

FINAL REPORT ON INITIAL CONSPECTUS

PROJECT OF

**THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF THE CZECH
REPUBLIC**

November 2003

Prepared by

**DR. MARY C. BUSHING
Bozeman, Montana U.S.A.**

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The majority of the following report is concerned with practical issues resulting from the interpretation and application of conspectus practice and theory and with the vagaries of translation from Czech to English. In addition, some of the broader issues of collection management for the Czech National Library became topics for this report. These broader subjects are: the metaphor of the appearance of the collections and their parallel to the political and social history of the country during the last half-century; the definition and management of the reference collections maintained in the new reference center and in the three reading rooms; and the more isolated Library Science collection.

This report covers the application of conspectus theory and practice, the use of specific terms, and the successful and not so successful translation of concepts from Czech to English and the sometimes oddities of translation. These topics and the evaluator's comments are to be used by those individuals directly responsible for the implementation and dissemination of the conspectus work and the subsequent strategies or policies for the development of more focused collections. The majority of this report is of little use to policy makers and administrators outside of the collection management arena. The preliminary report, submitted in July 2003, contains a more lengthy discussion of the issues, obstacles, "work-arounds" and solutions, as well as the implications of the conspectus project for the future. This document is more detailed in nature and many of the suggestions or questions can be addressed by the staff within a short time. There are only a few big issues and policy related topics to be addressed as a result of this report.

One of the most significant questions raised here is that of the definition, scope, and goals for the materials in the reading rooms and reference center. From the perspective of an outsider, these materials are some of the best things available at the National Library and yet there appears to be insufficient clarity and congruence of viewpoint regarding their management. Hopefully, merely the raising of the questions will encourage the staff to review their previous decisions and to better incorporate their thinking about these materials with the rest of the conspectus structure.

The professional staff of the National Library has done an excellent job of documenting and explaining their rationale for each segment of the collections. With some additional work to address areas with questions or translation difficulties, the product will be ready to be made available internationally through the web. There is no doubt that it will serve as a model for others and that the work accomplished by the Czech National Library will be recognized by others in the library community around the world. Congratulations on a job well done!

INTRODUCTION

This report is a follow-up and more detailed and practical report on the conspectus and collection development policy project undertaken by the Czech National Library during 2001-2003. While the initial report completed in July 2003 was an overview of the structure, methodologies, and general results of the project, this report is intended to provide more detailed comments on the concepts incorporated, the specific applications used, the web-based presentation of the project, and the English translation of that presentation. This report contains four sections:

1. A general discussion of large issues resulting from detailed work with the conspectus web report and the on-site visit and meetings in August 2003.
2. An analysis with comments upon the conspectus itself including its internal validity and the appropriateness of the resulting strategies for the various collections of the National Library.
3. Detailed questions, practical suggestions, translation ideas, and exact wording possibilities for the English version.
4. An evaluation summary to comment upon the quality of the work and the results of the project. This was covered in more detailed in the preliminary evaluative report submitted to the Czech National Library in July 2003.

While the topics discussed in each of these sections are not entirely separate, some conceptual organization for the report seemed necessary to provide a structure that would make it possible to use the report in a meaningful manner. There are perhaps other equally pragmatic ways of organizing the information but it is hoped that this structure will serve the staff of the National Library well as they finalize their conspectus information for sharing with the global library community and as they organize and coordinate future conspectus activities within the Czech Republic and the members of CASLIN.

The contents of this report may be shared by the staff of the National Library with whomever they deem appropriate. Questions, discussions, and further communication regarding the contents of this report are welcome. This report and the related follow-up discussions, along with the more general report submitted to the National Library earlier this year, concludes the contract for evaluation of the conspectus project per our agreement, dated 25 April 2003.

GENERAL ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION

There are three topics of a general nature that arose from the analysis of the conspectus project. As an outsider to the country, the culture, and the organization itself, the perspective and topics here may not all speak to the needs or the current priorities of the National Library but it seemed important to record the issues as identified. These reflect the evaluator's insights and opinions and are not the result of any particular mandate or directive by the staff of the National Library. Given the goals and plans of the administration of the National Library it may be that most of these issues are of little or no importance at this time. Please use whatever is helpful here and kindly disregard any ideas or observations that are neither helpful nor accurate.

Metaphor of the collection for the political and social history: Although this observation may serve no useful purpose, it was very striking to see how the physical appearance of the collections reflected so clearly the recent political history of the country and the purpose of the National Library as it existed under the totalitarian regime. The collections from mid-century until a few years after the Velvet Revolution are literally gray with the typical grey cloth board-covered binding found on Soviet books of the period. The books are almost exclusively in Russian with some German materials. By the mid-1990s, however, color has been re-introduced into the collections with red, blue, green, and multicolored bindings providing a sense of excitement as one browses the collection. The languages represented also change radically, with Czech, English, and German as the most predominant languages. Unlike the changes in the appearance of the city itself with the renovation and painting of buildings and the restoration of monuments and structures of importance, the collection will continue to reflect, in a real and a symbolic manner, this period in Czech history. If the collection is ever re-classified so that materials are all arranged according to discipline and subject, this very visual and striking representation of history would be lost.

