlands), and the Institute of Finland. Foreign Missions to Russia, Embassies and

Consulates, did much to provide books, organize professional training, support important library projects. The American Center in St. Petersburg, where I work, has done much for libraries in the Russian Northwest.

There are two recent books, published in Russia, with an extensive overview of libraries and the library marketplace: Regional Libraries in Russia in the Mirror of Numbers (1998), and The Library World in Russia between Two Millenniums, by Eugeny Kuzmin, both of which can provide a good start in learning about current library developments.

The problems in library collection development in Russia do not end with lack of funding. Another problem libraries have been enduring is a dramatic change in the book trade system. Formerly, there existed a strong multilevel hierarchy of book wholesalers funded by the government, from which libraries purchased books. When the system collapsed, libraries were left adrift with a growing number of publishers and bookstores, without any wholesale or vendor services. Due to the lack of a book trade system, according to a Russian Book Chamber analysis, 80% of books did not reach bookstores, and consequently, libraries. In particular, this was a problem in provincial libraries and bookstores. Moscow and St. Petersburg were not that heavily affected, since of 15,000\* publishers licensed in Russia, 80% are located in those two capital cities. In the late 1990's, the situation started to improve. New Russian and "brave" foreign vendors came to the library market. In addition to vendors, many Russian publishers and bookstores started to play the role of vendors and wholesalers. They opened marketing and sales departments, and developed dealer networks in the country.

Russian libraries survived. Their history from the end of 1980's through the 1990's is a good example of professional firmness, resourcefulness, and a devotion to their cultural and social mission. Without any funding from the government, except for employees' salaries,

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\* Before Perestorika, in the whole USSR there were 230 publishers.

libraries learned how to earn money, write grant proposals, and obtain partners and sponsors. Freed from the strict ideological and administrative pressure, Russian libraries developed new services, improved their technology, often leapfrogging in their innovations over several decades. To influence the government, Russian librarians created professional associations, lobbied government bodies, and promoted their representatives to the local and federal legislatures. Finally - Russian librarians met their foreign colleagues. They have learned foreign practices not from papers but first hand, and opened themselves to the world.

I would rather stick with the second conclusion with regard to the future of Russian libraries. I believe that Russian libraries not only survived but gained significant skills for fast and successful development in the future. Based on this belief, I will formulate some predictions for the year 2005:

*1) Russian libraries will still maintain a strong presence in the library world.* The overall system of libraries in Russia contains 150,000 libraries of all types. The three largest are: the Russian State Library in Moscow (42 million volumes), the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg (32 million volumes), the Library of the Russian Academy of Science in St. Petersburg (20 million volumes in the main library and significant collections at its 375 branches all over the country).

There are 282 central public libraries with 48,900 branches, 38,700 of which are located in rural areas.

88 Regional Research Libraries offer their collections and services to citizens of 89 administrative regions of Russia. Their collections vary from 2 to 7,000,000 volumes, and they are the main depositories for foreign books and periodicals.

Academic libraries present one of the largest networks in the country. Libraries of the Moscow and St. Petersburg State universities have collections of respectively 10,000,000 and 8,000,000 volumes. The school library system contains 63 000 libraries.

Networks of special libraries: technical, medical, government, military are well developed and work for their respective specialists and authorities.

It is interesting that no library has ever been assigned to create a national bibliography or provide centralized cataloging in Russia. These functions were delegated to the State Book Chamber, previously called the All-Union Book Chamber, which also works as a book statistics agency. Until now, according to the Legal Copy Law, a certain number of copies of each book published in the territory of Russia has to be sent to the Russian Book Chamber.

This whole well-developed system has been always working as one entity due to the Ministry of Culture, which is the ruling authority. After Perestroika, the Ministry became more of a coordinating body, which works in close cooperation with professional associations in the country.

Thus, the Russian library system has demonstrated its advantages, capability and strength through extremely hard times following the era of Perestroika. It is unlikely to be changed or destroyed. On the contrary, it has great possibilities for future improvements.

