

Digital Resources for Academic Education: Experiences from the Scientific Project ‘Data Base Bulgarian Revival Towns’

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Abstract: State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (SULSIT, Sofia) is a logical centre for realization of contemporary research, applied and educational projects, connected to the using of information technologies in the Humanity Studies. The research of period of the Bulgarian Revival focuses the interest of specialists from different scientific fields from Bulgaria and abroad. The project “Data Base “Bulgarian Revival Towns” (CD) aims to create new, solid information resource for the 50 towns which will serve the needs of scientific researches and the academic education. The present report summarizes the scientific activities in the mentioned project and their implementation in learning process with students of Library Management and Information Funds of Cultural and Historical Heritage specialties.

Keywords: Digital Resources, Bulgarian towns in the Revival, academic education, Data Base

1. Introduction

State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (SULSIT, Sofia) is a logical centre for realization of contemporary research, applied and educational projects, connected to the using of information technologies in the Humanity Studies. The research of period of the Bulgarian Revival focuses the interest of specialists from different scientific fields from Bulgaria and abroad. The project ‘Data Base “Bulgarian Revival Towns” (CD)’, financed by Bulgarian Ministry of Education, Youth and Science (Annex 1/Д002/144/13.10.2011) aims to create new, solid information resource for the 50 towns which will serve the needs of scientific researches and the academic education. The present report summarizes the scientific and applied activities in the mentioned project (period of realization: 2008-2013) and their implementation in the contemporary university environment.

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2. Status of the scientific researches in Bulgaria in the subject area

The period of Bulgarian Revival is an object of appreciable and numerous researches. The development of Bulgarian town in the Revival is a theme, which cover several directions in Bulgarian scientific literature. Eminent Bulgarian scientists have devoted many works on this period. Their works cover themes as: condition and development of Bulgarian revival town and its economic and ethno-demographical characteristics; Bulgarian church society and municipality; education, science, cultural institutions and spiritual life; appearance of the first structures of civil society etc. The Bulgarian town in the Revival is investigated in the works of a numerous of Bulgarian historians as Hr. Gandev, N. Genchev, M. Semov, N. Todorov etc. Fundamental studies are devoted to the famous Bulgarian intelligent people, which best environment was found in the Bulgarian town during the Revival – monographs of N. Genchev, M. Kujumdjieva, R. Radkova, R. Gavrilova, K. Topalov etc. Profound historical and sociological investigations of Bulgarian revival intelligence are: encyclopedia “Bulgarian Revival Intelligence” (1988), compilers N. Genchev and Kr. Daskalova, studies by N. Genchev “Bulgarian Revival Intelligence” (1991), studies by R. Radkova “Bulgarian intelligence in the Revival XVIII – first half of XIX: survey” (1986), by D. Ivanova “Bulgarian periodicals and constructive literary and language processes in the Revival” (on material from journal “Chitaliste” – 1870-1875)”, worked up Application 4: “Representatives of Bulgarian Intelligence in Tzarigrad (40th – 70th years of XIX centuries)” etc. Particular questions of Bulgarian Revival culture, education and science are comprehensive done in the surveys by: N. Aretov, M. Arnaudov, V. Boneva, G. Borshukov, Hr. Gandev, G. Ganchev, N. Genchev, A. Gergova, Kr. Daskalova, A. Dimitrov, N. Dragova, Iv. Ilchev, Z. Konstantinova, St. Kutinchev, D. Lekov, Z. Markova, Pl. Mitev, M. Mladenova, N. Nachov, P. Parijkov, R. Rusinov, T. Todorova, Iv. Yankova and many others.

The interest of researchers in this scientific field continues to be very active and profound. Nowadays, actual is the question for the application of information technologies in studies in the area of Humanity, for creation of data bases with scientific information and with fulltext digitalized documents.

3. Actuality of the scientific problems

The studying of historical past and protection of cultural heritage are connected and important tasks of the scientific groups, universities and cultural institutions. In world dimension it is increases the meaning of using the information technologies in Humanity Studies. This is actual problem, which is underline in the base of programs eContent, 7 Framework Programme of European Union – direction “Social Science and Humanity” (Digital Library), of the beginning in 2007 European project - European Digital Library, Europeana etc.