Reference and Reading Room Collections: During the on-site visit in August, it was very interesting to learn that the reference collection (those materials generally considered for referral only are scattered across three reading rooms and a reference center. These materials are those that typically do not circulate to users, are for consultation but seldom for complete reading by a user, are often multivolume sets or serial sets produced on an on-going basis, are often expensive, are generally scholarly, and are considered essential and authoritative sources within a discipline. Many of the titles have new editions produced on a somewhat regular basis and the new editions supersede the previous one and are intended, with a few notable exceptions, to *replace* the previous edition. While most of the library staff members working with these collections have experience with the materials and understand what is where and why it is located there, and the users can find the location of a particular title by using the catalog, it would still be worthwhile to consider these materials and their placement in light of the changed information environment.

From the perspective of someone new to the library or someone interested in browsing in the authoritative materials of a particular discipline without knowledge of the titles, works, or authors, it is nearly impossible to identify where best to look. While there are guidelines helping

to determine what goes in each collection, tradition seems to be the primary determinant. Just from browsing there appeared to be a great deal of overlap in subject coverage across the collections housed in each of these locations despite the articulated guidelines expressed by the librarians. Our interdisciplinary world does not view disciplines as distinct entities as it once did. Increasingly university students and others are viewing topics with a more holistic viewpoint thus requiring the literature and reference sources of more than one primary subject area. This trend was clearly articulated in the conspectus project with definitions of potential users coming to use a collection as a secondary focus for their work in an entirely different discipline. Furthermore, there is the question of to which of the *collections* stated in the conspectus project do these materials belong. Are they being developed with these strategies in mind or are they being managed as they have always been managed?

From the user's viewpoint, one already has to know a great deal in order to know where and how to use these works. Also of concern is the fact that outdated materials and/or superseded editions are being kept in some locations because the most recent edition is in the "primary" location for this topic thus leaving a twenty year old edition in the general reading room where it can be consulted by undergraduate students and general users who do not realize that there might be newer scholarship on the topic, a more recent source with more current data/information, a source, or edition that is current and not frozen in a period older than the users themselves. It is certainly true that some such editions or sources are not wrong, but are merely incomplete (i.e., lacking current scholarship, lacking definitions for technical words, or simply failing to reflect the world as it is today). Our users, however, often have no way of knowing or understanding these issues unless we have the opportunity to interact with them. We are designing libraries and library systems in order to allow the users to find information and materials without our intervention; we therefore need to design the physical library environment with this in mind. As we continue to think in terms of the "virtual patron" who might be somewhere else in the same building, across the street, across town, or even across the world, we need to rethink how we have always done things and question all of our practices from the viewpoints of our users; we can no longer afford to be making decisions based on what works for us. Rather, we must consider all of our activities from the needs of our present and our potential users.

The management and scope of these materials should be defined within the conspectus project and their locations should flow as a direct result of the anticipated users and the purpose of the materials within the collection definitions. This does not mean that these reference materials need to be defined as a separate *collection* for purposes of the conspectus. Perhaps the reference sources housed on open shelves in the library should be defined relative to their purpose with a note in the Universal Library Collection definition regarding these materials since it is likely that many of them fall within that collection. The remainder of the titles are likely to be part of the National Archival Collection and deserve a note in that definition as well. If any titles are also part of the Study Collection, that should be noted in the definition of that collection. It might be useful to have a note in the strategy section for each of these as well regarding titles that are selected for this purpose and are therefore located somewhere other than the likely location for the rest of the collection. Perhaps this is understood by the conspectus project team but it is not evident to the evaluator nor will it be evident to many within the library organization and certainly not to those outside of the organization. This is a topic for further clarification within the existing project. It also might warrant further discussion within the broader scope of the library organization and physical arrangements. Regardless of what is ultimately done about

these materials in terms of location, there should be some acknowledgement of them within the conspectus format.

In any further discussion of this issue, the following are questions that might help to clarify some of the issues:

- What is the purpose of these materials?
- How does the purpose justify location on open shelves and cataloging with call number locations rather than shelf number locations?
- What guidelines are used to determine the location of a particular title?
- Under what circumstances are superseded editions kept on open shelves for use?
- Under what circumstances are superseded editions from foreign countries kept by the National Library?
- Given scarce financial resources, how are duplications of important reference titles justified?
- Once materials are located in one of these locations is there a process for re-evaluated for possible location elsewhere, including closed stacks?

This list is not intended to be comprehensive but merely to suggest some of the key topics that occurred during the site visit. Many other questions and concerns are likely to arise in any discussion of these materials.

It may well be that these materials are clearly defined, actively managed and well justified within the organization but that was not clear during the site visit. There are many wonderful sources located in the various reading rooms and the reference center. The concern is that they should be managed as an intregle part of the whole.

Library Science and Information Management: The separate unit that manages the materials in this discipline should eventually be once again made an intregle and active part of the general collections and library services. It is not necessary to address this issue at this time, however.

CONSPECTUS ISSUES

In an effort to clarify the implications of the conspectus codes as well as to distinguish more clearly the collection definitions themselves, tables have been constructed and included in the report. Tables 1 and 2 provide the Collection Level, Acquisition Commitment, Goal Level, Language, and Preservation Commitment codes for the National Archival Collection and the Universal Library Collection. Preservation Commitment levels were not identified for the Universal Library Collection Domestic B or Foreign component. A table was not constructed for the Study Collection because it is consistent across all disciplines. Table 3 provides the goal levels for each aspect of all three collections in an effort to identify any inconsistencies, irregularities, or possible unrealistic expectations. Some of the topics to be discussed in this section directly address issues that became clearer with the tables while other topics are not evident in the tables. It is suggested that the conspectus team examine these simple tables in detail to see if they also spot inconsistencies or problems that can get lost in the detail of the full conspectus and collection details.

