Historical Overview

In Slovenia, the first public libraries were established at the end of the 18th century in order to support higher education studies. The predecessor of the present-day national library of Slovenia - the Lyceum Library in Ljubljana - originates from 1774. The Slovene public libraries were mostly limited to the education sector until the end of World War II. Some society and parish libraries were set up in the second half of the 19th century, but it was not until the period between the two World Wars that the first public libraries were established in three largest Slovene cities: Maribor, Celje and Ljubljana. Public society or school libraries played the role of public libraries in accordance with the legislation in force at that time.

The period of prosperity of general public libraries started after World War II. In 1961, the first Slovene Library Act was passed and ten years later the programme document The concept of the development of librarianship in Slovenia was adopted. The latter linked all Slovene libraries into one unified LIS with the national library as the leading library and public libraries as its driving force. This concept was enacted by The Librarianship Act in 1982.

However, the important system solutions have already been introduced in the beginning of the 60’s when National and University Library (NUL) started to compile the central catalogue of foreign serial publications held in the Slovene libraries. In 1968, NUL started with the centralized cataloguing of the Slovene publishing production, and then distributing the catalogue cards of the newly published Slovene books, particularly to the public and school libraries. In 1975, the Slovene catalogue was incorporated into the single system of co-operative cataloguing of legal deposit in former Yugoslavia. With the development of the automated union catalogue in the second half of the 80’s, which has linked together all larger Slovene libraries by the end of the 20th century, the Slovene LIS also attained the modern trends of the technological development.

Statistical data on libraries

The population of Slovenia is a little less than 2 millions (1.971.062 in 2002) and Slovenia extends over 20.273 km². Almost half of the population live in smaller rural areas and the Slovene LIS is adjusted to these characteristics.

There are 899 libraries in Slovenia: 1 national library, 54 libraries of institutions of higher education, 125 special libraries, 60 public libraries and 659 school libraries¹. Material and services are provided at 1.506 service points. However, the number of libraries pursuing library activities as a public service is lower because there are about 40 special libraries which operate within private institutions and have no licence to pursue library activities as a public service.

In 2002, libraries employed 1.733 professional staff, and in total, there were 2.179 employees employed in the Slovene libraries. Libraries provided 25.174.184 items for their users and

¹ All data are for 2002, except for school libraries, where the data for 1999 were used. Source: Library System Development Centre at the National and University Library (http://www.nuk.uni-lj.si/kis/1slovenske.html).
1,067,291 items were added to their collections. The total amount of SIT 1,356,701,000 (=EUR 5,898,700) was spent on library acquisitions in public libraries, SIT 1,056,946,000 (=EUR 4,595,400) in academic libraries, SIT 794,801,000 (=EUR 3,455,700) in school libraries and SIT 108,162,000 (=EUR 470,270) in the national library. The costs of databases which were made accessible at the national level were not included in the above expenditures because these purchases were financed directly by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, and the Ministry of Culture. In the same year, 32,500,000 items were loaned out.

The background information about the Slovene libraries is available through the COLIB database (http://home.izum.si/cobiss/hp/knjiznice.htm), and statistical data on the Slovene libraries are made available on the National and University Library website (http://www.nuk.uni-lj.si/kis/1slovenske.html). The operation of the Slovene libraries is monitored and statistically measured by Library System Development Centre at the National and University Library.

The National Library

The Slovene national library is the National and University Library (Turjaška 1, Ljubljana, http://www.nuk.uni-lj.si). In 2002, its collections amounted approximately 2,500,00 items of library material and it employed 142 workers. In the same year, NUL received SIT 1,395,535,000 (=EUR 6,067,500) for its operation, and from this grant SIT 108,162,000 (=EUR 470,270) were spent on library acquisition.

Public Libraries

In 2002, there were 60 public libraries in Slovenia (http://siki.lj-oz.sik.si/), which provided the material at 248 service points. They employed 879 employees, and 686 were professional staff. The complete public library collections consisted of almost 7,800,000 items, and approximately 21,500,000 items were loaned out. The total amount received that year (without the funds for investments) was SIT 7,243,504,392 (=EUR 31,515,200), and SIT 1,356,701,000 (=EUR 5,898,700) were spent on the acquisition of materials.

With regard to the activity statistics of public libraries in the last decade, clear development trends can be recognized. From 1991, when Slovenia declared its independence, the most important absolute quantities and performance indicators have grown constantly. During this period, the number of employees has risen for 27% (from 682 employees in 1991 to 868 employees in 2001), additions for 45% (from 290,856 items in 1991 to 423,994 items in 2001) and loan transactions even for 136% (from 9,248,000 items in 1991 to 21,883,936 items in 2001). The growth trend was moderate in 2000 and 2001, and in some areas even slight regression can be noticed. Adverse trend can be noticed in additions, the number of registered users and number of visits of the library.

