ALIAS: A Full-Service Interlending Aid Connecting Users with Non-English Resources

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ABSTRACT

Materials in less-commonly taught languages present challenges to many libraries in the United States. These challenges are increased when users attempt to access these materials through interlibrary loan and document delivery. Access problems on the part of the institution include issues of understaffing at the borrowing and lending libraries, language expertise, and mismatched and incorrect citations. Bibliographic challenges include technological issues, improperly cataloged items, and transliteration of different scripts. The University Library of the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign (UIUC) has one of the richest collections of foreign language materials in the region and is dedicated to the dissemination of this material to a broad audience. As a response to these issues, the Slavic Reference Service has teamed with the Center for Global Studies to develop and implement the All-Language Interlending Assistance Service (ALIAS).

INTRODUCTION

As one of the largest public university collections in the world, with over 10 million volumes and nearly 25 million items, the UIUC Library system deals with collection management and item retrieval issues of a magnitude and scope few other libraries do. Due to the existence of multiple National Resource Centers funded by the U.S. Department of Education and the U.S. Department of State, the collection is very rich in non-English language materials, with well over 40% of the collection requiring additional language skills to catalog and access. (Teper and Atkins 2003, 219) The University Library has marshaled the resources to respond to these issues in creative and specialized ways, using models that may not be realistic for smaller libraries. (Kern and Weible 2005, 17-35) The All-Language Interlending Assistance Service, or ALIAS, based on years of expertise developed by the Library's Slavic Reference Service, is one such response. ALIAS is premised on the Library's commitment to accessibility and resource sharing, both for its own collection and in assisting students and scholars to locate materials not held at UIUC. Faculty, librarians, students, and independent scholars from all over the world can turn to ALIAS for assistance with

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problematic ILL/DD requests within ALIAS's current (and constantly expanding) geographic scope.

Common Difficulties with ILL/DD

The problems of interlibrary loan and document delivery are apparent enough for English and other Western European languages. Several articles have been written on problems with interlibrary loan fill factors such as items on loan, items lost, incorrect citations, non-circulating materials, cost of delivery, and training. (Medina 1996, Beaubien 2006) Still others have been written about best practices in the interlending department. (Leon 2003, Ruthven 2002).

Despite advances in automation and cataloging, ILL/DD departments face a number of challenges and opportunities in the current environment, including the continuing debate over the ownership and use of digital materials. Many advances have been made in the ability to identify the holdings of institutions. International bibliographic tools such as OCLC can be used to indicate available volumes of serials, national bibliographies are coming online in great numbers, and technologies to transfer the information found in requested materials are also advancing. But at the same time, many libraries are seeing reduced staffing levels and high costs for materials.

ISSUES AT LENDING INSTITUTIONS

There are several issues related to foreign language document identification and retrieval that face lending institutions.

Staffing

Many smaller institutions have few individuals dedicated to working with interlibrary loan materials, let alone those materials that exist in the vernacular of another country. Serials inflation and monographic materials inflation have taken a heavy toll on the budgets across the U.S. in the last five or more years. The often high expense incurred with an emphasis on electronic access and the costs of this type of access have prevented the hiring of more staff to handle requests for those not directly affiliated with the lending and/or borrowing institution. In addition, it is difficult to find individuals with foreign language expertise at the level necessary for bibliographic verification. If the cost to fill a standard interlibrary loan request was $18.35 according to the Association of Research Libraries in 1996, the cost of a request in another language might be only slightly higher. (Jackson 1998) However a bad citation might cost as much as $72.90 in 2001 dollars. (Pedersen, 2001) Frequently there is no administrative support for this type of service. Dedication of staff to problem requests in foreign languages is often difficult to justify to higher administration.

Electronic database issues

Frequently, the lending institution may suffer from issues involved in retrospective cataloging. In our own institution, over a million records were added to the electronic catalog with minimal cataloging, providing only author and title access points. Even with the use of automated retrospective cataloging programs, a large percentage of

matches have proven to be incorrect and much remains to be done in the area of accurately representing the items in the collection prior to the 1980s.

The University Library at Illinois is not unique in having some difficulties in accessing the older parts of its collection. Many libraries, both major and minor, experienced some sort of break in the continuity of their collection management as the Library of Congress classification scheme (LCC) became the U.S. standard in the 1970s. A common policy was to catalog all new materials using LCC and to re-catalog all the older Dewey classification materials as time and resources allowed. Only a few institutions with ample resources have been able to do a complete retrospective conversion covering their entire collection. At UIUC, which already had over 4 million volumes in its collection in 1978, it was decided to avoid the problems of a two-classification-system collection by retaining the Dewey system, which was also favored on intellectual grounds by the institution at that time. Discussions concerning conversion continue to date at the institution, but no clear direction has been articulated.

More to the point for ILL/DD users, it was also decided to enter the entire pre-1978 collection into the new online catalog (the first at a major U.S. research library) using "Marcette" records containing only author, brief title, year of publication and call number, with complete bibliographic and holdings information retained in the physical card catalog. Some of Illinois' most valuable and comprehensive holdings have labored under this burden of incomplete and bifurcated cataloging for years. The institution has made huge efforts to retrospectively update all of these brief bibliographic records, but in a collection of over 10 million volumes, there are some records that have slipped through the cracks. A disproportionate number of these works are non-English materials. A further complication was an automated system for matching elements of Marcette records with full records from WorldCat, which led to many items being described as microform when they were not and vice versa, as well a a number of out-and-out incorrect matches. The Slavic Reference Service has become expert at ferreting out items that are obscured by these issues, and has passed that expertise along to ALIAS.