*2) There will be increased automation within libraries, library networks, and among libraries, publishers and vendors.*

Computers came to Russian libraries much later than to libraries in the western world. But the development of library automation was extremely fast, once it began. In the year 2000 computers are not merely a novelty. The Ministry of Culture stated recently that the National Program on Library Computerization has been completed. We understand though, that machines themselves are not the goal of automation. It is essential that libraries have integrated automation

systems and on-line catalogs, not to mention all types of networks for resource sharing and information exchange. In this aspect, libraries in Russia still have much to accomplish. It is a good thing that this drawback is well understood. Networking gradually becomes a major issue among professionals. All foundations stopped giving money for purchasing hardware, but they support networking strongly. The leaders in funding are Open Society Institute (OSI), the Russian Foundation for Fundamental Research (RFFR), and IREX (USA). Due to the fact that computers came to libraries at the same time as the Internet, library automation in Russia began in a unique way. One can scarcely find a complete on-line catalog, or a well-developed integrated automation system there, but one would be impressed about how actively librarians use the Internet, develop electronic delivery services, install the Z39-50 protocol, create web-sites and digitize collections. The most critical issues in library automation remain the National MARC format, updating of cataloging rules, subject lists and classification tables. These problems do need to be solved, being essential for automation and networking.

*3) Russian libraries will participate more frequently in consortia to purchase materials and access to electronic resources.*

The practice of building consortia was developed in Russia in a different way, compared to the western world, where libraries themselves came up with this idea. Russian libraries practically did not know about the largest databases and, if they did, they could not pay the price. In the late 1990's they started to use OCLC First Search and ProQuest Direct with short or long (one year) free trials, which foreign institutions gave them, along with training, to stimulate interest in purchasing on-line products and services. But prices remained unaffordable, and foreign vendors and sponsors approached Russian libraries with the idea of consortia. Lange&Springer and Elsevier made these arrangements through the Russian Library Association. Currently, Lange&Springer works with a consortia of 580 libraries and research institutions in

Russia, providing access to 440 periodical titles. Elsevier, provides access to 330 of its journals through the Electronic Library of the Russian Foundation of Fundamental Research. Any library or research institution can become a member of the consortium, headed by RFFR. According to the license agreement, to get access to electronic databases, libraries have to subscribe to at least 5 titles in a hard copy. OSI initiated the program Electronic Information for Libraries (EIFL), which allowed hundreds of Russian libraries to get access to EBSCO. At first, access was fully paid for by OSI, but now it works on a cost-sharing basis. It means that libraries are managing to get money to pay their share.

Russia may be more and more interested in joining foreign consortia. A Russian-American consortium of medical libraries was created in May 2000. It was initiated by the Dartmouth Medical School and the School of Medicine at the Pennsylvania State University. They received a grant from the National Library of Medicine (U.S.A.) to start resource sharing with the following Russian partners: Pavlov Medical University (St. Petersburg), Petrozavodsk University, the Russian National Library, and the Library of the Russian Academy of Science and National Library of Karelia. The Russian partners received free access to major medical databases for one year using grant money. A similar project is now under discussion between University of Rhode Island Library and the Novgorod University Library.

*4) There will be more Russian electronic databases in 2005.*

Starting with production of home-made CD-ROM resources, Russia has immediately moved to on-line resources. CD-ROM's are mainly used as supplements to on-line data bases. Now three companies share the market of legal electronic resources. They are: Kodeks (St. Petersburg), Garant (Moscow) and Konsultant-Plus (Moscow). Two major companies provide access to Russian periodical full data bases: East View Publications (a US-Russian Company) and Integrumworld ([www.integrum.ru](http://www.integrum.ru)). The latter offers access to 1000 data bases with



25,000,000 electronic documents. There are free electronic libraries in the “Russian Internet”. Maksim Moskowsky Electronic Library, has been created and updated not only by its owner, but by users who are willing to take the time to digitize texts. A good overview of Russian Internet resources can be found in Michael Neubert’s “Online News from Russia via the Internet” (*Slavic and East European Information Resources*, Vol. 1(1) 2000, p. 45-67).

Some university libraries and research institutions started to create databases of their grey literature, providing search possibilities, and full text of papers ([www.unilib.neva.ru](http://www.unilib.neva.ru)). There are many journals which established their web sites with full text access. Until there are many more Internet users in the country, these free full text on-line magazines are likely to exist.

*5) There will be more joint digitization and microform projects.*

The first microform projects in Russia involved library catalogs. One of the first companies that started microfilming card catalogs at the end of 1980’s was the Dutch company, IDS. Later, when Russia opened its collections, old periodicals and the local press became extremely popular for microfilming projects. One of the leading companies was Norman Ross Publishing (U.S.A.), which signed many agreements with the leading Russian libraries to make copies of their collections. The Library of Congress developed several programs on microfilming old and rare materials from Russian libraries. Currently along with microfilming, Russia participates in several digitization projects with European countries and Northern America. One of the biggest is called “Meeting the Frontiers”, started in 1999 with the Library of Congress.

