

ILIAC / SETON HALL UNIVERSITY

Planning for Growth:

The Impact of Digital Information on Libraries in Russia, Europe and the United States
March 15th, 2007

Roundtable discussion

The Use of Print and Digital Sources in Academic and Scientific Library Collections
The Yale Experience

This presentation does not attempt to analyze the use of digital and print sources “in toto.” For that there is an abundance of literature, which documents the relationship of digital versus print usage in academia. My presentation will concentrate instead on the Slavic, East and Central European vernacular languages’ digital options.

At the turn of the millennium the Slavic Collection at Yale University investigated the following digital databases: *Integrum*, *Universal Database* and the *Central and Eastern European Online Library (C.E.E.O.L.)*. Mr. Smolyansky, a representative of the *Integrum* database, came to Yale University during the spring break. Unfortunately his excellent presentation was sparsely attended with the majority of faculty and graduate students out for spring vacation. The Library staff concluded that *Integrum* had many good features, one of which was a large collection of Russian literary works with the possibility of instant translation into English.

East View presented its *Universal Database* at annual AAASS conferences. The fact that the *Universal Database* was a “domestic” product and that other East Coast Consortium libraries decided to subscribe to it, were persuasive arguments for the purchase of this database by the Yale University Library. We acquired the following parts of this database:

Universal Database—Newswire; Universal Database of CIS & Baltic Periodicals; Universal Database of Russian Governmental Publications; Universal Database of Russian Military and Security Periodicals; Universal Database of Russian National Bibliography; Universal Database of Russian Newspapers; Universal Database of Russian Regional Newspapers; Universal Database of Social Sciences and Humanities; Universal Database of Statistical Publications; Universal Database of Ukrainian Publications; *Voprosy istorii : Online Archive 1926-1999*.

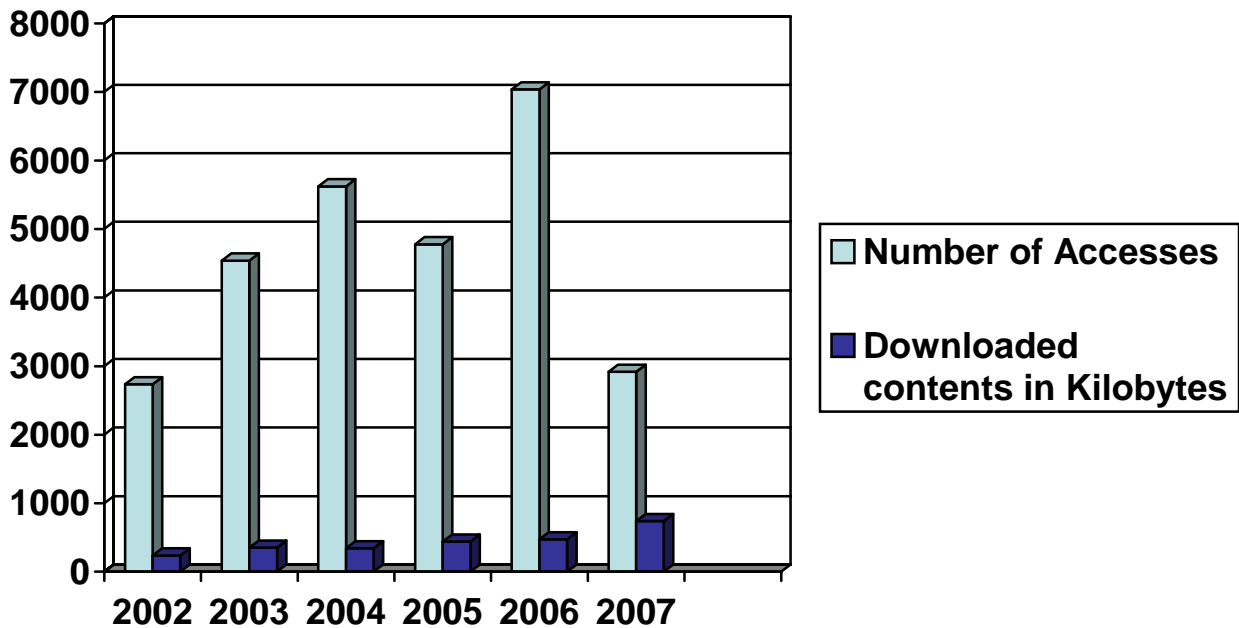
I would have preferred to subscribe to both databases for Slavic and Eastern European materials but the costs were prohibitive and I could not present such an option to the Library administration.

After several years of deliberation, in January 2007 Yale subscribed to the *Central and Eastern European Online Library (C.E.E.O.L.)* based in Frankfurt, Germany. *C.E.E.O.L.* is an online archive, which provides access to full text PDF articles from

humanities and social science journals, electronic books and digitized documents pertaining to Central, Eastern and South-Eastern European topics.