This section also contains comments about the protocols used and the procedures implemented to make this project possible. Some of the suggestions recorded here were made in person during the site visit in August.

Controlled vocabulary: The tendency when writing documents of this type is to try to vary one's language, using synonyms and other techniques to say many of the same things in different ways but that actually makes the conspectus less useful. Because of our ability to search by key words in most documents, it is useful to devise a controlled vocabulary to identify exact words or phrases to be used for particular concepts within the conspectus. Once such an authority list has been developed and used consistently key word searching can help to identify exactly where in the document, and therefore in the collections, a particular type of material, topic, or other issue or concept is discussed or noted as relevant. This was discussed at our meetings at the National Library and the staff has been addressing it.

Terminology for collection names: The *National Archival Collection* is an easily understood concept with a title for the collection that reflects its purpose and is therefore appropriate. Likewise, the *Study Collection* is a collection that is easily understood and its title reflects its purpose. The *Universal Library Collection* is also a clear name that reflects its role, however, its title could be shortened to simply the *Universal Collection*. There appears to be no need to use the term *library* in its title just as the word library is not used in the other collection titles. All three collections are really subsets of the collections of the National Library. Leaving it as is works fine but this is just a suggested simplification.

Clarification of the universe for each collection: At first glance the differences between the three collections and their domestic and foreign components seemed clear but while working within the strategies for each, questions began to arise regarding the distinction between the collections. Perhaps the distinctions do not have to be precise but one wonders if the conspectus team will be able to articulate the concepts clearly to others given the tendency in libraries for us to be exact about such things. In general, librarians and others working in libraries are not

comfortable with a great deal of ambiguity but there appears to be quite a bit of ambiguity here since these collections are seldom located in separate locations. So that books that are for each of the different collections could be housed side-by-side in the stacks.

A clear definition of each collection has been attempted at the beginning of the collection characteristics for each. The purpose would be useful to state here as well. Thus for the National Archival Collection, one might state "This collection is intended to serve as a comprehensive record of the publications about all aspects of Bohemica regardless of language or place of publication along with all publications produced within the area since 1801." This wording may not be quite accurate but it may serve to assist you in writing such a statement. This purpose statement will help to enlighten the descriptive information that follows it. The purpose should serve to justify all collection strategies that will follow. It is easy to overlook statements of purpose because you are all very familiar with the collections and understand the purpose for each. The user will not understand the distinctions in purpose unless you state them.

It is also unclear if the Universal Library Collection Domestic A consists actually of the same books as those identified for the National Archival Collection with the Universal Library Collection Domestic B is primarily just additional copies of these already existing titles. Somehow this lack of clarity needs to be addressed at the beginning. Slightly more introductory material may help to make the entire conspectus report more meaningful.

Division of the Universal Library Collection: The division of the universal library collection into three separate components may not be necessary. While working with the material, it became increasingly clear that the differences between the Domestic A and Domestic B collections appear to be primarily in the number of copies with the B collection intended to provide additional copies of titles received as part of the archival function. It is suggested that the distinction between these two be closely examined and possibly eliminated. The already excellent narrative sections for each division or subject could serve to indicate the areas where additional copies are needed or appropriate. A general rule of the conspectus is that additional copies do not enhance or add to the quality of the collection; they serve to increase access for users but they do not contribute substantially to the quality of the collection. It may not be possible to combine these two at this late stage in the process but it might be something to consider for future clarification of the collections. It may also be that the reviewer misunderstood the differences here and therefore failed to appreciate them.

Conspectus terminology: The terms used to identify the various codes in the conspectus structure have very specific meanings and the English terms should remain consistent with accepted practice. Thus, CL stands for collection level and is correct the way you have defined it on both the evaluation and strategy pages for each collection. The AC or Acquisition Commitment should be defined using these terms rather than the acquisition policy used in the translation. A policy is a rationale for something while this code merely defines at what level the library currently acquires materials for this collection. The GL or Goal Level defines what we want the collection to be in the future. The project refers to this as the collection development strategy rather than the goal. A strategy is a means by which to accomplish something, it is not the goal itself. Thus this code would be more correctly referred to as the Goal Level than as a strategy.

Language codes: The L or Language code is fine although you might consider defining the ones that are used rather than referring individuals elsewhere. For the domestic items in the

Archival Collection and for all of the study collection, you rightly use "P" to indicate that these materials will be predominantly in Czech with little or no other language material. For the foreign collection of materials in the Archival as well as for most of the Universal Library Collection, a "W" indicates that these materials will likely be in a wide range of different languages. In a few subject areas you have designated a language code of "S" for selective other languages for the foreign materials in the Universal Library Collection. The use of the "S" seems like a very reasonable approach and ought to be considered for more of the subject areas for the Universal Library Collection. It would also be useful if you defined what is meant by "Selective other language material" for your purposes. Have you identified the languages that will be collected and if so, why not be clear about what they are likely to be? Leaving things ambiguous will only result in disagreements later as personnel and the environment changes.