The proliferation of electronic databases has been seen as a boon to many researchers, but what happens when the citation the user requests in one language leads to information that was published in another language? This is a recurring problem for scholars, especially younger scholars, who are trying to discover and understand information in our globalized world. This problem frequently develops due to the practice of translating article titles into English before entering them into the database, sometimes providing no indication of the original language of the article. This is especially common in the sciences, and creates extra work for ALIAS, as patrons must be contacted directly to ascertain whether they are aware that the article they requested is written n Russian, Hungarian, etc.
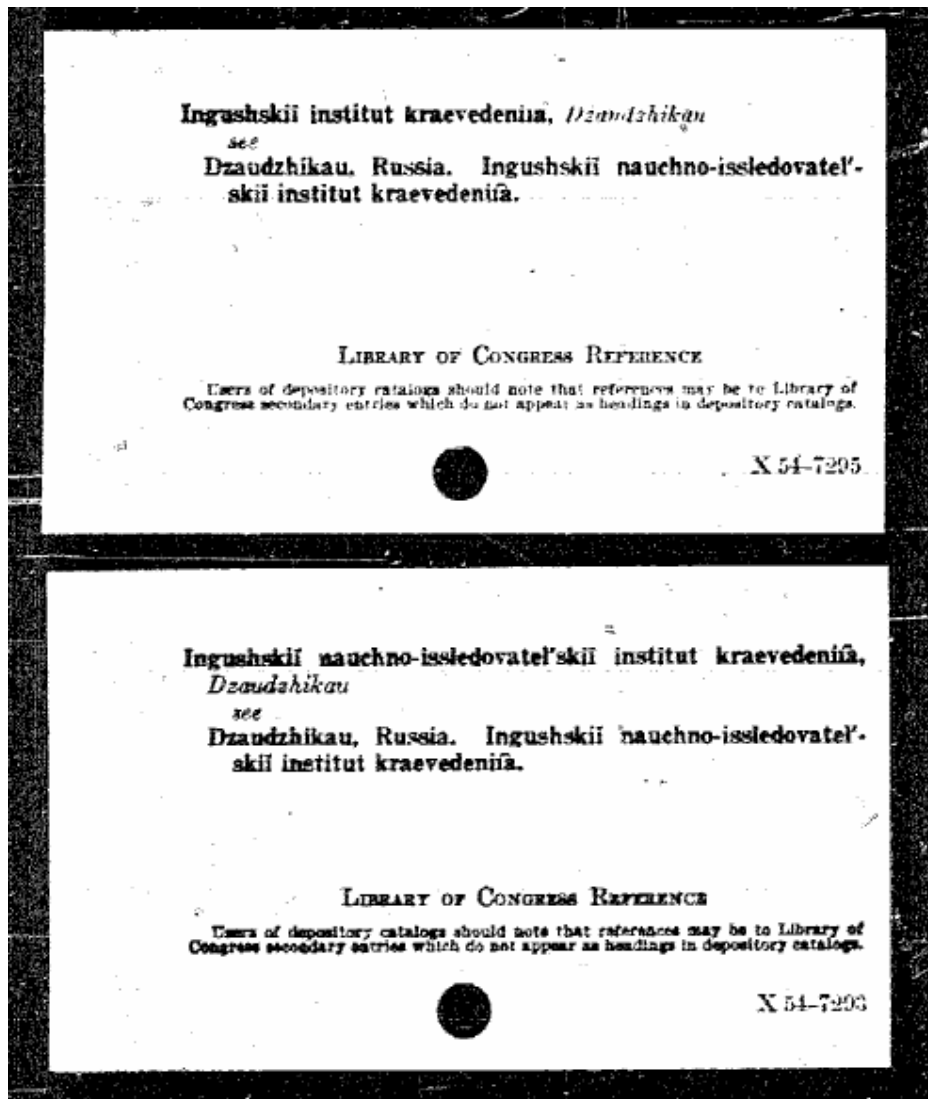
Other Issues

The problems common to circulation in any library are more apparent in the area of foreign language interlibrary loan. Several factors including mis-shelved items, non-circulating items, and items that are charged out to others, provide difficulties for the statistical fill rate of the interlibrary loan department, even when the department is well-staffed. High volume interlibrary loan departments in the Consortium for Institutional Cooperation, a group of libraries in the United States, showed anywhere