The *Universal Database* acquisition has changed our patrons' reading habits—they now read the daily press and journals online. The digital materials are accessible on all computers connected to Yale University, in dormitories, libraries and at homes.

Usage Statistics of East View Universal Databases at Yale 2002 - March 2007



Yale readers have left the newspaper reading room empty. Students and faculty found their preferred periodical literature on the computers and if they use the newspaper room it is for other purposes. Nowadays in our very elegant newspaper room we typically observe readers from the general public perusing Slavic and East European papers. They are not familiar with the new technology. Although the newspapers arrive with some delays, this does not present a problem to these readers. The delays vary from either a week to ten days if the subscription was for

air mail delivery or six weeks to two months if they are sent via surface mail—sometimes even longer if the papers are shipped from Eastern European countries in containers. It seems that the readers from the general public are looking for papers that would connect them with their old homeland and native language. They are not reading in order to find out what is going on in the world per se but because of “nostalgia.” The printed newspapers from all over the world have lost their newsworthiness and the purpose of the Newspaper Reading Room will have to be reevaluated.

One would hope that the digitized newspapers and periodicals would resolve our acquisitions and preservation problems--that this era of massive scanning would relieve us of the responsibility to secure materials for future generations. Everything would be scanned. FINIS!!! THE END OF HISTORY!!! Interestingly enough this is not the case. So far we are running along a double track of acquiring traditional printed materials while at the same time expanding our access to digital and microformatted items. Newspapers are the best example of this situation. I'll try to explain the current thinking in regard to newspaper policies for the Slavic and East European collections at Yale Library.

The digital newspapers are not our property. We have not resolved the long-term usage and preservation issues for materials available only through paid usage agreements with the real owners. At present, we are unable to archive digital newspapers for future users, although they are invaluable primary source and research materials. Nor is there a guarantee that we will be able to use the same software and electronic systems in years to come. Tragically, the same is true for the newspapers in paper format. Without preservation they will crumble and turn to dust.

With today's knowledge and techniques, microfilming the newspapers represents the best answer to archival and long-term preservation. In addition, microfilming, as opposed to the digital versions, presents the newspapers in their original form. The reader will see the same graphic designs, illustrations, maps etc as can be seen in the original paper edition. Future users will, as we do today, use the microfilm reading machines to learn about the past. This valuable primary source will enlighten historians, writers and researchers about the major issues of different epochs and the microfilm reading machines will be in use unless some new way of archiving and storing this information is found.

Newspapers are undisputed primary source materials and their value is paramount for researchers from all branches of learning. The Slavic and East European Collection at Yale University has, for its part, painstakingly collected newspapers which document the fall of Communism and the post-Communist era in Central and Eastern Europe and the Balkans. As a result we have amassed a large collection of newspapers, which are now difficult to manage and in danger of disintegrating. For the list of these newspapers check the following web site:

<http://www.library.yale.edu/slavic/newspapers.html>

After accessing the above link, please click on the [Newspapers for Web](#) page.

We manage paper copies of the Slavic, East and Central European newspapers in the following way:

1. After arrival they are shelved in the East European section of the Newspaper Reading Room and they are available to users for a period of three months.
2. The newspapers are then transferred to the Slavic Reading Room where they are arranged by title, marked by date and placed on the shelves in the so-called “cage” at the back of the Slavic Reading Room. They are not discarded and are kept permanently in the cage, unless replaced by a micro-format edition. Patrons can request specific issues for use in the reading room.
3. We purchase microfilm copies of select titles and when they are processed, the paper copies are discarded. We are fully aware that most of these titles are available in digital format. However, we do not discard the paper copy unless we have an alternate microfilm version on hand. This provides the Library with a permanent archived copy.

Since, as we said earlier, we do not know the long-term future of digital formats, we believe that our acquisition of materials in the microfilm format is justified. When we buy microfilm, we stop the paper subscription. We systematically look for available microfilms, and therefore our paper collection will gradually diminish. This ultimately translates into savings for the library. Retaining the same title in three formats: paper, microfilm and digital, would be prohibitively expensive.

Social sciences and humanities journals are available in paper and very often in digital formats. In Sterling Memorial Library the paper subscriptions for journals have not been cancelled. The Medical Library and the Science Kline Library, however, have made this leap into the future and have stopped their paper subscriptions. A readers’ behavior study conducted by these libraries showed that medical and science students and scholars search and find their materials online and rarely ask for paper copies of journals.

Perhaps sometime in the future we will have the option to store and access our newspapers in digital formats. However at present, we have to continue to collect, access, organize and preserve the print and micro-formats to ensure that patrons will be able to study the past.

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Julia Muravnik, library assistant at the Slavic Reading Room, Sterling Memorial Library, Yale University, compiled the newspapers for web page list and also created the graph on usage statistics.