A comparison of individual indicators between the libraries in EU Member States and the Slovene ones shows that they are comparable with the European states. In 2002, the total additions were 206 items per 1000 potential users, and libraries loaned out 10,9 items per capita and employed 34,8 professional staff per 100,000 inhabitants.
Until the Librarianship Act was adopted in 2001, the development of the Slovene public libraries was based on the concept of uniform general public libraries. The new act has formally introduced the regional libraries (central regional libraries) and determined the special tasks relating to the development of librarianship in their region. There are ten public libraries with the status of a regional library. The regional libraries cover areas with very different numbers of population (from 504.531 in the central Slovene region, which includes the capital Ljubljana as well, to 73.609 in the region of Koroška), and this is the reason for the differences in the size of their stock, the number of employees and the amount of funds available in 2002:

- Mariborska knjižnica (The Public Library of Maribor), Maribor (http://sikmb.mb.sik.si/angl/welcome_ang.htm): library collection consists of 461.200 items; 78 permanent employees;

- Knjižnica Otona Župančiča (The Oton Župančič Public Library), Ljubljana (http://www.lj-oz.sik.si): library collection consists of 314.600 items; 70,5 permanent employees;

- Osrednja knjižnica Celje (The Public Library of Celje), Celje (http://www.ce.sik.si): library collection consists of 378.000 items; 43 permanent employees;

- Goriška knjižnica Franceta Bevka (The France Bevk Public Library), Nova Gorica (http://sikng.ng.sik.si): library collection consists of 369.000 items, 32 permanent employees;

- Osrednja knjižnica Kranj (The Public Library of Kranj), Kranj (http://www.kr.sik.si): library collection consists of 379.400 items, 36 permanent employees;

- Knjižnica Mirana Jarca (The Miran Jarc Public Library), Novo mesto (http://www.nm.sik.si): library collection consists of 431.700 items; 39 permanent employees;

- Osrednja knjižnica Srečka Vilharja (The Srečko Vilhar Public Library), Koper (http://sikkp.kp.sik.si): library collection consists of 337.332 items; 29 permanent employees;

- Knjižnica Ivana Potrča (The Ivan Potrč Public Library), Ptuj: library collection consists of 280.200 items; 22 permanent employees;

- Pokrajinska in študijska knjižnica (Regional and Research Library), Murska Sobota (http://sikms.ms.sik.si): library collection consists of 261.900 items; 20 permanent employees;

- Koroška osrednja knjižnica dr. Franca Sušnika (The Dr. Franc Sušnik Central Carinthian Library), Ravne na Koroškem (http://www.rav.sik.si/eng/index.htm): library collection consists of 257.800 items; 17 permanent employees.

Libraries of Institutions of Higher Education
In Slovenia, there are three universities: University of Ljubljana, which is the oldest and the largest Slovene university, University of Maribor and University of Primorska, which was established in 2003. Their study and research programmes, and also the programmes of the institutions of higher education which operate outside the universities, are supported by 54 libraries. In 2002, library material and services were provided at 80 service points. Altogether the libraries of institutions of higher education employed 367 employees, and among them 276 professional staff. Their total library collection consisted of 4,224,485 items, and library users borrowed 3,147,571 items. The total amount received that year was SIT 2,423,278.000 (=EUR 10,536,000), and SIT 1,056,946.000 (=EUR 4,905,000) were spent on the acquisition of materials.

Taking into account the absolute values, positive trends can be noticed also by the libraries of institutions of higher education during the period of the Slovene independence from 1991 on. In the decade 1991-2001, the number of employees rose for 21% (from 249 employees in 1991 to 356 employees in 2001), the additions for 43% (from 82,377 items to 118,375 items), and loan transactions for 105% (from 1,591,000 items in 1991 to 3,264,000 items in 2001). The growth of additions stopped in 1999, and in 1998 the growth of the number of employees also stopped.

The relative values, however, indicate a more worrying situation. From 1991 to 2001, the number of potential users rose for 2.5 times, therefore the values of indicators have fallen considerably. In 1998, the libraries of institutions of higher education had 51 items of library material available per potential user, but in 2001, only 45 items were available per potential user. In the same year, they loaned out 65 items of library material per user and in 2001 only 36. This substantial fall is not only a consequence of more and more expanded and easily accessible electronic resources, but also a result of insufficient funds which libraries have received for the acquisitions. This is proved by the figures relating to the spending on the acquisition of library material: 56 ECU (in 1998) and only 35 EUR (in 2001) were spent per potential user.