Acquisition Commitment: The definition of the AC in conspectus practice and as it is defined for the project is "what we acquire" now. That is, the rate at which we acquire materials in this subject for this collection in the present. The purpose of identifying the current rate of acquisition is two fold: (1) to allow a library to compare the level of the existing collection along with the present level of acquisition to determine if they are making progress towards their goal or if something will have to change if they are to reach the goal; and (2) to enable libraries with large backlogs in processing to reflect the most recent few years of acquisition commitment as an indicator that they are moving towards their goals. In some areas of the conspectus plan it is clear that this code is being applied correctly but in other areas this was not quite as self-evident. It is suggested that the Acquisition Commitment codes be reviewed for consistency and accuracy.

Preservation Commitment: The library has indicated a commitment at the highest level (5) for the preservation of the National Archival Collection and this is appropriate. This level of preservation effort requires many types of resources including state-of-the-art technology and environmental controls for temperature and humidity and it is essential that the National Library be committed to this preservation effort. A preservation commitment of "5" has also been indicated for the materials in the Universal Library Collection originating within the country. Since the majority of these materials are the items already included in the National Archival Collection through the depository program, a preservation commitment of "5" is appropriate. As part of the collection description for the National Archival Collection, it would be useful to explain that the Preservation Commitment of "5" is a direct result of the collection definition as archival. This means that materials in this collection are intended to be kept forever and that efforts to preserve both the items themselves and their intellectual contents will be a priority.

The project did not indicate a preservation commitment for the Domestic B or the Foreign component of the Universal Library Collection. There is also no preservation commitment for the Study Collection. It is anticipated that the multiple copies of titles acquired for the Domestic B section of the Universal Collection as well as those acquired for the Foreign section will be used sufficiently that wear and tear will result. Likewise, the justification for the materials in the Study Collection is anticipated use, primarily by university students. Use and preservation do not go well together. In light of this, it would be useful to indicate a preservation commitment for each of the three areas that fit their role and anticipated use. For the Study Collection, a preservation commitment of 2 would be appropriate. At this level "some cleaning and mending may be used to repair damage from normal use. Material is retained for its useful life."¹ For the remainder of

¹ Bushing, M., Davis, B. and Powell, N. (1997). *Using the Conspectus Method: A Collection Assessment Handbook*. Lacey, WA: WLN.

the Universal Library Collection (Domestic B and Foreign) a level 2 preservation commitment would also be appropriate. It may be important to state these so that there is clarity about the purpose of these collections; they are intended for use and once the usefulness of a particular title or type of material has diminished, the removal of such material is appropriate. Not everything that is acquired for these three areas is intended to be maintained forever. These collections are defined by the anticipated use. If the use does not occur, then the material and the collection goals in some subjects may need to be adjusted.

Identification of criteria for the “qualified estimation” method: As discussed on site, it is important for those who worked on the conspectus to be able to define in some manner the criteria used for the qualified estimation method they developed to determine the initial collection levels for each collection. There is a tendency by experts in any field to assume that everyone understands the elements that they automatically apply in a given situation. This is true here with the conspectus project. The team members need to record the factors that they considered during their qualified estimation approach to the existing collections. Some of the factors are likely to be: extent of holdings, depth of coverage, serial holdings and length of back-runs, standard reference tools, and geographical/language coverage as appropriate. There are certainly others. These should be documented and provided as part of the project information.

Study Collection issues: The study collection has a 2a collection level, a 2a acquisition commitment, and a 2a goal level throughout. This level is defined as “Basic Information Level, Introductory” and consists of limited collections of introductory monographs and reference tools that include:

- Basic explanatory works
- Histories of the development of the topic
- General works about the field and its important personages
- General encyclopedias, periodical indexes, and statistical sources

This collection is sufficient to support the inquiries of patrons and students through high school attempting to locate general information about a subject.² While this description fits a great deal of the material contained in the reference center and the reading rooms, it does not fit the university study and examination guides and other material maintained for the use of the university students. It might be possible in the future to redefine this collection concept into the Universal Library Collection with strategy notes indicating in what subject areas such materials will be acquired and maintained for the use of university students. Some of the subject areas may require something beyond the 2a level to support university degree work and the 2a level may not be appropriate for all disciplines. Another possible solution is to define “2a” in a specific manner for the purposes of the Study Collection. That is to say that the universal definition stands but a note could be added to the description of the collection identifying the types of materials acquired and maintained for the use of university students. These materials are maintained without any intention of providing further supportive materials, either at a higher, more specialized level or at a lower, introductory level in this collection.

Government documents: The acquisition of official publications from the Czech government or from any other national governments is not mentioned. It may be important to note that in some disciplines these are the primary resources and in many other disciplines governmental agencies

² Bushing, M., Davis, B., & Powell, N. (1997). *Using the Conspectus Method: A Collection Assessment Handbook*. Lacey, WA: WLN.

supply the majority of the documentation and information. Two disciplines for which this is true are agriculture and geology. The best and most extensive publications come from governmental agencies in various countries. It might be useful to indicate within the collections the divisions or subjects that are and will continue to be built with government documents in addition to commercially produced books and serials.

