

KoBSON: A good news delivery service

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Abstract:

Librarians in developing countries sometimes have hard times adjusting to the technological, or any kind of innovation. Most of them are usually unable to go for innovation. On the other side, researchers are forced, and able to quickly adopt emerging tech trends. That challenge struck us during the establishing of KoBSON (Serbian Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition of Electronic Resources). We looked for a way to make direct communication with our end-users and inform them about all services that we provide.

What we did?

Starting in 2005, we have implemented a new service consisted of all articles published by Serbian authors and referred in Web of Science (WoS). We have noticed two things:

- 1 that names of non-English authors' were often misspelled in WoS
- 2 only one author would receive an e-mail alert.

We decided to unify all names of Serbian authors and to make sure that all co-authors will receive email notifications. Records were updated on weekly basis; all authors received a personalized e-mail alert, with support messages from KoBSON team, and with direct link to our web page. We expected that almost every author will click to see who is behind "the good news delivery", and who are those people who care about Serbian researchers. And that really happened.

With this service the number of users intensely started to grow. They started to use our web page, not just for this service, but for all content we provide to them. Nowadays, we have more than 4 300 visits per day (more than 116 500 visits per month).

We also think that our model can be implemented to any other services (e.g. Scopus, Google Scholar, etc.) and in every country in the world.

Key words:

KoBSON (Serbian Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition of Electronic Resources), marketing, self-promotion, author-promotion, repository, technical innovations

KoBSON (Serbian Consortium for Coordinated Acquisition of Electronic Resources) has been established in October 2001, with main goals to provide access to great number of international scientific journals and to improve electronic information access. Serbian Ministry of Science funded the whole program. In the following years budget had grown, as did the number of subscribed services and journals. Access to the journals was improved according to the users needs: prompt and simple access, access for unlimited number of users simultaneously, service availability at anytime and anywhere (24/7), remote access via EzProxy etc. In the beginning we have been faced with small number of users. The problem occurred because we started train the trainers' campaign with the librarians who then had to present new ways of accessing the content to their end users. Sadly, most of the librarians were unable to abandon the old way of thinking, to improve their knowledge and embrace new technologies. That resulted with failure of train the trainers' campaign so we decided to take a new approach – to get in touch directly with the most productive researchers.

Therefore, during the 2004-2005, we come up with the idea to create a new service, “Naši u WoS”¹, and to use it to promote our website and services we provide. The idea was to download, retroactively, all referred articles written by Serbian authors from the WoS service (only if the author mentioned Serbian institution in the address as his affiliation) and to continue to update the database on weekly basis. We firstly negotiated with Thomson and agreed on minimal dataset available for download. In the research papers authors usually put only one email address; luckily first authors are not always the same. Additionally we were able to get more email addresses from our remote access user registry.

After downloading these articles into our database, we would send a personalized (alerting) email to each of the authors where we inform them that his/hers article is visible in the WoS, and that it's also visible on our website within the “Naši u WoS” service. At the end of the message we congratulate the author and we put our website address in the signature. The goal was to get good news to the authors working desk where they can click the link, visit our website and get to know about the service which takes care of them and their scientific work. And that really happened.

Example of e-mail:

Dear user,

We would like to inform you that your article

(Authors, Title, Source, Year, Volume, Issue, Pages) has been referred in WoS during the last week, and since today, you can see it on KoBSON page too, in Menu Science in Serbia, service Naši u WoS.

A complete list of your articles can be seen on this [link](#).

