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ARCHIVAL SCIENCE WITHOUT STANDARDS, POSSIBLE OR NOT?

Abstract:

During its existence the International Council on Archives published several standards in the field of archival science as recommendations to the member countries. The Slovak Republic has not officially adopted any standard in the archival field until this day and has only a non-official translation of ISAD(G). The present contribution deals with the Slovak archival terminology and several cases of different meanings between ICA standards and terminology in the Slovak Republic, further informs about the results of analysis application used for authority records in the Slovak Republic and its compatibility with international standards. The second part of the contribution deals with comparison information deepness of finding aids, their internal structure in flow of additional work associated with the implementation of archival standards into practice.

Key words:
archival science, archival terminology,
International Council on Archives, standards ISAD(G), ISDIAH, ISAAR(CPF), Bach – applications

Izvleček:
Arhivistika brez standardov. Možno ali ne?

Mednarodni arhivski svet (MAS) je doslej objavil več standardov s področja arhivske znanosti kot priporočila državam članicam. Republika Slovaška do danes še ni uradno sprejela nobenega standarda s področja arhivov in ima le neuraden prevod standarda ISAD(G). Prispevek se ukvarja s slovaško arhivsko terminologijo ter podaja več primerov razlik v pomenih med standardi MAS in terminologijo na Slovaškem. Prinaša tudi izide analize aplikacije, ki se na Slovaškem uporablja za normativno kontrolo, ter njeno kompatibilnost z mednarodnimi standardi. Drugi del prispevka se ukvarja s primerjavo informacij v iskalnih pripomočkih, njihovo notranjo strukturo in implementacijo arhivskih standardov v praksi.

Ključne besede:
arhivistika, arhivska terminologija,
Mednarodni arhivski svet, standardi ISAD(G), ISDIAH, ISAAR(CPF), aplikacije Bach

The process of globalization in all areas of human activity did not forget the field of archival science. The information is not searched for in various encyclopedias or in other books any more but more and more in different databases. Modern information technology allows us to make accessible and to study hundred years old archival documents and thereby significantly extends the possibilities for cooperation between archives. Archivists become some kind of determinant in the world of

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exchange of information, contained in archival documents. What was once put into a database can be once found by a potential researcher. Therefore, the interoperability of information systems is necessary. Equally important is that also information inserted into them is interoperable. This can be achieved by using common and uniform standards.

International Council on Archives during its existence published a lot of standards in the field of archival science as recommendations to the member countries. The Slovak Republic has not officially adopted any standard in the archival field until this day and has only non-official translation of ISAD(G). In addition to technical interoperability it is necessary to talk about semantic interoperability - the same understanding of the content by all users and assigning a specific meaning to a specific term in a specific area.

An important part of this interoperability is terminology. Despite the fact that terminology is one of the main attributes and determinants of the development of every science and that it is also an instrument of communication and cooperation with various institutions in different countries, the Slovak archival community to this day has not issued a definitive form of a terminological dictionary. At the first contact with the standards it is obvious that it is impossible to work with them without understanding basic terms. For the purposes of this paper we analyzed terms in ISAD(G), ISAAR(CPF) and ISDIAH and we compared them with the terms and their interpretation in the work version of the terminological dictionary. It is important to say that despite the widespread view that there is a significant discrepancy between international and Slovak terminology, on the basis of analysis we cannot agree with this view. Of course, there have been some confusion while, but nothing in principle unsolvable. Major problems were caused by new terms, for example, access point, authority record, qualifier etc. In our opinion it is necessary to stop searching for the Slovak equivalents for terms that did not occur in the terminology used in Slovakia. We need to accede this matter creatively - new terms should be assigned new meanings and with final validity integrate them into the Slovak terminology. We realize that this task is not easy, but it is necessary to overcome it.

In addition to terminology, we focused our analysis to one of the applications (Bach Aplications) used in the State Archives, as well as to electronic data, which contains archival information systemAFondy and we confronted them with the standards.

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT STANDARDS

Main standards used in archival science

ISAD(G) is the International Standard for Archival Description (General) for creating comprehensive archival description. Standard was developed by a Committee of the International Council on Archives. The Committee based its work where possible on existing national standards for archival description. The first edition came out in 1996 and was revised in 2000.

This standard serves to express all information relating to archival fonds and all their subordinate parts - description of units on various levels of structured archival material. In other words, ISAD(G) describes archival units (archival fonds and archival collections) across the horizontal and vertical scale, the basic unit for the application description is a description of the unit at any vertical level of archival material. The aim of archival description is to identify and explain the contents of archival

documents, including all connections to facilitate access to archival documents. Objectives are achieved by creating accurate and relevant descriptions and their arrangement according to predefined models (schemes). Archival description is included process that:

- ensures the creation of rigorous (consistent), appropriate and clear (explanatory) descriptions;

- facilitates the search and exchange of archival;

- authority to share databases;

- ensuring the possible integration of descriptions from different locations into a single information system.