Primary media of discipline: In some disciplines, such as music, in order to have a meaningful collection at any level but certainly at the higher levels certain types of media are necessary. For example, with music one needs to have not only the written music but the performed music via recordings and film (video or DVD currently). In theatre one should have not only the printed plays but a selection of the performances to be viewed. In some disciplines government documents are essential as noted above. In architecture, to have a comprehensive collection, one would expect blueprints as well as books. In commerce, one expects corporate or company annual reports. In engineering one expects schematics for machinery and/or repair manuals. If such specialized "literature" or formats are not to be acquired in disciplines where they might be expected, the decision not to collect them should be noted. While the collection is primarily print at this time, mention needs to be made within those disciplines in particular where other formats are to be acquired as essential elements for comprehensive collections or research level collections in particular.

Dissertations: It is specifically noted that dissertations will not be acquired. The acquisition of dissertations written in Czech with degrees awarded by Czech universities is not necessary since these are available from the institution itself. However, the acquisition of dissertations may be essential for the National Archival Collection's foreign acquisitions. There may be important work done at a wide range of universities that would greatly enhance the collections, particularly in national topics. Library Science is also an area where dissertations may provide useful literature. It is recommended that this exclusion be discussed.

Astronomy & other national topics of importance: From the viewpoint of a westerner it was surprising not to see the mention of some national emphasis in areas such as astronomy and music as well as in other subjects. It would be expected by those outside of the country that you would have substantial collections on astronomy for example with in-depth coverage important personages. Adding such details would help to make the collection narratives more meaningful and provide the kind of unique character to the collections that other expect. The collections should not be just like all of the other national library collections. In addition to having the publications that originate in the Czech Republic, the library should have special strength and depth in areas that have national and historical significance. The addition of more detail in the division strategy sections would help to accomplish this and provide more useful information for others.

Consistency: Given the huge scope of this project, it is remarkable to find such a high level of consistency and quality across all collections and disciplines. The collection strategies for each discipline in each collection are outlined well and provide a rationale for many aspects of the character of each. The consistency, as well as the thoughtful approach throughout makes this an exemplary project that with refinements over time will serve to guide the development of the collections in meaningful and justifiable ways.

Possible universe of publications: In general, the conspectus codes are to define a collection based upon the possible universe of information. In some instances, because of the special nature of a national library collection, the possible universe needs to be more clearly defined in order to make sense of the collection codes assigned. For example, in the instance of the Foreign publications for the National Archival Collection, it is not the intent of the Czech National Library to collection foreign publications at a 4 level but rather to collect foreign publications related to national or cultural issues (Czech Republic and/or Bohemica) at a 4 level. This diminishes the universe of possible publications. A note about the potential universe in this case would be helpful. Such a note should be included during the initial description of the collection.

Universal Library Collection Domestic Production A: The Preservation Commitment (5), the Acquisition Commitment (5), and Goal Level (5) for all disciplines seem too high. Perhaps it is the evaluator’s failure to understand completely this complex aspect of this collection that is the issue. Please review these levels and be certain that these high levels are justifiable and possible to sustain.

Table 1: National Archival Collection Levels

Subject Division	Domestic	CL	AC	GL	L	PC	Foreign	CL	AC	GL	L	PC
	Agriculture		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W
Anthropology		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Art & Architecture		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Biological Science		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Business & Economics		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Chemistry		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Computer Science		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Education		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Engineering & Tech		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Earth Science		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
History & Aux Sciences		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Lang, Ling, Literature		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Law		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Library Science		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Mathematics		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Medicine		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Music		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Performing Arts		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Philosophy & Religion		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Phys Ed & Recreation		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Physical Science		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Political Science		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Psychology		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5
Sociology		4	5	5	P	5		3a	3b	4	W	5

One might question if it makes sense for foreign publications to be acquired at the same level for each subject or discipline area. Computer science is an area where one expects there to be very little publication on or about Czech or Bohemica topics produced outside of the country or region. Might a 2a be a more realistic indicator of the level the collection is likely to have? It would be useful to consider each of these in light of the potential publication universe and to adjust some of these areas down to levels that reflect more realistically the level of acquisitions that might be reasonable.

Table 2: Universal Library Collection Levels

Subject Division	Domestic A	CL	AC	GL	L	PC	B	CL	AC	GL	L	Foreign	CL	AC	GL	L
Agriculture		3c	5	5	P	5		2a	1a	2a	P		2a	1a	2a	S
Anthropology		3c	5	5	P	5		2b	2a	4	P		3a	2b	4	W
Art & Architecture		3c	5	5	P	5		3b	2a	4	P		3b	2b	4	W
Biological Science		3c	5	5	P	5		3b	3b	4	P		3b	3b	4	W
Business & Economics		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2b	3b	P		2b	1b	3b	W
Chemistry		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2b	4	P		3b	2b	4	W
Computer Science		3c	5	5	P	5		1a	1a	3a	P		2b	1a	3a	S
Education		3c	5	5	P	5		2b	1a	4	P		2b	2b	4	W
Engineering & Tech		3c	5	5	P	5		2a	1a	2a	P		1a	1a	2a	W
Earth Science		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2b	4	P		2b	2b	4	W
History & Aux Sciences		3c	5	5	P	5		3b	2b	4	P		1b	2b	4	W
Lang, Ling, Literature		3c	5	5	P	5		3b	2b	4	P		4	3b	4	W
Law		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2a	3c	P		3a	1b	3c	W
Library Science		3c	5	5	P	5		3b	2b	4	P		3c	3c	4	W
Mathematics		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2a	4	P		2b	2b	4	W
Medicine		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2a	2a	P		2b	1b	2a	S
Music		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2b	4	P		3c	3b	4	W
Performing Arts		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2b	4	P		2b	2a	4	W
Philosophy & Religion		3c	5	5	P	5		3b	2b	4	P		4	3b	4	W
Phys Ed & Recreation		3c	5	5	P	5		2a	1a	2a	P		1a	1a	2a	S
Physical Science		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2b	4	P		3b	2b	4	W
Political Science		3c	5	5	P	5		3b	2b	4	P		4	3c	4	W
Psychology		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2a	4	P		2b	2b	4	W
Sociology		3c	5	5	P	5		3a	2a	4	P		2b	2b	4	W