from 29% to 57% of interlibrary lending requests going unfilled with the most common reasons for non-fill being lacking, in-use, non-circulating, and not on shelf. (Beaubein, 2006) Finding specific statistics on non-fill rates due to language and transliteration issues is virtually impossible since such information is not maintained in a granular way. At Illinois approximately 5,000 interlibrary loan requests in non-Western European languages were filled in 2006. From October 2005 until September 2006, the Slavic Reference Service filled almost 2400 requests in Slavic and East European languages that were direct requests. These requests came in to the SRS through chat, e-mail, in person, by letter and by phone. Clearly there is a need for this type of service.
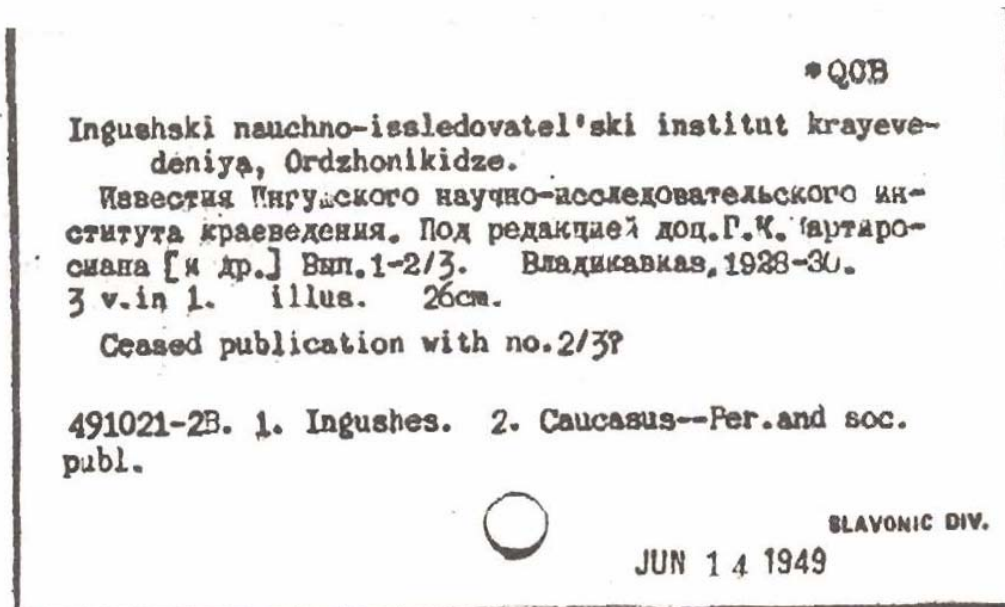
To illustrate the need for high level expertise, consider the following. Pre-AACR2 forms of entry for serial publications are notoriously difficult and can cause major problems in locating older journal articles. Other factors sometimes complicate the picture even further, as in the case of the *Izvestiia ingushskogo nauchnogo-issledovatel'skogo instituta kraevedeniia* (*Proceedings of the Ingush Institute for Research in Regional Studies*), which was first published in the North Caucasus city of Vladikavkaz in 1928 and later in the Chechen capital of Groznyi. Vladikavkaz, however, was later renamed Ordzhonikidze and then re-renamed Dzaudzhikau in 1944 before returning to its original name in 1954. A common practice prior to AACR2 was to catalog serials under the current name of the city of publication (regardless of what it was at the time), such that numerous 19th century periodicals published in St. Petersburg were cataloged under "Leningrad," for example. In the case of the *Izvestiia* mentioned above, all three city names can be found in standard bibliographic sources.

Fig. 1

Ingushskii institut kraevedeniia, *Dzaudzhikau*
see
Dzaudzhikau, Russia. Ingushskii nauchno-issledovatel'-
skii institut kraevedeniia.

Ingushskii nauchno-issledovatel'skii institut kraevedeniia,
Dzaudzhikau
see
Dzaudzhikau, Russia. Ingushskii nauchno-issledovatel'-
skii institut kraevedeniia.

(from The Slavic Cyrillic Union Catalog of Pre-1956 Imprints (Totowa, N.J., 1980),
fiche #50)

Fig. 2.

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                                              ＊QOB

Ingushski nauchno-issledovatel'ski institut krayeve-
       deniya, Ordzhonikidze.
    Известия Ингушского научно-исследовательского ин-
ститута краеведения. Под редакцией доц.Г.К. Мартиро-
сиана [и др.] Вып.1-2/3.   Владикавказ,1928-30.
3 v.in 1.   illus.   26cm.

    Ceased publication with no.2/3?


491021-2B. 1. Ingushes.   2. Caucasus--Per.and soc.
publ.

                                          SLAVONIC DIV.
                              JUN 1 4 1949
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(from the New York Public Library's *Dictionary catalog of the Slavonic collection*, 2ⁿᵈ ed., v. 17, p. 14)

Fig. 3.