In 2002, 40 libraries were in operation within the framework of the University of Ljubljana ([http://www.uni-lj.si/DefaultA.asp](http://www.uni-lj.si/DefaultA.asp)). 54,312 students were registered in a range of study programmes in the 2001/2002 academic year. The University of Ljubljana has no central library, but two independent libraries have the status of a university library. They operate as associated members of the university: National and University Library, and Central Technological Library. There are some larger libraries in the fields of medicine, economy and social sciences:

- Centralna tehniška knjižnica (Central Technological Library), Ljubljana ([http://www.ctk.uni-lj.si/english/index.html - basic](http://www.ctk.uni-lj.si/english/index.html - basic)): library collection consists of 300,700 items; 48 permanent employees;

- Centralna ekonomska knjižnica, Ekonomska fakulteta (Central Economic Library, Faculty of Economics), Ljubljana ([http://www.cek.ef.uni-lj.si/indexe.html](http://www.cek.ef.uni-lj.si/indexe.html)): library collection consists of 220,800 items; 18 permanent employees;

- Centralna medicinska knjižnica, Medicinska fakulteta (Central Medical Library, Faculty of Medicine), Ljubljana ([http://www.mf.uni-lj.si/cmk/index.html](http://www.mf.uni-lj.si/cmk/index.html)): library collection consists of 209,900 items; 18 permanent employees;
- Knjižnica Pravne fakultete, Pravna fakulteta (Library of the Faculty of Law, Faculty of Law), Ljubljana (http://pf-lj.kelt.si/knjiznice/PF_knjiznica.php): library collection consists of 113,400 items; 8 permanent employees;

- Osrednja družboslovna knjižnica, Fakulteta za družbene vede (Central Social Sciences Library "Jože Goricar", Faculty of Social Sciences), Ljubljana (http://odk.fdv.uni-lj.si/odk/indexe.html): library collection consists of 170,856 items; 12 permanent employees.

There were seven libraries of institutions of higher education at the University of Maribor in 2002, and the central university library called University Library of Maribor. In the 2001/2002 academic year, 28,082 students enrolled at the University of Maribor. Besides the university library there is only one library with a more extensive collection:

- Univerzitetna knjižnica Maribor (University Library of Maribor), Maribor (http://www.ukm.uni-mb.si): library collection consists of 852,400 items; 81 permanent employees;

- Knjižnica Pedagoške fakultete, Pedagoška fakulteta (The Library of the Faculty of Education, Faculty of Education), Maribor (http://www.pfmb.uni-mb.si/knjiznica/): library collection consists of 123,300 items; 8,5 permanent employees;

At the University of Primorska, there are five libraries of institutions of higher education, whereas the central university library is in the process of establishment.

School libraries

The data on school libraries are collected by the Statistical Office of the Republic of Slovenia. The last data of the libraries at primary and secondary schools were collected for 2002, but they are not processed yet. According to the data for 1999, there were 659 school libraries in Slovenia, with the total collection of 7,643,400 items. School libraries employed 536 employees, of which 507 were professional staff. The recorded circulation reached 6,979,500 items.

Special Libraries

The statistical data on 125 special libraries were processed in 2002. This category includes only libraries serving the work-related objectives of institutions (outside higher education), which provide the resources for library operation. Besides, there are also records of about 50 monastery and other church libraries.

As a rule, special libraries are smaller in size, but mention shall be made of the most important ones:

- Knjižnica Slovenske akademije znanosti in umetnosti (Library of Slovenian Academy of Sciences and Arts), Ljubljana (http://www.sazu.si/English/library.htm): library collection consists of 474,000 items; 20,5 permanent employees;
- Knjižnica Narodnega muzeja Slovenije (Library of the National Museum of Slovenia), Ljubljana: library collection consists of 193,000 items; 6 permanent employees;

- Slovanska knjižnica (The Slavonic Library), Ljubljana: library collection consists of 142,200 items; 9 permanent employees;

- Knjižnica Slovenskega inštituta za standardizacijo (The library of the Slovene Institute of Standardization), Ljubljana: library collection consists of 139,924 items; 1 permanent employee;

- Knjižnica Instituta Jožef Stefan (The Library of the Josef Stefan Institute), Ljubljana: library collection consists of 110,126 items; 3 permanent employees;

**Union Catalogue**

All types of Slovene libraries participate in the national shared bibliographic system COBISS (Co-operative Online Bibliographic System and Services – [http://www.cobiss.si](http://www.cobiss.si)), which is maintained by IZUM (Institute of Information Science - [http://www.izum.si](http://www.izum.si)). In 2002, the participating libraries were: the national library, all public libraries and libraries of institutions of higher education, 112 special libraries and 30 school libraries. Although all administrative units of public libraries take part in the Union Catalogue, more than half of the branches were not included in 2001 (from 250 branches only 120 were included, i.e. only 48%).