As stated earlier in the text, the addition of Preservation Commitments for the Domestic B and the foreign production aspects of this collection are recommended. In addition, Preservation Commitments for the Study Collection are also recommended so that there is clarity about the central aspect of this collection—usefulness for university students. Each discipline or division line of this table should be examined and discussed to determine if within the whole National Library collection these provide consistency and make sense across the entire discipline.

Table 3: Comparison of goal levels for all collections

Subject Division	NAC	NAC	ULC	ULC	ULC	SC
	Domestic	Foreign	Domestic A	Domestic B	Foreign	
Agriculture	5	4	5	2a	2a	2a
Anthropology	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Art & Architecture	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Biological Science	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Business & Economics	5	4	5	3b	3b	2a
Chemistry	5	4	5	3	3	2a
Computer Science	5	4	5	3a	3a	2a
Education	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Engineering & Tech	5	4	5	2a	2a	2a
Earth Science	5	4	5	4	4	2a
History & Aux Sciences	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Lang, Ling, Literature	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Law	5	4	5	3c	3c	2a
Library Science	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Mathematics	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Medicine	5	4	5	2a	2a	2a
Music	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Performing Arts	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Philosophy & Religion	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Phys Ed & Recreation	5	4	5	2a	2a	2a
Physical Science	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Political Science	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Psychology	5	4	5	4	4	2a
Sociology	5	4	5	4	4	2a

This table can also serve to help discussions with other libraries regarding the subject gateways and discipline specific collecting responsibilities. Before using it for that purpose, however, discussions with library staff throughout the organization at the National Library should center on the appropriateness of these goals for each of the identified collections. Others working with the collections and users on a day-to-day basis may see things differently and may have further useful input into the process of defining these goals.

PRACTICAL SUGGESTIONS

The following section contains practical suggestions and addresses issues of translation and English usage that should be addressed. Minor single word changes have been noted on a printed copy of the conspectus English language version and returned to the National Library to assist with minor editing.

Articles: In English the use of the articles *a*, *an*, and *the* are often required as adjectives before nouns. It is common when translating from a language that does not require articles to leave them out of sentences. While the meaning of the sentence can usually be deduced, it is more difficult for an English language speaker to read the sentence. It also clearly indicates a somewhat clumsy translation. While some of these instances were marked, there are many more. Perhaps after the editing for meaning and other word use, it might be useful to have it read by a native English speaker to make sure that appropriate articles have been included.

Word use: There were a number of instances when words were used in the translation that did not quite fit the meaning intended. The following were notable instances that should be addressed.

- *Emphasis:* This term was used in the strategy or policy statements regarding the importance of subtopics within the general discipline. While the use of the word is appropriate when there is a type of ranking so that some topics are to be "emphasized" over others, it does not fit in instances when all of the subtopics are to be handled equally. Thus this is correct: *Emphasis will be placed upon European and North American literature.* But this is not correct: *Emphasis will be placed upon all topics equally.* A more correct phrasing of this idea might be: *All topics are of equal importance within this subject.*
- *Strategy:* You have chosen to use the term *strategy* for the policy statement. This is technically correct but the generally accepted term is usually *policy* for the definition and guidelines for a particular collection. The choice is yours and it is not a problem if this is your choice.
- *Personal pronouns:* Because this is a formal document, the use of personal pronouns should be avoided. In place of the pronoun *we*, the *National Library* or *The Library* would be more appropriate.

Date: In some instances 1801 is indicated as the oldest date for collection purposes, but in other places, 1901 is stated as the date. This needs to be corrected for consistency. It is assumed that the 1801 date is correct from other evidence within the document.

Code definitions: In the introduction to the descriptions and strategies for each collection, the reader is referred to the OCLC site with a live link to find the definitions for the codes used. For the National Archival Collection both domestic and foreign, the Universal Library Collection domestic A, and the Study Collection the codes are consistent throughout the twenty-four divisions. Rather than referring users elsewhere, it would be useful to supply the code definitions on the page as part of the narrative. For the other two collections (Universal domestic B and Universal foreign) referring users to the OCLC website seems appropriate since many different code levels are used to define these collections. This applies to collection codes, language codes

and preservation commitment codes. If the code remains the same for the entire collection, than provide the appropriate definition but if there are variants, then refer users elsewhere.

Suggested wording for English language version & other issues of clarity: The following are suggested wording for some statements in the text that appear repeatedly but that needed clarification in the English translation. As with all of the suggestions within this report, the decision to use or not use any recommendations is your choice.

1. Collection evaluation introductory statement might be phrased: “. . . Within individual subject areas the present level of the collection is identified. The table also expresses an acquisition commitment for collection development with respect to the institutional mission and expresses a goal level that may be influenced by the financial resources available for acquisitions at any given time.