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3555    Dzaudzhikau.  Ingushskii nauchno-issledo-
            vatel'skii institut kraevedeniia
        IZVESTIIA
            Ordzhonikidze.  1928-30.  3 issues
            published in all.
            NN
```

(from Smits, *Half a Century of Soviet Serials, 1917-1968* (Washington, 1968), v. 1, p. 254)

There are many other types of problems that are frequently encountered. Typical interlibrary loan requests filled (or successfully forwarded) by ALIAS include the following:

- requests with incorrect pagination, volume number, and just the first (misspelled) word of the journal title.
- requests for what appear to be monographs, but are actually issues of a periodical with individual volume titles.
- requests for what appear to be individual journal articles, but are actually monographs published separately under the auspices of the journal.
- requests for articles that appear in three or more parts spread out over several issues of a journal.
- requests in which the name of the publisher has been mistaken for the name of the journal, the name of the journal has been left out altogether, the title of what turns out to be a Russian-language article is provided only in English, and the author's name exists in both Ukrainian and Russian versions.

- requests for articles from journals that have merged, split and changed titles more than once in a period of a few years (making their holdings in U.S. libraries hopelessly confused), while clarification from Russian national bibliographic sources and subject bibliographies is not forthcoming.

ISSUES AT BORROWING INSTITUTIONS

Technological Issues

The Online Computer Library Center or OCLC and its catalog, WorldCat, is the primary resource used both in the U.S. and most of the world to facilitate interlibrary lending transactions. For over 30 years, this resource has provided libraries the opportunity to browse each other's collections to determine specific holdings and to request these holdings via interlibrary loan.

Some problems exist with this database despite, or perhaps because of, its size. A major problem is the incorrect matching of the user's request with a particular record in WorldCat, which can be done by the user (in the case of monographs) or by ILL/DD staff at the user's home institution. For example, when a user requests an article from the law subseries of the *Proceedings of the Georgian Academy of Sciences*, an ILL/DD staff member who is unlikely to know Georgian will type some portion of the title *Sak'art'velos mec'nierebat'a akademia mac'ne : Samart'lis seria* (if the user has provided the full title) into WorldCat, where they will encounter a number of serials with similar titles (some from before Georgian independence in 1991 and some after) and may well end up choosing the wrong one. The fact that these particular publications have Russian parallel titles is not necessarily helpful to someone who does not know Russian either, and, depending on how much information was provided by the user, the English version of the journal's title buried later in the record may also be of no help. The four WorldCat records for the law subseries (and its predecessors) reproduced below in figures 1 through 4 will provide some idea of what ILL/DD staff are faced with when working with an unfamiliar language.

Fig. 4.

Title:	**Sak`art`velos mec`nierebat`a akademiis mac`ne.**
	Izvestiia Akademii nauk Gruzii. Samart`lis seria = Seriia prava.
Publication:	T`bilisi : "Mec`niereba"
Year:	1992-?
Frequency:	Semiannual, <1998, 1->; **Former:** Quarterly, <1993, 1-1993, 2>
Description:	Began in 1992.; v. ;; 26 cm.
Language:	Georgian; In Georgian, with summaries and tables of contents in Russian.
Standard No:	**LCCN:** 2003-207934
	SUBJECT(S)
Descriptor:	Law — Georgia (Republic) — Periodicals.
Note(s):	Description based on: 1993, 1.
Class Descriptors:	**LC:** K23
Other Titles:	Samart`lis seria; Izvestiia Akademii nauk Gruzii.; Seriia prava; <1993, 1-1993, 2; Issues for <1998, 1-> have English title:;
	Proceedings of the Georgian Academy of Science.; Series of law
Preceding Title:	Sak`art`velos mec`nierebat`a akademiis mac`ne. Ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria; (DLC) 2003207933; (OCoLC)531262241

Fig. 5.

Title:	**Sak`art`velos mec`nierebat`a akademiis mac`ne.**
	Izvestiia Akademii nauk Gruzii. Ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria = Seriia ekonomiki i prava.
Publication:	T`bilisi : "Mec`niereba"
Year:	1990-1992
Frequency:	Quarterly
Description:	Began in 1990.; -1992, 3.; v. ;; 26 cm.
Language:	Georgian; In Georgian, with summaries and tables of contents in Russian.
Standard No:	**LCCN:** 2003-207933
	SUBJECT(S)
Descriptor:	Law — Georgia (Republic) — Periodicals.
Geographic:	Georgia (Republic) — Economic conditions — Periodicals.
	Georgia (Republic) — Economic policy — Periodicals.
Note(s):	Description based on: 1991, 2.
Class Descriptors:	**LC:** HC10
Other Titles:	Ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria; Izvestiia Akademii nauk Gruzii.; Seriia ekonomiki i prava
Succeeding Title:	Sak`art`velos SSR mec`nierebat`a mac`ne. Ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria; (DLC)sc 85003595; (OCoLC)11259241; Mac`ne.
	Ekonomikis seria; (DLC) 2003207939; (OCoLC)53129075; 0206-569X; Sak`art`velos mec`nierebat`a akademiis mac`ne. Samart`lis
	seria; (DLC) 2003207934; (OCoLC)53126971; 1512-0961

Fig. 6.

Title:	**Sak`art`velos SSR mec`nierebat`a akademiis mac`ne.**
	Izvestiia Akademii nauk Gruzinskoi SSR. Seriia Ekonomiki i prava. Ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria =
Corp Author(s):	Sak`art`velos SSR mec`nierebat`a akademia.
Publication:	T`bilisi : "Mec`niereba"
Year:	1980-1900s
Frequency:	Quarterly
Description:	Began in 1980.; v. ;; 26 cm.
Language:	Georgian; Text in Georgian or Russian.
Standard No:	**ISSN:** 0206-569X; **LCCN:** sc 85-3595
	SUBJECT(S)
Descriptor:	Economics — Periodicals.
	Law — Periodicals.
	Law — Soviet Union — Periodicals.
Geographic:	Georgia (Republic) — Economic conditions — Periodicals.
	Soviet Union — Economic conditions — Periodicals.
Note(s):	Description based on: 1983, 3.
Class Descriptors:	**LC:** HC10; **Dewey:** 330.05
Other Titles:	Izvestiia Akademii nauk Gruzinskoi SSR.; Seriia Ekonomiki i prava; Ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria; Seriia Ekonomiki i prava
Preceding Title:	Sak`art`velos SSR mec`nierebat`a akademiis mac`ne. P`ilosop`iis, p`sik`ologiis, ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria; (DLC)sf 92092213; (OCoLC)11259129