ISAD(G) is based on the principle of provenance (Respect des fonds) and it reflects the gradual creating description. It defines the multilevel description, which is based on the following theses:

- description from the general to the specific,

- information corresponding to the level of description,

- link descriptions,

- not repeat information.

The basis of archival description is a flexible unit; it means a unit of description.

ISAAR(CPF) is the International Standard Archival Authority Record for Corporate Bodies, Persons and Families. The first edition of this standard was published by ICA in 1996, the second, expanded edition, was published in 2003.

This standard provides rules for preparing archival authority records, which provide descriptions of corporate bodies, persons and families associated with the creation and maintenance of archival documents. These archival authority records may be used:

- to describe a corporate body, person or family as units within an archival descriptive system;

- to control the creation and use of access points in archival descriptions;

- to document relationships between different records creators and between those entities and the records created by them and/or other resources about or by them.

The primary purpose of this standard is to provide general rules for the standardization of archival descriptions of records creators and the context of records creation, thus enabling:

- access to archives and records based on the provision of descriptions of the context of records creation that are linked to descriptions of the often diverse and physically dispersed records themselves;

- user understanding of the context underlying the creation and use of archives and records so that they can better interpret their meaning and significance;

- precise identification of records creators incorporating descriptions of relationships between different entities, especially documentation of administrative change within corporate bodies or personal change of circumstances in individuals and families;

- the exchange of these descriptions between institutions, systems and/or networks.

ISDIAH is the International Standard for Describing Institutions with Archival Holdings and was adopted by ICA in 2008.

This standard provides general rules for the standardization of descriptions of institutions with archival holdings, thus enabling:

- the provision of practical guidance on identifying and contacting institutions with archival holdings, and accessing holdings and available services;

- the generation of directories of institutions with archival holdings and/or authority lists;

- the establishment of connections with authority lists of libraries and museums and/or developing common directories of cultural heritage institutions at a regional, national and international level;

- the production of statistics on institutions with archival holdings, at a regional, national or international level.

These descriptions may be used:

- to describe institutions as units within an archival descriptive system;

- to serve as a standardized access point for institutions with archival holdings, within a directory, archival information system or network; and/or

- to document relationships between institutions and between those entities and the archives they hold.

The main purpose of the standard is to facilitate the description of institutions whose primary function is to keep archival documents and to make them available to the general public. But this standard can be applied to all entities, which provide access to the records they hold.

Bach – application is an application which records information about:

- legal persons in regional territorial competences of the State Archives in the field of the pre-archival care;

- creators, who transferred archival documents to the State Archives;

- institutions with archival holdings (Archives of legal persons).

Whereas the abovementioned application contains information about three different groups, it was necessary to compare this application with the standard

ISAAR(CPF) and also with the standard ISDIAH. For better overview and comparison we put the data into a table.

Table 1: Comparative table items in ISAAR(CPF) and ISDIAH and Bach application

ISAAR (CPF)	BACH	ISDIAH	BACH
IDENTITY AREA		**IDENTITY AREA**	
Type of entity	Only corporation	Identifier	Does not exist
Authorized form(s) of name	Does not exist	Authorized form(s) of name	Does not exist
Parallel forms of name	Does not exist	Parallel form(s) of name	Does not exist
Standardized forms of name according to other rules	Business Register	Other form(s) of name	Acronym
Other forms of name	Acronym	Type of institution with archival holdings	Does not exist
Identifiers for corporate bodies	Business identification number	**CONTACT AREA**	
DESCRIPTION AREA		Location and address(es)	Location and address(es)
Dates of existence	Dates of existence	Telephone, fax, email	Telephone, fax, email
History	Does not exist	Contact persons	Contact persons
Places	official seat of the company	**DESCRIPTION AREA**	
Legal Status	Legal status	History of the institution with archival holdings	Does not exist
Functions, occupations and activities	main and secondary economic activity	Geographical and cultural context	Does not exist
Mandates/Sources of authority	Does not exist	Mandates/Sources of authority	Does not exist
Internal structures/Genealogy	Does not exist	Administrative structure	Does not exist
General context	Does not exist	Records management and collecting policies	Date of approval of guidelines for records management system etc.
RELATIONSHIPS AREA		Building(s)	Does not exist
Names/Identifiers of related corporate bodies, persons or families	Does not exist	Archival and other holdings	Names of archival fonds
Category of relationship	Does not exist	Finding aids, guides and publications	Does not exist
Description of relationship	Does not exist	**ACCESS AREA**	
Dates of the relationship	Does not exist	Opening times	Does not exist