At the end of 2002, Co-operative Online Bibliographic Database (COBIB) contained over 2.2 million bibliographic records, and 184,135 new bibliographic records were added that year. COBIB is publicly available through COBISS/OPAC ([http://cobiss3.izum.si/](http://cobiss3.izum.si/)), and more than half of the records were contributed by the national library and libraries of the institutions of higher education.

The operation of the library information service The Institute of Information Science Maribor (IZUM) is financed by the Ministry of Education, Science and Sport. In 2002, IZUM employed 88 employees.

The majority of other libraries used the program School Library to carry out their activities, and six special libraries used the program Infolib.

**Legislation**

In Slovenia, library activities are regulated by a uniform act adopted in 2001: *The Librarianship Act*. This general act is complemented by a number of regulation acts: some are derived from the Librarianship Act, and some have been issued by the ministries responsible for various types of libraries:

- *Order on Core Library Services*,
- *Rules on the conditions for carrying out library activities as public service*,
- *Regulations concerning the register of libraries*,
- *Regulations concerning the regional libraries*,
- *Rules on co-financing central specialised information centers*,

- Regulations for the issue of licence for shared cataloguing.

Whereas different ministries are responsible for each type of library, libraries are also specified in the acts adopted in other fields. Financing of Education Act, for instance, defines that every school shall have a library, and in accordance with the standards of the Ministry of Education, Science and Sports, it can be managed only by a trained librarian with a university degree. In addition, library and information skills have long been a compulsory part of the educational programme. Libraries are laid down also by the Higher Education Act. Then, there is an important provision on libraries in the Local Government Act, which specifies that there shall be a library in every municipality.

One of the most important acts relating to libraries is the Legal Deposit Act of 1972, which provides that printers must deliver the legal deposit copies of printed and audiovisual material to National and University Library. Copies are also delivered to University Library of Maribor and eight regional libraries. A new act is currently under consideration. The number of deposit libraries entitled to delivery is to be reduced, and legal deposit legislation should be extended to electronic publications.

Education and training

Formal education in library and information science is provided by the University of Ljubljana, Faculty of Arts, Department of Library and Information Science and Book Studies (http://www.ff.uni-lj.si/biblio/anglesko.htm), which offers undergraduate and postgraduate studies.

As a general rule, professional library staff should, after a period of one year of work of a professional nature in a library, pass the qualifying examination. Various forms of expert training for qualifying examinations and continuing education are organized by Library Educational Centre at the National and University Library (http://www.nuk.uni-lj.si), which provides over 40 different courses and workshops. The training courses specialised for the work in the national shared bibliographic system COBISS are provided by IZUM.

Other forms of informal education include: conferences, seminars, courses and lectures, which are organized by Union of Associations of Slovene Librarians and its sections, The National Education Institute of The Republic of Slovenia, and Association of Public Libraries.

Liaison of professional organizations

Librarians can join regional library associations, which united as Union of Associations of Slovene Librarians (http://www.zbds-zveza.si/). Eight specialized sections operate within the framework of the Union, with regard to the types of libraries (the section of higher education libraries, for example), and in order to study individual theoretical issues temporary working bodies or divisions can be appointed with regard to the type of activity (division for cataloguing, etc.).

The Association of Public Libraries operates independently of the Union and unites independent public libraries.

Scientific and professional journals and other publications
In Slovenia, only one scientific journal is published in the field of library and information science: *Knjižnica* (*The Library*), available also in the electronic version ([http://revija-knjiznica.zbds-zveza.si/](http://revija-knjiznica.zbds-zveza.si/)). It is published by the Union. The professional journals of a more general nature are *Organizacija znanja* (*Organization of Knowledge*) ([http://home.izum.si/cobiss/oiz/](http://home.izum.si/cobiss/oiz/)) and *Knjižničarske novice* (*Library News*) ([http://www.nuk.uni-lj.si/knjiznicarskenovice/](http://www.nuk.uni-lj.si/knjiznicarskenovice/)) with the current information on librarianship. The journal *Šolska knjižnica* (*the School Library*) covers the issues of school libraries.

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