Succeeding Title:	Sak`art`velos mec`nierebat`a akademiis mac`ne. Ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria; (DLC) 2003207933; (OCoLC)53126241

Fig. 7.

Title:	**Mac`ne =**
	Matsne = Vestnik.
Corp Author(s):	Sak`art`velos SSR mec`nierebat`a akademia.; Sazogadoebriv mec`nierebat`a ganqop`ileba.
Publication:	T`bilisi : Sak`art`velos SSR Mec`nierebat`a akademiis gamomc`emloba,
Year:	1900s
Frequency:	Bimonthly
Description:	v. :; ill. ;; 26 cm.
Language:	Georgian; Georgian and Russian.
Standard No:	**LCCN:** sf 91-94056
	SUBJECT(S)
Descriptor:	Georgian literature — History and criticism — Periodicals.
Geographic:	Georgia (Republic) — History — Periodicals.
	Georgia (Republic) — Civilization — Periodicals.
	Georgia (Republic) — Economic conditions — Periodicals.
	Soviet Union — History — Periodicals.
Note(s):	Description based on: 1964, 4./ Sak`art`velos SSR Mec`nierebat`a akademiis Sazogadoebat`a mec`nierebat`a ganqop`ilobis organo.
General Info:	Split into: Mac`ne. Enisa da literaturis seria; Mac`ne. Istoriis, ark`eologiis, et`nograp`iisa da xelovnebis istoriis seria; and: Mac`ne. P`ilosop`iis, p`sik`ologiis, ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria.
Class Descriptors:	**LC:** DK670
Other Titles:	Matsne; Vestnik
Succeeding Title:	Mac`ne. Enisa da literaturis seria; (DLC)sf 91094059; (OCoLC)5331473; Mac`ne. Istoriis, ark`eologiis, et`nograp`iisa da xelovnebis istoriis seria; (DLC)sf 91094060; (OCoLC)10917546; Mac`ne. P`ilosop`iis, p`sik`ologiis, ekonomikisa da samart`lis seria; (DLC)sf 91094061; (OCoLC)5331461

While these are not the only records for these periodicals in WorldCat, in general their relationships with each other are fairly clear and the duplication of records is not overly confusing. In other cases, it can take massive amounts of time to sort through the multitude of records for the same item that are created when different institutions catalog it in slightly (or wildly) different ways. In the above examples (which, again, are not particularly difficult ones from ALIAS's point of view), it should be noted that

not only does the actual title of the periodical change over time, but the way that it is represented changes from record to record.

Even when the correct periodical title is chosen by ILL/DD staff at the user's institution, time constraints and other factors often prevent them from identifying and forwarding the request to institutions which actually hold the particular issue of the periodical that their user needs. ALIAS deals with many such requests, and often finds that the requested issue of the periodical is not held anywhere in North America or Western Europe, in which case whoever generated the lending string of libraries to which the request will be forwarded can hardly be blamed.

A certain percentage of the problematic ILL/DD requests handled by ALIAS originate at smaller institutions with little foreign-language expertise, where problems with transliteration appear to be especially difficult to resolve, and understandably so. The steady stream of requests ALIAS receives in Romanian, Turkish, Polish, and other languages written in the Latin alphabet, however, as well as the frequency of requests

from major research libraries, demonstrate that other factors are also at work.

In many cases, those who would borrow using WorldCat cannot see the specific serial holdings of individual institutions without visiting those institutions' online catalogs themselves. Even an institution's own catalog sometimes does not resolve the matter (especially in the case of the Library of Congress), and old print sources such as the *Union List of Serials* must be pressed into service. In addition, OCLC records are not updated as consistently as one would hope, with individual 'institutions' withdrawals of titles not reflected accurately in the database. There are also difficulties with transliterations of non-Latin scripts in this database. Despite the application of Unicode, individuals have to navigate through the process of transliteration in order to use this tool effectively. This problem is not unique to automated systems. (Sweetland1989, 301-302)

Transliteration Issues

The problem of non-English materials being cited as if they are written in English (i.e., with translated English titles) was discussed earlier in the paper. If, however, the original citation is in Cyrillic, Arabic, or another non-Latin script, then it is up to the user or ILL/DD staff at the borrowing institution to render the citation into the correct Latin letters (in the U.S., this would be according to the Library of Congress' transliteration tables) in order to request the item, since Unicode has only recently begun to be used in online catalogs in the U.S. More often, the user or ILL/DD staff takes the citation directly from a source that does not use Library of Congress transliteration, leaving it up to ILL/DD staff at the lending institution to make the necessary interpretations and conversions, if they are able to do so. The problems that may arise from the use of different transliteration systems is illustrated in Figures 5 through 9, all for the same item (a 1935 monograph on the symphonies of Tchaikovsky):

Fig. 8.

Author(s): Budâkovskij, A. E.
Будяковский, А. Е.
Title: P. I. Cajkovskij : simfoničeskaâ muzyka / A. Budâkovskij ; Leningradskaâ filarmoniâ
П. И. Чайковский : симфоническая музыка / А. Будяковский ; Ленинградская фи
Published: Leningrad , 1935
Ленинград , 1935
Material: 273 s. : kuv., nuott.
Series: (Knigi o simfoničeskoj muzyke)
(Книги о симфонической музыке)
Format: Book
Subject (Personal Name): Cajkovskij, Petr Il'ič
Чайковский, Петр Ильич
Other Author(s): Leningradskaâ Filarmoniâ
Ленинградская Филармония

(from Helsinki University Library, displaying both the original Russian and ISO 9
transliteration)

Fig. 9.

Titel: P. I. Čajkovskij : simfoničeskaja musyka / A. **Budjakovskij**. Gosudars
Verfasser: **Budjakovskij**, A.
Körperschaft: Gosudarstvennyj Simfoničeskij Orkestr Leningradskoj Filarmonii
Erschienen: Leningrad, 1935
Umfang: 273 S. : 8 Taf.
Schriftenreihe: Knigi o simfoničeskoj musyke

Schlagwörter: Tschaikowski, Pjotr Iljitsch [1840-1893]

(from the Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek in Weimar, Germany, mostly using DIN
1460 [or, perhaps, ISO/R 9] transliteration, and an older transliteration system for
"Tschaikowski")

Fig. 10.

System number	000519302
Author - personal	●BUDYAKOVSKY, A.