CONTROL AREA		Conditions and requirements for access and use	Does not exist
Institution identifiers	Does not exist	Accessibility	Does not exist
Rules and/or conventions	Does not exist	**SERVICES AREA**	
Status	Does not exist	Research services	Does not exist
Level of detail	Does not exist	Reproduction services	Does not exist
Dates of creation, revision or deletion	Dates of creation or revision	Public areas	Does not exist
Language(s) and script(s)	Does not exist	**CONTROL AREA**	
Sources	Does not exist	Description identifier	Does not exist
Maintenance notes	Person responsible for information	Institution identifier	Does not exist
RELATING CORPORATE BODIES, PERSONS AND FAMILIES TO ARCHIVAL MATERIALS AND OTHER RESOURCES		Rules and/or conventions used	Does not exist
Identifiers and titles of related resources	Does not exist	Status	Does not exist
Types of related resources	Does not exist	Level of detail	Does not exist
Nature of relationships	Does not exist	Dates of creation, revision or deletion	Dates of creation or revision
Dates of related resources and/or relationships	Does not exist	Language(s) and script(s)	Does not exist
		Sources	Does not exist
		Maintenance notes	Person responsible for information
		RELATING DESCRIPTIONS OF INSTITUTIONS WITH ARCHIVAL HOLDINGS TO ARCHIVAL MATERIALS AND THEIR CREATORS	
		Title and identifier of related archival material	Does not exist
		Description of relationship	Does not exist
		Dates of relationship	Does not exist
		Authorised form(s) of name and identifier of related authority record	Does not exist

Significant differences:

- IDENTITY AREA (ISAAR(CPF), ISDIAH): as a fundamental problem we can consider the fact, that it is not possible to put the information about other entities (families and persons) into the Bach application and the application also lacks certain items that are based on standards.

- DESCRIPTION AREA (ISAAR(CPF), ISDIAH): this area is very poor in the Bach application; diametrical difference is in the perception of the item Records management and collecting policies: while in Bach application the information about guidelines for records management system approved by higher authorities is recorded, the standard talks about pre-archival care, which carries out the institution with archival holdings.

For all other areas (except contact area) we can conclude that they are insufficient and that Bach application does not fit with these standards.

ROLE OF ARCHIVAL STANDARDS

The basic task of archival standards is to facilitate the exchange of data among computer systems and provide archivists with mechanisms for ensuring long- term access and use of information stored in electronic form. Archivists want to help wide professional and amateur public to find the information, which they need quickly and efficiently.

Looking at twenty six structured elements of the standard ISAD(G) we can recognize a lot of descriptive items, which are registered in the electronic archival information system AFondy only at the level of whole archival fonds and archival collections (registered list of archival fonds and archival collections). System AFondy contains basic summary information of the relevant archival materials, which can create the basic form for compiling the highest layer (vrstva) of the description of archival fonds and collections by archival standard ISAD(G). For a better overview and comparison we have inserted the data into a table.

Table 2: Comparative table items in ISAD(G) standard and electronic archival information system AFondy

ISAD (G)	*Electronic archival information system AFondy*
3.1 IDENTITY STATEMENT AREA	
3.1.1 Reference code(s)	1. Registration number 2. Name and numerical identifier Archives
3.1.2 Title	4. Name of archival fond – archival collection
3.1.3 Date	6. Time extent
3.1.4 Level of description	Does not exist
3.1.5 Extent and medium of the unit of description (quantity, bulk, or size)	7. Amount extent • processed archival documents • not processed archival documents 15. Structure of archival documents 15.a type of archival documents (charters, books, maps…) 15.b number of processed archival documents

