

Current Position and Perspectives of the Fundamental Library of St. Petersburg State Technical University

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Our library is one of the oldest and biggest one among the libraries of Russian technical higher education institutions. This year we celebrate the 100 anniversary of the university and, consequently, the library. The famous scientists, public figures and statesmen of Russia participated in library organization: the minister of the finance S.Y.Vitte, economist and philosopher P.B.Struve, historian A.A.Kornilov, economist and statistician V.E.Den and others. Rather high financing of library after its foundation allowed to create good collection of the Russian and foreign literature on natural, humanitarian and technical sciences. Some famous scientists also granted their private collections to the library as gifts.

Now library collection consists of about 3000,000 volumes. It covers many technical areas, as well as economy, philosophy, foreign languages, etc. The main goal of the library is to provide information support for the educational and research processes of the University. The library is open for all students and employees of the university. As a whole it has about 40,000 patrons.

The Fundamental Library has 18 departments. The most important are the following:

- Department of acquisition;
- Cataloguing department;
- Department of scientific literature;
- Department of educational literature;
- Department of scientific, technical information and bibliography.

Some documents (scientific journals, periodicals, some textbooks) are available for free access in the Reading Hall. About 500 patrons can work in the Reading Hall at the same time.

One of the most prospective directions of the library development is use of telecommunication and information technologies for increasing the quality of traditional library services and delivering new ones. From 1994 the electronic catalogue is being created. Now it has about 35, 000 records. The program for library automation was worked out by the Library Automation Department employees.

Connection to the Internet, which was received in 1995, gave a new breath to library development. The library is available in the Internet at <http://www.unilib.neva.ru/lib/>

Also in 1995 the Open Library Systems Center appeared. Since that we closely co-operate in applying modern information technologies within the library. They provide professional technical support, possessing powerful servers and complicated software. The staff consists of specialists in computer science.

Since 1995 our electronic catalogue is available via the Internet(<http://www.unilib.neva.ru/lib/opac.html>). In 1996 the first in Russia Z39.50 server was developed, and the catalogue is available via Z39.50 protocol as well. The first in Russia Z39.50-HTTP gateway was developed to provide access for Russian libraries to Z39.50 servers all over the world (<http://www.ruslan.ru:8001/z3950/gateway.html>).

The full text database, which now stores some volumes of the University Transactions, is also available via the Internet and Z39.50 environment. The specificity is that texts are in Russian.

The ILL Department use the Internet for electronic delivery service. The Department participated in the experimental co-operation with OCLC FirstSearch program in 1998. In 1999 the library won the grant for access to OCLC resources via the FirstSearch program.

In 1999 we started the project aimed on joining four St. Petersburg university libraries within distributed library consortium. We have created the prototype of shared union catalogue for these libraries. It is accessible via Internet and Z39.50. We have decided to start with so-called "rey" literature. The service of ordering electronic delivery of the publication found in the union catalogue will be created soon, approximately in October, 1999. Ariel (RLG) system is used for preparing the electronic copy of the document and sending it to user via E-mail or ftp. ILL Department will provide this new service.

The Internet Center for free access to world information resources was opened in 1999. The center is open every day from 9 a.m. till 6 p.m. Now we have 10 PCs there.

The library uses every possibility to provide access to commercial databases, available via the Internet. We have experience of working with Questel/Orbit, UMI, Kodex (Russian electronic library system for legislation issues), etc. Patrons can order the search in these resources according to key words of subjects of interest. This service is free for students, researchers and educators. The Department of the Scientific Technical Information and Bibliography provides this service.

The training courses for librarians of the north-western region of Russia will be arranged in the Fundamental Library soon. The goal of these courses is to increase qualification of professional librarians in the area of informatics. The courses consists both of lectures and practical lessons. The courses are directed in librarians with different experience in computer science and cover subjects from basics of computer science (standard client programs, etc.) to advanced library protocols and standards. Librarians will study how to use computers and Internet for providing library services and creating information repositories, how to create the Web pages.

We plan to broaden the access to electronic resources all over the world, but there is a problem to find funding to subscribing to these resources. We are also going to provide access to collections of electronic textbooks and materials for distant learning.

According to financial problems, which are actual to all Russian universities, we face now many difficulties. Acquisition has been reduced 8 times in comparison with 1989. Last year the staff of the library was cut on 30%. All these urges us to move to submit grant applications to different foundations, to provide some services on commercial base, to find all possible ways to save appropriate quality of library services. The grants from USIS, Eurasia, Soros foundation helped us to support further development of the library.

Thus we are greatly interested in implementing reasonable innovations within the library, which will

help us to raise the quality of the library services. We are also open for co-operation and contacts with our colleagues.