

CELEBRATING THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE ISSN NETWORK IN BELGRADE AND ENVISAGING ITS FUTURE

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From 1975 onward, the annual meeting of Directors of National ISSN Centres has been held continuously at the invitation of a different member country. In 2015 the meeting took place in Belgrade, at the National Library of Serbia, from October 12th to 16th. The coordinator of this event was Slobodanka Komnenić, director of ISSN Serbia.

The ISSN is a lively network of 88 member institutions, coordinated by the ISSN International Centre located in Paris. National Centres – generally hosted in national libraries, academic institutions or book chambers – assign ISSNs and create catalogue records for print and digital serials and other ongoing resources of their own country. The ISSN IC is in charge of the maintenance and the promotion of the central registry and the animation of the whole network, notably from a bibliographic point of view. It also assigns ISSNs for international organisations and for publishers operating in countries without a national centre. The annual meeting of the directors of national centres provides a unique opportunity to discuss the current trends in publishing, the evolution of bibliographic standards and the future of the network.

In Belgrade the network celebrated a very special event, i.e. the 40th anniversary of the ISSN International Centre and its network which were established in 1975. Through times, the network has expanded (from a dozen of countries to 88 currently), as did the scope of the standard itself: originally designed for print serials, it has been extended to digital

publications and to other ongoing resources, such as monographic series, databases or scholarly blogs.



Fifty ISSN experts gathered in Serbia, representing thirty-seven countries and five continents – Europe, South and North America, Africa and Asia. The main venue of the meeting was the National Library of Serbia. The building of the National Library dates from 1973 and it was renovated in 2011. Most meetings were held in the main conference room, a large auditorium at the entrance of the library. Workshops and the meeting of the ISSN Review Group took place in smaller though convenient meeting rooms. The wrap-up meeting was hosted at the ancient city and legionary fort of Viminacium, a Roman archaeological site located one-hour drive east from Belgrade. A guided tour and a taste of Balkan cuisine were highlights of this historical getaway.

This week of conferences and debates was opened by Tamara Butigan Vučaj, Deputy Director of the National Library of Serbia, Asja Drača Muntean, Assistant Minister, Ministry of Culture and Information, and Gaëlle Béquet, Director of the ISSN International Centre.

During this meeting, the ISSN Review Group, which gathers experts from different national centres, had a discussion about the future

revision of the ISSN standard (ISO 3297:2007), which will be launched in 2016.

The directors' meeting is first and foremost the place where the ISSN IC reports on its own activity and the projects it is running for the enhancement of the ISSN registry and the development of better services, such as, for example:

- the enhancement of the IT system and the use of OAI-PMH to ingest national centres data in the registry;
- the development of ROAD, the Directory of Open Access scholarly Resources¹;
- the cooperation with the Keepers registry, which identifies online scholarly resources which are preserved or need to be preserved by heritage institutions².

Several directors of ISSN national centres also gave a report about their activities, namely Brazil (which will host the 2016 meeting), Canada, Germany, Morocco, India, Indonesia and Serbia. Participants were struck by the similarity of issues affecting national centres and by the strong feeling of a shared mission in spite of the diversity of countries and contexts.

Besides, Jérôme Kalfon, director of the French bibliographic agency for higher education (ABES) gave a presentation about the services provided by ABES. Regina Reynolds, director of the US ISSN Centre, gave an update on RDA standard and Bibframe, the linked data cataloguing format developed by the Library of Congress and its partners.

However, the climax of the meeting was a one-day workshop during which participants debated the future evolutions of the ISSN and

its network, its business model, its data workflow, and the potential release of some ISSN data as linked open data. These discussions shaped some recommendations that were submitted to the Governing Board of the ISSN International Centre.

This meeting demonstrated once more the commitment of the whole network to better meet new usages and improve its visibility.



Fifty ISSN experts representing thirty-seven countries and five continents gathered at the National Library of Serbia. Photo: Biljana Rakocevic.

National bibliographies provide a valuable record of the intellectual output of a country and its cultures. Formatting national catalog data to be harvestable, or presenting it as linked data, opens these resources to scholars worldwide. In this panel session, we invite papers discussing how national bibliographies have been made more accessible and the possibilities opened by that accessibility. Papers can address methodology for providing harvestable and/or linked data, how national bibliographies can be used in creating new knowledge, and national bibliographic data can be used in scholarly communication.

¹ <http://road.issn.org>

² <http://thekeepers.org/>