	15.c number of not processed archival documents
	15.d number of archival documents (together)
	15.e time extent
	18. Processing status
3.2 CONTEXT AREA	
3.2.1 Name of creator(s)	9. Creator
3.2.2 Administrative/ Biographical history	Does not exist
3.2.3 Archival history	21. History (limited number of characters in AFondy)
3.2.4 Immediate source of acquisition or transfer	
3.3 CONTENT AND STRUCTURE AREA	
3.3.1 Scope and content	5. Classification scheme
	22. Thematic description
3.3.2 Appraisal, destruction and scheduling information	Does not exist
3.3.3 Accruals	10. Incremental numbers and date of assumption in Archives
3.3.4 System of arrangement	Does not exist
3.4 CONDITOIN OF ACCESS AND USE AREA	
3.4.1 Conditions governing access	12. Access to fond
	14. Deposit
3.4.2 Conditions governing reproduction	Does not exist
3.4.3 Language / scripts of material	Does not exist
3.4.4 Physical characteristic and technical requirements	11.a Status of preservation
	11.b Physical characteristic
	11.c Status of damage
3.4.5 Finding aids	8. Finding aids
	19. Usability of origin registry aids
3.5 ALLIED MATERIALS AREA	
3.5.1 Existence and location of originals	24. Parts of archival fond at other institutions or in possession of physical persons
3.5.2 Existence and location of copies	13. Existence of copies
	13.a Form of copies
3.5.3 Related units of description	24. Parts of archival fond at other institutions or in possession of physical persons
3.5.4 Publication notes	23. Editions
3.6 NOTE AREA	
3.6.1 Note	25. Note
3.7 DESCRIPTION CONTROL AREA	
3.7.1 Archivist's Note	17. Name of Archives´ Director
3.7.2 Rules or Conventions	Does not exist
3.7.3 Date(s) of descriptions	16.Date of record updating

The comparison showed that for seven items from the standard there is no information in AFondy system. Conversely in system AFondy there are two items (3. Owner and 14. Information if the archival fond is in the deposit in the Archives), which we could not assign to any items in ISAD (G).

Department of Archives and Registries of the Ministry of Interior of the Slovak Republic published a Methodological instruction for priority processing archival fonds, which among others, defines the data elements essential in finding aids. The methodological instruction says that a finding aid consists of five parts:

1) Title page – contains basic information about the fonds, its content and includes the most important bibliographic data,

2) Finding aid introduction - is the study of the development and organization of the fonds creator and the history of the archival fonds. Introduction introduces the reader to the content issues and facilitates orientation in the fonds. It is necessary to pay attention to all of the following compulsory parts of the introduction:

   a) An overview of the creator´s development. In this section we also analyze the organizational structure of the fonds' creator and its changes, as well as the definition of the material and territorial competence.

   b) Development and fond history. This part contains information about the record management and administration of the creator.

   c) Archival description. In this section we find the first status of preservation fonds in terms of timeframe, its structure and content, then the fonds arrangement, information on the applicability of registry tools and the existence of any finding aids.

   d) Analysis of the fonds´ content.

   e) Record about finding aid elaboration. It contains information on who, when and where the fonds was held, processed and made available.

3) Register of inventory units.

4) Auxiliary apparatus – contains names, factual and local registries.

5) Imprint. Finding aid concludes imprint, it means a registered record about the archival fonds and elaborating finding aid of it. It contains the name of the archives, the name of the fonds, its units, the names of the organizers of the fonds, the names of processors of the finding aid, number of pages.

In the summary we can state that there are not many differences between archival standards ISAD(G) on the one side and information in electronic archival information system AFondy and Methodological instruction for priority processing archival fonds on the other side. As the yet unresolved area we see a strict hierarchical division of information about archival material described by the level of individual items. Despite initial fears from the comparison of Slovak archival methodology and applications used in the Archives with archival standards, we can conclude that the biggest differences are between items used in the Bach application and ISAAR(CPF) standard. Slovak Archivists have much work in this area.

POVZETEK

ARHIVISTIKA BREZ STANDARDOV. MOŽNO ALI NE?

Mednarodni arhivski svet (MAS) je doslej objavil več standardov s področja arhivske znanosti kot priporočila državam članicam. Republika Slovaška do danes še ni uradno sprejela nobenega standarda s področja arhivov in ima le neuraden prevod standarda ISAD(G). Prispevek se ukvarja s slovaško arhivsko terminologijo in podaja več primerov različnih pomenov med standardi MAS in terminologijo na Slovaškem. Prinaša tudi izide analize aplikacije, ki se na Slovaškem uporablja za normativno kontrolo, ter njeno kompatibilnost z mednarodnimi standardi.

Po opravljeni primerjavi lahko rečemo, da med arhivskim standardom ISAD(G) na eni strani ter informacijami v elektronskem arhivskem informacijskem sistemu AFondy in Metodološkimi navodili za prioritetno obdelavo arhivskih fondov na drugi strani ni velikih razlik. Kot doslej še nerešeno področje avtorici prepoznata hierarhično razdelitev informacij o arhivskem gradivu na nivoju posameznih dokumentov. V nasprotju s prvotnim strahom pred primerjavo slovaške arhivske metodologije in aplikacij, ki se uporabljajo v arhivih z mednarodnimi standardi, je moč zaključiti, da do največjih razlik prihaja med postavkami v aplikaciji Bach in standardom ISAAR(CPF). Slovaške arhiviste čaka na tem področju še veliko dela.