2. In describing the strategy for the National Archival Collection and other collections, the term “non-periodic” is used. It is unclear what this means since the term “periodicals” is used later in the same sentence. Perhaps stating it in a more positive manner would help clarify the meaning. “The collection consists primarily of monographic items received through the fully implemented legal depository copy legislation with the addition of printed periodicals that also are received as deposit copies.”

3. There appears to be some disagreement between the initial description of the National Archival Collection and the type of materials described for the Foreign production aspect of the collection.

4. In the section entitled “Further Information” for the National Archival Collection, foreign production, the phrase “a specific standing” is used. It is unclear what this means but perhaps it means is a priority. If that is the case, then the translation needs to be adjusted.

5. In the characteristics of the Universal Library Collection, the last line contains an abbreviation of UN that should be written out in full and an unclear phrase “there are large complete sets of specific works, such as music” which should be adjusted for clarity. It is assumed that this refers to things such as the complete works of a given composer or the complete writings of a given author.

6. The use of date ranges have been translated awkwardly so that under further information for some of the collection strategy statements the date ranges should be adjusted to something like: “Missing Slovak publications from 1935 through 1992 . . .”

7. Also under further information, the statement regarding electronic resources might read better in English with the following wording: “. . . their acquisition is planned in the near future when we determine the means and the extent of their procurement.”

8. For the Universal Library Collection Domestic Production A strategy link to other institutions, it might read better, “. . . collections are open to interested users” rather than including interested generally or specifically.

9. Also under the strategy for the ULC, concerning Czech materials, the wording might be better, “. . . published from 1935 through 1992 are retrospectively acquired as part of the acquisition of foreign language works.”

10. Within further information about specific subject categories, a description of the emphasis is quite hard to sort out in most cases. The following form of the statements (agriculture) might provide more clarity: “Within the subject category emphasis is placed on these fields of study: landscape planning and parks and gardens (712). All other topics are covered in general. Related works with a broader and/or multidisciplinary approach may be acquired in subject categories with higher acquisition commitments and goal levels.”

11. Under links to other institutions, the description of users is translated such that it is hard to follow. Simplifying the statements would help. Rather than making the statement one very long sentence, divide the information into two sentences. Art and Architecture, Museology is used here as an example: “Users – Mainly art school students and students at schools with an orientation towards the humanities and arts, natural and applied sciences, or agriculture. In addition, users may be members of the Academy of Sciences institutes or other specialized autonomous science or research institute, or other types of specialized establishments, museums, or galleries.”

12. Also under links to other institutions, there are descriptions that include both the primary and the secondary potential users in a complex sentence. It would be easier to read and understand if these were also made into two separate sentences. (Biological Sciences) “Subject oriented and interdisciplinary user links—collections are open to users who are concerned primarily with biological systems, phenomena and processes including ecology and environmental protection and pollution. They are also open to those for whom a study of these topics is supplementary to their main subject of study (namely, chemistry; medicine; psychology; agriculture; and certain aspects of political science, law, economics, geography, applied sciences, and technology.”

13. The phrase “qualified extensive selection” is not explained anywhere. It should be explained. It is unclear just what is meant.

14. For Geography and Earth Science, individually published maps continues to be listed as “not acquired” although for this subject such an exclusion does not make sense.

15. For Language, Linguistics, and Literature, fiction has a maximum level of 3. This implies that there is a preference for critical and biographical works over original works. This should be discussed further. It may be necessary to provide justification for more comprehensive coverage of fiction by major writers or works that have been recognized as “classic” titles within their own language. Having extensive critical material is not very helpful if individual users cannot read the works themselves.

16. Under both Law and Political Science one might include national and local governmental officials and those involved in foreign relations and international aspects of business as potential users. This is a way to make a political statement about the relevance of the collections to the life of the country.

17. The word "broader" is consistently misspelled as "border" and "link" is misspelled as "ink" in a number of places.
18. Library Science has the only mention of the students at Charles University and the support the collections give to the academic program. There should be other mentions of specific programs and institutions that directly "drive" the National Library Collections.
19. Music is the one discipline with a meaningful specific statement regarding the types of materials that are included in the collections. The statement includes songbooks, sheet music, scores.
20. For Political Science, the last paragraph under Further Information, the words "fully on" can be removed.
21. Under Languages for the specific subject areas of the Universal Library Collection, the following wording might be better: "The acquisition rule to obtain works in the original language or in the language of an original edition is not observed. Generally, the library acquires translations into a major world language or a frequently used European language. Consideration is given to languages of existing or newly forming ethnic groups."
22. In this same collection (ULC foreign) under date, there is an incomplete sentence. The meaning is fine but the wording needs to be changed to make it a complete thought.
23. In this same collection, there is the statement that "retrospective acquisition of serials is very rare." The availability of electronic options is changing this and the statement might be better worded with some flexibility. (Collections like those offered by JSTOR makes it possible to acquire full back-runs of core titles in electronic format which the library owns.)
24. The word "rank" is used in a couple of places where the word category would be a better word given the intended meaning.
25. In describing the strategy for Anthropology for the Universal Library Collection foreign publication materials, the sentence "Selection of audio-visual materials is very strict" seem out of place here since for anthropology and ethnology video and audio recordings are essential.
26. In this same area but for Art and Architecture, the term country has the following statement: "Qualified extensive selection from world-wide production without territorial limitation (in regard to a work's significance for the discipline in a world-wide and regional context)." Although the phrasing could be improved, the idea is a good one and should be applied in some other discipline areas.
27. Slides are not often mentioned as a medium yet until very recently slides were the primary visual presentation for art and architecture as well as for anthropology and other disciplines. Are slides excluded from the collections?
28. Under Business and Economics the country statement is a good one and might apply elsewhere as well.