The research of the period of Bulgarian Revival focuses the interest of specialists from different scientific fields from Bulgaria and abroad. **That's why the access to scientific information and prime source material in electronic format is so important for the contemporary development of scientific research and for the intercultural scientific exchange and communication.**

To the moment there isn't created a data base or digital library which contains digital documents or scientific researches, connected to Bulgarian Renaissance and in particular to the problems of the development of Bulgarian towns during this historical period. In first stage there are some projects of libraries for digitalization collections with revival periodicals and literature (Central Library at Bulgarian Academy of Science ("Bulgarian Revival Literature. Exchange of digital copies" – collaborative project with Library of Congress, USA); National Library "St. St. Cyril and Methodius" – Project, Digitalizing and preserving the written legacy of Bulgaria'; Public Library "Stoyan Chilingirov", Shoumen (Electronic catalog "Revival periodicals").

Defining of problem: To the moment there isn't created digital information resource, which can give analytic and systematic information for the status and development of the Bulgarian towns in the Revival and which can ensure the needs of education and science in the Bulgarian universities and scientific institutions as well as in the research centers abroad.

The necessity of creation such digital resource is irrefutable: on the one hand for the insurance of the research process (needs of scientific sections in the universities, institutes, academies etc.), from the other hand – for the goals of academic education in Humanity.

The actuality of the problem is illustrated from the importance such developments of digital products to be implement in the educational content and in the educational activities of the following specialties in SULTSIT: "Information Funds of the Cultural and Historical Heritage"; "Library Management", "Librarianship and Bibliography" etc. They can be used also by studying the discipline "Historical information" by the programme of department "Archival Sciences" of Historical Faculty at Sofia University as well as in the programmes of subjects at St. Cyril and St. Methodius University of Veliko Tarnovo, University of Shumen "Konstantin Preslavski" etc.

4. Methods and research approaches.

The scientific tasks in the project will be execute through application of interdisciplinary research instrumentarium, which includes historical, sociological and politics methods for compare findings about the development

of 25 Bulgarian Revival towns of the area of today's Bulgarian state. This approach allows complete and complex survey of the new social and economic changes and factors, which create conditions for the building in XVIII-XIX age of the Bulgarian town from new type and clarifying and generalization of the specification of Bulgarian Revival town as new for the pre-revival society, material, social, cultural and spiritual environment.

1. Interdisciplinary research instrumentarium, which includes historical, sociological and politics methods (Investigation Card). Research searches, findings and analyses.
2. Bibliographic thematical survey. Bibliographic description and systematization. Cultivation of data. Structuring.
3. Digitalization of library materials. Cultivation of texts, editing.
4. Graphical methods. Data Base creation.
5. Web design, creation of graphical and text version of materials and digital collection. Internet publishing, frame of rubrics and sections in the web-site of SULSIT. Multimedia presentations.
6. PR and educational strategy for popularizing the results from the project.

The Investigation Card includes the following chapters:

- Chapter 1: Natural resources;
- Chapter 2: Population;
- Chapter 3: Agricultural development;
- Chapter 4: Trades (Professions);
- Chapter 5: Trade;
- Chapter 6: Organizations of the professions in guilds;
- Chapter 7: Social life;
- Chapter 8: Administrative government;
- Chapter 9: Life in town as living standart;
- Chapter 10: Social and politics life after the liberation to the creation of independent Bulgarian government;
- Chapter 11: Social and politics life after 1878 to the beginning of XX age

The empirical base of the scientific research includes data for new 25 Bulgarian towns (Aitos, Gorna Oriahovica, Jeravna, Karnobat, Kotel, Ljaskovec, Malko Tarnovo, Nesebar, Dupnica, Elena, Tryavna, Yambol, Kazanlak, Asenovgrad, Varna, Vidin, Samokov, Sevlievo, Trun, Haskovo, Bansko, Dryanovo, Teteven, Troyan, Chirpan), as well as research of the basic factors, contributed to the success of the Bulgarian Revival process.

Direct users of the project results: State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies, the universities in the country and abroad, including by education of blind people; scientific community; researchers; the broad public.

The innovative applied decision, which the present project offers, is presentation of this rich systematic information massive in Data Base “Bulgarian Revival Towns” (CD), which in the end of project contains information for 50 Bulgarian towns. The data base will allow to reach to systematic search and results in utility of scientific observations. There is collected rich material, which can serve another scientific developments in different scientific areas – history, cultural studies, philology, ethnology, sociology etc. and especially for the history of science.