Title	●П. И. Чайковский. Симфоническая музыка. [With plates, including portraits and facsimiles, and with musical notes.]
Publisher/year	●pp. 273. Ленинград, 1935.
Physical descr.	8º.
Added name	●Tchaikovsky, Peter Ilich, 1840-1893
Holdings (All)	Details
Shelfmark	X.409/2588. Request

(from the British Library, with most of the record in Russian, and the author's name
in the Library's own, pre-LC transliteration system)

Fig. 11.

(from the New York Public Library's *Dictionary catalog of the Slavonic collection*, 2nd ed., v. 5, p. 770, using NYPL's own transliteration system, with most of the record in Russian)

Fig. 12.

Title:	**P.I. Chaikovskiĭ;** **simfonicheskai͡a͡ muzyka.**
Author(s):	Budi͡a͡kovskiĭ, A. 1905-1941. (Andreĭ),
Corp Author(s):	Leningradskaĭ͡a͡¡ gosudarstvennaĭ͡a͡¡ filarmoniĭ͡a͡¡.
Publication:	Leningrad [Filarmonii͡a͡]
Year:	1935
Description:	273, 3 p. illus. (music) plates, ports., facsims. 20 cm.
Language:	Russian
Series:	Knigi o simfonicheskoĭ muzyke;
Standard No:	**LCCN:** 48-36321
	SUBJECT(S)
Named Person:	Tchaikovsky, Peter Ilich, 1840-1893. Orchestra works.
Note(s):	At head of title: Leningradskai͡a͡ Filarmonii͡a͡, A. Budi͡a͡kovskiĭ./

(from WorldCat, using Library of Congress transliteration as well as the established
LCSH form of Tchaikovsky's name, which predates LC transliteration)

With five different transliterations of "Budiakovskii" and "Tchaikovsky" in as many
records, not to mention the fact that two of the holding institutions have not
transliterated the title or publication information at all, this item gives one a good idea
of the challenges ILL/DD departments face when dealing with non-Latin scripts.
(Some readers may also notice the minor errors of transcription and transliteration
included in these records, which is to say that different institutions not only use
different transliteration systems, but also do not necessarily apply them consistently or
correctly, adding a further layer of complexity.)

Display of diacritics

Diacritical marks are essential for distinguishing one letter from another in many
languages and transliteration systems, and are therefore essential to avoid ambiguity
and/or a descent into gibberish. Unfortunately, they are usually awkward to enter into
bibliographic records, and often do not display correctly in electronic databases (as
can be seen in the corporate author field in Figure 12, which should read
"Leningradskaia gosudarstvennaia filarmoniia," i.e., Leningrad State Philharmonic).
The language expertise of ALIAS staff usually enables these kinds of problems to be
easily solved, but for users or ILL/DD staff who do not know the language being
represented with diacritics, these problems can be utterly bewildering.

USER-RELATED ISSUES

From the point of view of the library user, the most important challenges may be on a
more basic level: is the user's citation accurate? Is it clear enough for ILL/DD staff
to interpret correctly? Are ILL/DD staff at the user's library able to match the request
to the correct item or items on WorldCat? Is the material included in a series or sub-
series that could be cataloged in multiple ways, generating different titles for the same
item? Are there broader issues of cataloging, manpower, or other issues at the lending
library that make it difficult for ILL/DD staff to locate the requested material? With

non-mediated interlibrary loan requests becoming more common, who, if anyone, is verifying the citation before the request is sent?

For ALIAS users, the largest question is: do ILL/DD staff have the necessary language skills? For example, can they verify that an article in Cyrillic script on a certain range of pages in a certain journal is the article that the user wants? If the article is not on the cited pages, will ILL/DD staff be able to read the table of contents to see if it is elsewhere in the same issue? Will they be able to tell if an article is divided into parts published separately over two or more issues? If the user's citation uses a European transliteration system for Russian (i.e., *Cehov i Cajkovskij*), will ILL/DD staff be able to find the title under the Library of Congress transliteration (*Chekhov i Chaikovskii*)? These types of problems may sound a bit esoteric, but ALIAS and its intellectual foremother, the Slavic Reference Service, can attest that they are all too common.

At Illinois we are happy to report that our ILL/DD staff have taken it upon themselves to acquire certain language abilities that significantly reduce the number of requests forwarded to ALIAS. This cannot reasonably be expected at every institution, especially those with more limited resources and less frequent non-English requests, nor can it be counted on in perpetuity.

ALIAS: A SOLUTION

For over 30 years, the recognition of the importance of foreign-language verification and discovery has been key to the work of the Slavic Reference Service at the University of Illinois. The University of Illinois has sponsored the Russian, East European, & Eurasian Studies Department's Summer Research Laboratory on campus each year since 1973. Since that time, many hundreds of scholars—senior and junior faculty, advanced graduate students, and independent researchers from all over the world—have used the Lab to gain access to the excellent collections of the Slavic & East European Library (SEEL), to attend and participate in lectures, forums, presentations, roundtables, and discussions, and to interact and network with other scholars in a collegial atmosphere. From the beginning it was apparent that the experience of these visiting scholars was greatly enhanced by the assistance of the SEEL librarians and staff, and that a number of scholars wished to remain in touch with SEEL for bibliographic and reference assistance after leaving campus. Within three years the Slavic Reference Service (SRS) had been formally established to meet these needs.

In addition to more open-ended reference work, assisting scholars with interlibrary loan requests and the bibliographic queries that often preceded them quickly became a major activity of the SRS, challenging and educating (not to mention infuriating) generations of graduate assistants, including the junior author of the present article and the current manager of the SRS, Helen Sullivan. Often armed with only the barest of bibliographic information, or information that was patently wrong, SRS staff would locate hard-to-find items in the UIUC collection, verify the accuracy of citations in authoritative bibliographic sources, or, if an item was not held at UIUC, identify other institutions in the United States or abroad that would loan the item. In certain cases, the SRS would also order preservation-quality microfilm copies of items not held in the United States, to be added to the UIUC collection and made available for interlibrary loan. In all cases, users received either the desired item or a recommendation from the SRS on how, where and whether the item could be obtained.