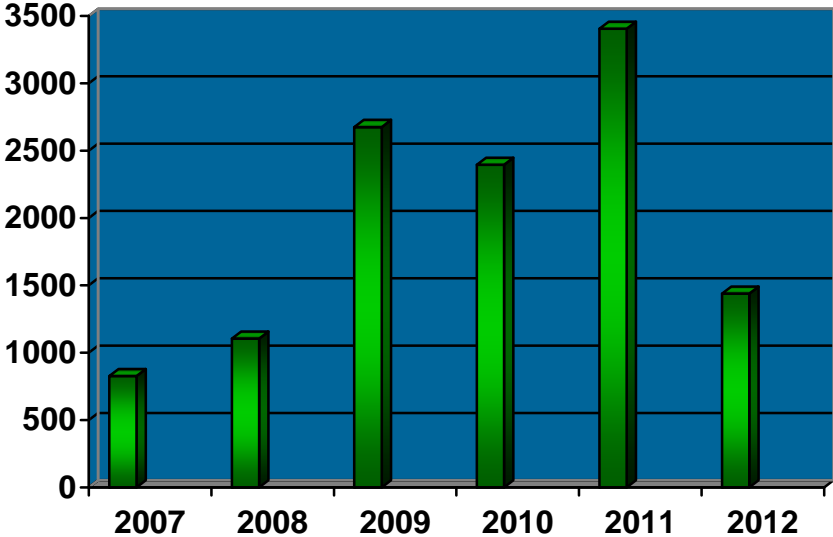
Best regards,

KoBSON team

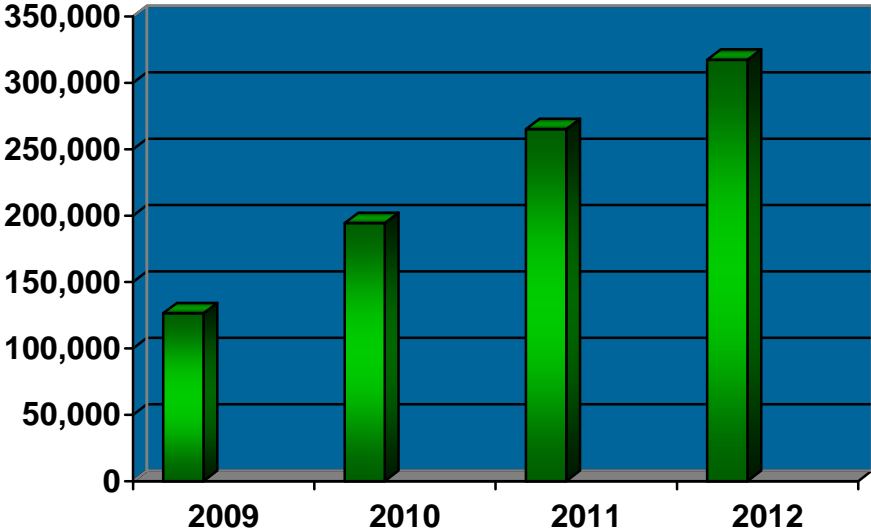
www.KoBSON.nb.rs

¹ ‘Our researchers in WoS’ – database consisted of paper names for Serbian researchers, published in articles referred in WoS

This practice has been ongoing ever since. Growth of the articles in our repository attracted more attention from the scientific community so the number of our registered users started to grow rapidly (Picture 1), as well as the number of visits to our website (Picture 2).

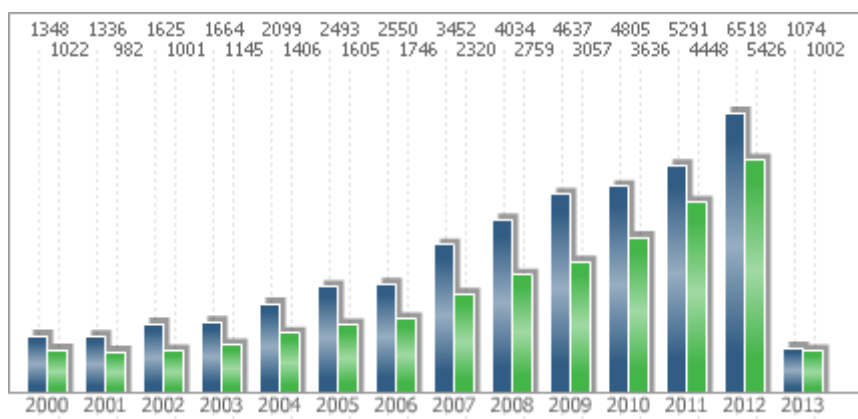


(Picture 1)



(Picture 2)

Simultaneously, the number of articles written by Serbian authors started to grow (Picture 3 – total number of referred articles (blue) vs. number of scientific articles (green)) alongside the number of Serbian scientific journals referred in the WoS. Also other KoBSON services recorded the increasment of website traffic. “Nasi u WoS” quickly became very popular among our users and we constantly work on its upgrades by adding new features requested by users.



(Picture 3)

All records are supplemented with bunch of links which gives the researchers a great comfort to find a lot of useful information at one place:

- There is a link to article record in Web of Science where users can see detailed information about the article (abstract, keywords, etc.)
- Every record is equipped with DOI number and the link to the full text is established (if it's available trough the subscription)
- There is also a link to the page with detailed information about the journal in which article is published (Bibliographic data, Journal Availability in Serbian libraries, On-line subscription, Detailed information about journal publisher)
- The most interested and useful links for every author - links to 'cited by pages' in three most popular citation data bases in Serbia: ISI/WoS, SCOPUS and SCIndeks – Serbian Citation Index²

² <http://scindeks.ceon.rs/>

There are a few more tools in this service, like possibility for export a list of articles in two formats: TXT or BibTex, to show all author articles or to select just Article/Review. There is also a link named Correction through which users can send us information about some wrong data in record.

Thanks to this program and constant tendencies to further develop and upgrade its service, KoBSON is a well known for dedication to fulfill user's scientific needs and to serve as an example of good practice for library services. We are also certain that this way of self promotion can be applied to other citation databases, such as Scopus or Google Scholar. We chose to use the WoS because legislative of research assessment in Serbia is based on Thomson data (for now). Therefore, this repository became very well known, not only for the research community, but also for their evaluators. Our neighboring countries Slovenia and Croatia followed our model and developed similar services.³

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- 7) Thomson Reuters: <http://apps.webofknowledge.com/>

³ You can find more info on: http://home.izum.si/COBISS/bib/Citations_SI_en.html for Slovenia; and on http://www.trend.uns.ac.rs/stskup/trend_2013/radovi/T1.1/T1.1-2.pdf for Croatia