One of the most important tasks is the creation of **Digital Collection “Bulgarian Revival” in the web-site of the State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (SULSIT)**. The collection has graphic and text version. It supports directly the education of students with disabilities in the area of humanity studies (especially blind students, who can use the information in text version through specialized software Screen Reader and synthezator of Bulgarian speech - Speech Lab 2.0).



Digital Collection “Bulgarian Revival”: <http://bgv.svubit.org/>

The Project foresees also development of educational content and training materials and application the data base in educational programmes and in training practices of students from SULSIT. Assoc. Prof. PhD Tania Todorova

develops new discipline 'Digital Resources for Social Science and Humanity' in which exercises the students are involved in digitalization process for Digital Collection "Bulgarian Revival". Todorova (2010)

The publication activity in the project is connected with publishing of Volume 2 of the survey "Bulgarian towns in the Revival" and with reports in scientific conferences and in final seminar. Yankova (2006, 2010)

5. Results and achievements

1. There will be created an innovative applied product in the area of Bulgarian Humanity Studies – Data Base "Bulgarian Revival Towns" (CD), which cover analytical presented information massive for the development of 50 Bulgarian towns in the Revival of the territory of today's Bulgarian state.
2. There will be collected rich material, which can serve different scientific works in different scientific areas and the interlibrary scientific exchange.
3. There will be created new educational content (with application in programs in SALSIT) with possibilities for interactive education and using new forms for teaching and learning. The students from the specialties Library Management, Librarianship and Bibliography, Information Funds of the Cultural and Historical Heritage, Information Technologies in SALSIT are lead in the methodology and instrumentarium of work with electronic documents and data by the using of contemporary instruments for publishing and communication.
4. The creation of Data Base "Bulgarian Revival Towns" (CD) and of Digital Collection "Bulgarian Revival" in the web-site of SALSIT will ensure suitable access to information for wide range public.
5. The Data Base "Bulgarian Revival Towns" (CD) and the Digital Collection "Bulgarian Revival" in the web-site of SALSIT will popularize in electronic environment the achievements of leading bulgarian university scientists. Internet begins its existence exactly in the scientific environment and change in traditional way for communication in the electronic space between scientific workers, lecturer and students. The project is an endeavour for presentation of serious scientific achievements and for popularization of this type of communication in the humanity disciplines.
6. There are supported the education of students with disabilities. The collection "Bulgarian Revival" in the web-site of SALSIT will have a text version, accessible for blind students with the specialized softwares Screen Reader and Speech Lab 2.0.
7. There will be published new study – Volume 2 of the edition "Bulgarian towns in the Revival".
8. There is stimulate the publication activity and scientific development, including of young scientists. There will be created possibility for participation of students in research tasks.
9. The achievements and results from the project are accessible, they are base for future development and coordination with another partners from the country and abroad (universities, libraries, institutes, other organizations).

6. Conclusions

The perspectives for application of the results from the project and for transfer of knowledge have many directions:

1. Possibility for using the achievements from the project (issue, data base etc.) as base and model for future surveys of the bulgarian towns in the Revival in all aspects of the scientific, cultural, social and politic process in this period in it.
2. In the future the Data Base “Bulgarian Revival Towns” (CD) can be present online and can grow up in scientific portal. It will be open for scientific communication. Through Internet it will be accessible for the scientific society in the country and abroad.
3. The future development is connected to the enrichment of the educational content of programmes in SULSIT.
4. The project creates a conditions for participation of students in surveys on the bulgarian towns and it stimulates the development of young scientists and the development of new survey themes.
5. The achievements and results from the project are open and accessible, they are also base for future development and coordination with other partners from the country and abroad (universities, libraries, institutes, other organizations).

The project ‘Data Base “Bulgarian Revival Towns (CD)’ strives for giving an answer of the information needs, generated from the reforms in the Bulgarian higher education as well as of the interest of the scientific society, from all over the world, in digital presentation of the cultural and historical heritage and in exchange of scientific information in electronic format. The project is subordinate to the building of new forms for integration of the Bulgarian education according to the world and european standarts in the science and education. In this way it is created a conditions for popularizing the Bulgarian science and culture and for its entry in the European educational space. It is created a unique information resource, which is representative and important for the international exchange of scientific information and knowledge.

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