Consultation with individual patrons and ILL/DD departments was conducted as necessary. Assistance was also offered using non-Latin fonts and keyboards on the Internet, and with citation correction and verification not connected with an ILL/DD request.

The success of this service lends itself to expansion with increasing emphasis on less-commonly taught languages and the global nature of the value of information. It seemed reasonable, therefore, that other languages and/or geographic areas would benefit from this type of service.

Filling the Gaps

ALIAS seeks to continue the same high level of service provided by the SRS. Currently, ALIAS handles problematic ILL/DD requests relating to all of the languages, peoples, territory, and intellectual output of Central, Eastern and Southeastern Europe, the Russian Federation, Central Asia (i.e., the five former-Soviet republics), the Caucasus, and Turkey, with coverage of the Arabic-speaking world and other areas to be added by fall of 2007. Currently ALIAS is not ordering microfilm copies of Turkish or Arabic works not held in the U.S., nor answering open-ended reference questions relating to these areas, although these capabilities are being developed. The next phase of expansion may see Iran, Afghanistan, Kashmir, Xinjiang, Tibet, Mongolia, and Manchuria added to ALIAS's coverage, with other areas to follow. Eventually, it is hoped that the entire non-Anglophone world will be encompassed, and the model can of course be applied to English-language information resources as well.

The tools ALIAS uses to provide this level of service are both abstract (i.e., methodological) and concrete, encompassing a variety of digital and analog resources and techniques for using same. These, too, have in large part been inherited from the Slavic Reference Service. A major development in streamlining the work of the SRS occurred very early on, when the collective searching expertise of SRS staff was distilled into one-page search sheets for use with ILL/DD requests—one for monographs, one for newspapers/newspaper articles, and one for other periodical publications and articles published therein. Though the process of revision is continual as the universe of bibliographic information changes and grows, the essential template is the same. On the front appears an ordered list of ten to twenty sources (both print and electronic) which will tell the searcher with a high degree of certainty whether the desired item is held in any library in North America or Western Europe, and will do so in the shortest possible amount of time. The search sheets begin with the University's own online catalog, continue through online union catalogs such as WorldCat and Karlsruhe VK and area-specific sources such as the National Library of Turkey, and wind up with time-tested print sources such as the *Union List of Serials* and the British Library's eight-volume *Catalogue of the Newspaper Library* (1975).

On the back of the search sheets, ordered lists of the major bibliographic sources for each country covered by ALIAS enable the searcher both to verify the accuracy of a citation if initial searches in Western sources are unsuccessful, and to locate items at libraries outside North American and Western Europe if necessary. There are no restrictions on publication date or subject matter, which requires the use of subject bibliographies, catalogs of incunabula, and various other resources for some requests. For countries in which printing with movable type was uncommon until the 18th or

19th centuries, ALIAS is able to recommend sources that provide bibliographic access to manuscripts.

In addition to the search sheets, another major tool used by ALIAS and its patrons are the online Guide, which has existed in various forms since 2000. As ALIAS identifies, evaluates and uses a wide range of online and print resources (beyond those included on the search sheets) on an ongoing basis in order to perform its services, annotated bibliographic descriptions of the most important of these are made available to the public via the Guide (http://www.library.uiuc.edu/spx/class/titlepage.html). Turkish, Arabic, Central Asian, and other sections of the Guide, describing basic as well as subject-specific bibliographic sources that ALIAS has found useful, are continually under development. The Guide provides an extensive bibliography of resources and tools. It includes general information about fonts and keyboards, library catalogs, encyclopedias, periodicals, dictionaries, handbooks and bibliographies. The information is then broken down by resources by subject for each of the language groups, search tools, and biographical resources. Whenever possible, screen shots of the search tools or catalog records are provided and explanations about the resources also provide good support for scholars. The Guide is heavily used, both by ALIAS staff (to refresh their memories about old sources or to learn about ones that are new to them) and by on- and off-campus patrons who find it to be an invaluable aid to their research.

ALIAS is structured to provide direct service to users, and in this age of unmediated research, to the independent scholar who is more familiar with bibliographic search and verification. A web page has been developed to allow the individual researcher, or the interlibrary loan department, to place a request electronically. The page provides access to placing requests in a variety of formats including e-mail, instant messaging, and phone requests. For e-mail requests a form is provided that requires pertinent information to the materials needed as well as contact information for the individual requesting the material. Another, less obvious way in which requests are filled is by a close working relationship with the University Library's Interlibrary Loan and Document Delivery department. Traditionally, this department had passed ILL/DD requests in a variety of languages on to the SRS for verification and discovery. This is one of the primary means by which these requests continue to find their way to ALIAS. In addition to the request form, the web site provides access to the Guide. Statistics are kept on the number of requests filled, referred onward and unfilled.