29. At the same time, for Business and Economics, "trade publications including corporate imprints" are excluded. Given the discipline area this hardly seems reasonable.

30. For Chemistry, the emphasis should be on serials with some limited monographic works other than standard textbooks. It is unlikely that audio-visuals, multimedia or cartographic works would be useful in this discipline but there are specifically listed as appropriate types of materials.

31. Also in this collection (ULC foreign production) for Geography and Earth Science the country statement says "without territorial limitation" but it would seem reasonable to have some emphasis upon European related materials without excluding "works of significance for the discipline in a world-wide and regional context."

32. Under History, it is stated that "current production" items are the principle materials to be collected with some exceptions allowed for retrospective special, classical, or fundamental works. Since retrospective material is most reasonable in history this might be stated more directly.

33. In Language, Linguistics and Literature there is no country or language emphasis. It would seem reasonable to include some statement that does in fact allow major European, North American, and Asian languages to be more broadly represented than minor languages or those from elsewhere in the world. Although it is appropriate to have broad coverage there are limits to what can reasonably be accomplished.

34. Again under Literature, there is a question about fiction. The wording is unclear here but it says "Not selected at all." This needs to be clarified in the English version. Criticism without the works themselves is not useful.

35. For Law the country statement provides a reasonable emphasis: "Qualified strict selection from world-wide production without territorial limitation with preference for Europe and North America." Perhaps this can be a model for similar statements in other disciplines.

36. For Library Science, surely the above Europe and North America statement would also be true.

37. For Political Science, Europe and North America may also provide reasonable emphasis or primary focus at least for the present.

38. The Study Collection "characteristics: statement is unclear. It might be appropriate to mention the support of particular local institutions such as Charles University and to be more specific in defining the types of materials and the topics. The last sentence is, "Its marked study character is set by established type and subject specification of the acquired materials." What does that mean?

39. The term "clicking" has been misspelled as "licking" a number of times.

40. If the collections in the reading rooms and reference center are part of the Study Collection, then the statement making Czech the primary language for the Study Collection is not true. If these collections are mainly part of the Universal Library Collection, then the language statement and other descriptors need to take these materials into account in some meaningful manner.

41. For Subject and Interdisciplinary links for the Study Collection, it says that "the collection is open to users who study on basic and introductory level." (level should be plural – levels) Does this mean that only formal students can use the collection? Further it states, "A link to other disciplines is not monitored." This statement appears many other places in the conspectus document. To what does it refer? Could it be stated more clearly?

42. The details included for the Study Collection are very good but they need to be written more clearly.

EVALUATION SUMMARY

Despite the many questions and individual details questioned throughout this report, the quality of the work, the usefulness of the results, and the potential for building focused and appropriate collections makes this conspectus project a model of excellence. This project brings together international standards and applies them to the complexity of a national library collection with a remarkable degree of foresight and thoughtfulness. The staff members involved in this project have done an excellent job of adapting the conspectus concepts in an environment without subject classification, with multiple theoretical collections that do not correspond to actual physical collections in specific locations. They have created order out of a sort of institutional and historical chaos that makes defining collections and goals very difficult.

The completion of the conspectus project, along with the writing of the policy or strategies to guide the further development of information resources for the Czech National Library, now enables the Library to refine its own processes and results and to assist other libraries in conducting similar projects in order to clearly define their information resources in all formats in a meaningful and consistent manner. This project can serve as a model for other projects in other libraries with collections of depth and/or breadth. Together these conspectus projects will help to complete a mosaic of information resource strengths for the region. The conspectus approach to the analysis and description of collections and collecting goals along with the development of policies at the local and national levels is essential to ensure that information is managed in wise and cost-effective manners in the present and the future. The resulting ability to coordinate the management of these resources and to make them accessible to citizens, students, researchers, and scholars provides the basis for the preservation of cultural heritage, knowledge to compete and participate in a global marketplace, and an informed and responsible citizenry. The accomplishment of the goals of the UIG and the conspectus component are within sight at this stage of the project. Further refinement of the process and the dissemination of the tools and skills to enable other libraries to contribute meaningful data to this information gateway are the next steps.

The analysis and summary comments made in the preliminary report (July 2003) are relevant here in this more detailed and practical report. The clarity of vision, the courage to adapt some established tools and to create new ones, the ability to understand the information environment in a global society, and the good sense not to allow the minutia of this type of project to prevent progress are commendable. The leadership for this project has kept this

project going so that the National Library can move on to the next step in their plan to provide meaningful subject gateways--links between users and collections of strength with information resources in many formats. The Czech National Library has managed to leap across one hundred years of library and information management theory and practice in just a dozen years. It is now possible for all of us to appreciate the resources available in just one small country in the middle of Europe.

The challenges for the future are ones of refinement and application. They involve extending the skills to others to enable them to add their data and policy goals to those developed at the National Library so that coordinated information resource management can be a reality in the not too distant future within the Czech, CASLIN, European and broader western library communities.