*6) The foreign vendors currently serving Russian libraries will continue to strengthen their position.*

Martinus Nijhoff was the first company, which established a very real presence in Russia. It is among a few vendors well known by Russian librarians. It not only does business but also sponsors events, book donations and similar sorts of activities. For some time it was the only

reference should libraries or individuals ask about buying foreign books or subscribing to foreign periodicals. Nijhoff is famous for its generous book donations to many libraries. Currently the company has three regional offices operating in Russia. They are in Moscow, St. Petersburg and Yekaterinburg.

Lange&Springer is another well-known name in Russian libraries. At the beginning of 1990's, it started a program called "Books for Libraries", which offered CIS and Baltic countries books at discounted prices. Due to this program many libraries in Russia bought a significant number of foreign books. Springer provides assistance to Russian libraries in getting access to electronic resources of other publishers and vendors.

Company "Helferich L.P.B" grew out of Springer. Peter Helferich worked as a Springer's representative in Russia for many years. He created his own company in 1999. The company offers all sorts of assistance to Russian libraries, and works as an intermediary between them and foreign vendors and publishers. Recently it started The International Center for Libraries, Publisher and Book Sellers in order to provide information on book markets and library services to Russian librarians.

Swets-Blackwell is another vendor, who started its business in Russia rather early. Swets' Moscow Office provides periodical subscription services to many Russian libraries up to the present.

This year Harrassowitz offered its customers a new distribution service for Russian periodicals.

Cambridge University Press and Oxford University Press are active in the Russian Market, selling English dictionaries, books and manuals, organizing book exhibits, and donating books to schools.

*7) There will be more opportunities for foreign vendors to exploit the Russian marketplace.*

The marketplace in Russia is not only large, but it is not well exploited. Foreign companies, publishers and vendors, work mostly in Moscow and St. Petersburg. Regional libraries get involved in their business only through consortia, not directly. At the same time, there are very wealthy regions where libraries can pay for resources and services. Among these are: Rostov, Tiumen, Samara, Novgorod. Gradually other regions will be joining the list. To develop business in Russian regions, foreign vendors and publishers can now find many opportunities to promote their products. These opportunities are: book salons and centers, book fairs and library conferences.

For example, the St. Petersburg University Book Salon offers its space for all sorts of exhibits, promotional events, and seminars. Every fall it organizes annual exhibitions along with conferences for librarians, publishers and book vendors, trying to establish effective cooperation among them. Librarians from many universities all over Russian attend those exhibits.

The two major book fairs in Russia take place in St. Petersburg and Moscow in early summer (St. Petersburg) and September (Moscow). They are well attended, and play an important role in library collection development in the country.

Finally, library conferences can be a perfect occasion for foreign vendors to meet Russian librarians and to promote their products and services. The two largest conferences are: the All-Russia Library Directors' Conference and the International Crimean Conference.

The Directors' Conference takes place in different cities. It is funded by the Ministry of Culture, and is very well attended. Each year, library directors, representatives from the federal and local governments, and publishers and vendors discuss the most important issues. In 1999, the issue was Preservation of Library Collections.

It has been six years since the International Crimean Conference welcomed librarians from all over the world in the hospitable land of Crimea. In 2000, more than 1,200 participants from Russian, CIS and foreign countries attended the conference. This year a new section was added to the conference program, called “Cooperation of Libraries and Book Market Participants” ([www.gpntb.ru/win/inter-events/crimea200/program/eng/index.html](http://www.gpntb.ru/win/inter-events/crimea200/program/eng/index.html)). It will stay on conference programs in coming years. Along with meetings and sessions, there is a big exhibition in Crimea, where all institutional or commercial enterprises can promote their products.

**Conclusion:**

Russian libraries have survived extremely difficult times, when their existence itself was questionable. Now, due to their active position, with government support and immense foreign assistance, they have started a successful renaissance in terms of automation, collection development, public services and international cooperation. The yet unexplored Russian library market seems to be a good prospect for foreign book and library vendors. To be successful in it, one has to familiarize himself/herself with libraries in Russia, and remember that Russia is an unusual country in many ways, which one Russian politician described as follows: Russia contains in itself East and West, North and South; it is a very rich country, and at the same time poor; it is still totalitarian, and yet already democratic; it is still closed to the world and sometimes unexpectedly open; it is highly developed and still developing.