Challenges in Development

On the most basic level, the challenges facing ALIAS staff in assisting users with their ILL/DD requests are of three kinds: bibliographic, linguistic, and organizational. The bibliographic challenges are the key to the entire operation and are addressed by rigorous and prolonged training in the use of sources, various systems of transliteration, how to interpret and overcome difficulties with ILL/DD requests, searching strategies, tools such as the search sheets and the online Guide, and in the nature and types of bibliographic access and how they vary from country to country and time period to time period.

Linguistic challenges are met by strategic staff recruitment and requested assistance from the broader UIUC community as necessary. Current and recent ALIAS staff have had some ability, ranging from rudiments to fluency, in Russian, French,

German, Spanish, Italian, Polish, Turkish, Ukrainian, Arabic, Latvian, Armenian, Georgian, Uyghur and Adyge. As ALIAS expands, staff with knowledge of Tibetan and Persian are ready to step in. Work in languages such as Czech, Bulgarian, Croatian, Lithuanian, Uzbek, and Azeri can be conducted based on a staff member's knowledge of a related language. A UIUC faculty member is currently available to help with complicated questions relating to Hungarian and Romanian requests, and similar relationships can be drawn on by ALIAS in case of need.

Despite this range of linguistic ability, ALIAS staff routinely work in languages they do not know, a state of affairs that ALIAS embraces. Thanks to conventions of bibliography and cataloging that cross all linguistic boundaries, and to the judicious use of ALIAS's many bilingual dictionaries, and to ALIAS's online Guide, but most of all to the rigorous bibliographic training received by ALIAS staff, it is quite possible for a staff member to successfully handle a request with only the scantiest knowledge of the relevant language. Obviously, if any ambiguity or uncertainty arises in the course of filling the request, the opinion of someone more knowledgeable will be sought, but in many cases this is not found to be necessary.

Organizational challenges were lessened for the development of ALIAS upon the creation of a Center for Global Studies, a Title VI National Resource Center (NRC), funded by the U.S. Department of Education. The NRC grant provided the University of Illinois funding for a Global Studies Librarian to be embedded in the Center, as well as funding for the purchase of materials. This provided the institutional capability to pilot the project. The first step along the road to expansion was the decision to include Turkish materials in the service. There was a great deal of existing expertise in the provision of materials and there were several individuals on campus with the requisite language skills. Funds to support the project were garnered from a variety of areas including those from a private donor, the Center for Global Studies, the European Union Center, and the University Library.

ALIAS also depends on organizational relationships outside UIUC, i.e., on international cooperation. The SRS has longstanding relationships with the Library of Congress, the University of Chicago Library, the Russian National Library in St. Petersburg, the (Russian) State Historical Library in Moscow, and with the Jagiellonian University Library in Krakow, Poland. Initial assistance in developing the Turkish bibliography came from the University of Toronto. Contacts are currently being developed with the National Library of Turkey in Ankara, and similar relationships with other major world libraries are always being sought. These relationships can be critical in gaining access to materials not available to scholars in North America and Western Europe. In addition to inter-institutional relationships, ALIAS also benefits greatly from its relationships with individual scholars and librarians around the world. The service is international in scope and recognition.

The Future of ALIAS

The essential elements to the success of this project include expertise, cooperation, and, of course, funding. The expertise resides in the rich and varied area studies libraries at the University of Illinois. This is most apparent in the Slavic and East European Library which provided the genesis for the project. Cooperation is absolutely essential not only within the University Library, but externally as well. The willingness of librarians from around the world and in many different venues from special collections to university libraries to national libraries is a key to the success of the project. We believe the cooperation we have already received reflects a

truly "globalized" understanding of the need for materials in all languages to understand the past and the future of our individual existence on the planet. The project may be taken further at our institution to include languages and materials from East and South Asia, as well as materials closer to home in the Americas. We invite you to join with us in our efforts to provide resources to the multitude of scholars who sometimes desperately need help in the discovery and location of materials for their research.

Illustration Credits

Figure 1: Library of Congress; Catalog Publication Division. *The Slavic Cyrillic union catalog of pre-1956 imprints*. Totowa, N.J. : Rowman and Littlefield, 1980.

Figure 2, Figure 11: New York Public Library. Slavonic Division. *Dictionary catalog of the Slavonic collection.* 2nd ed. Boston : G. K. Hall, 1974.

Figure 3: Smits, Rudolf. Half a century of Soviet serials, 1917-1968 : a bibliography and union list of serials published in the USSR. Washington : Library of Congress, 1968.

Figures 4-7 and Figure 12: WorldCat (http://newfirstsearch.oclc.org/), viewed 17 May 2007

Figure 8: Helsinki University Library catalog (HELKA) (http://helka.linneanet.fi/webvoye.htm), viewed 17 May 2007

Figure 9: Online-Katalog der Herzogin Anna Amalia Bibliothek Weimar (http://opac.ub.uni-weimar.de/DB=2/), viewed 17 May 2007

Figure 10: British Library Integrated Catalogue (http://catalogue.bl.uk/F/?func=file&file_name=login-bl-list), viewed 17 May 2007

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