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Open Access in Lithuania

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The reestablishment of Lithuanian independence on the eleventh of March of 1990, and the subsequent dissolution of the Soviet Union in 1991, meant that Lithuania's information infrastructure had to undergo inevitable transformations. First, free market mechanisms instead of the state controlled subsidized publishing enterprises created a new reality also in the information sector of Lithuanian economy. Second, the Lithuanian information sector now had free access to the new technologies of the West. However, the access and implementation of the new technologies in lieu of existing publishing technologies meant increased price of access. This might be considered as one of the reasons for Lithuania's push for the Open Access (OA).

The OA movement in Lithuania acquired a new character after Lithuania's entry in the European Union (EU) in 2004. The purpose of this article is to briefly examine and describe various OA related structures that currently exist in Lithuania ten years after joining the EU.

In November of 2013, the ISM University of Management and Economics, located in Kaunas, Lithuania, hosted an Open Access workshop that was organized by the Open Access Infrastructure Research for Europe (OpenAIRE).[1] The purpose of this workshop was to focus on the legal issues and the analysis and research of the most effective business models for supporting OA projects.[2] ISM University of Management and Economics has been on the forefront of OA in Lithuania for several reasons. First, there is recognition of the fact that OA fosters scientific collaboration among various scientists on national and international levels by removing barriers of access for scientific knowledge. As a consequence of removing this impediment to the access of scientific knowledge, new discoveries are made possible. If the purpose of this workshop was to highlight the legal issues that are associated with OA in Europe in general and Lithuania in particular, then it might be right to briefly survey the legal status of the OA framework in Lithuania.

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[1] I was unable to find the meaning of the acronym ISM during my research.
[2] "ISM hosted an open access workshop." ISM University of Management and Economics. http://www.ism.lt/index.php/corporate_page/bottom_menu/library/news/ism_hosted_an_open_access_workshop/84702 (accessed March 9, 2014).

Article 45 of the Lithuanian Law on Higher Education and Research mandates the transparency of research activities. This law stipulates that research findings be made available to public for all research that is funded by the public funds.[3] I must however note that there is not any institutional obligation to create and maintain an OA repository according to this law. Despite the lack of legal obligation for the creation and maintainance of a legal depository,the first repository of scientific papers that were made available under this law was established in 2006. The name of the repository is the Lithuanian Academic E-Library (eLABa).[4] The eLABa is the part of the Lithuania Academic Libraries Network (LABT).
The eLABa portal states that there are three research groups that form the part of this project.

Each group is responsible for unique set of functions that are described below:

1. The creation of the Lithuanian Electronic Publishing System
2. The development of the Lithuanian Virtual Library and Creation of Full‑text Database Repository
3. The Group for Lithuanian Science and for the study the preservation and presentation of the E-documents to its users.

All of these groups are envisioned to support the goals of the eLABa. The main goal of the Lithuanian Academic Libraries Network (LABT) is to develop information technology based on the Lithuanian integrated scientific and study information space, combining traditional and e-libraries, e-publishing, information search and its supply to users, and providing virtual service to employees of Lithuanian science and study institutions, students, citizens and other E-Systems.[5]

The Virtual Library of Lithuania (the VLB) has landing pages at two different sites. The older 2010 landing page at http://www.elaba.lt/eng/ has the following interface (see: picture 1 below)

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[3] REPUBLIC OF LITHUANIA. "HIGHER EDUCATION AND RESEARCH INSTITUTIONS." Lietuvos Respublikos Seimas. http://www3.lrs.lt/pls/inter3/dokpaieska.showdoc_l?p_id=366717 (accessed March 9, 2014).
[4] "Lithuania- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization." Lithuania- United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. http://www.unesco.org/new/en/communication-and-information/portals-and-platforms/goap/access-by-region/europe-and-north-america/lithuania/ (accessed March 9, 2014).
[5] "Lithuanian Academic E-Library (eLABa)." Lithuanian Academic E-Library (eLABa). http://www.elaba.lt/eng/index.php?page=labt_tikslai(accessed March 9, 2014).

Picture 1 The Landing Page of the VLB

The second newer landing page of the VLB is in English and Lithuanian. The page is powered by ExLibris Primo. Primo allows users of this site to perform a faceted search (see: pic 3).

Picture 2: The Landing page of the Lithuanian Virtual Library.
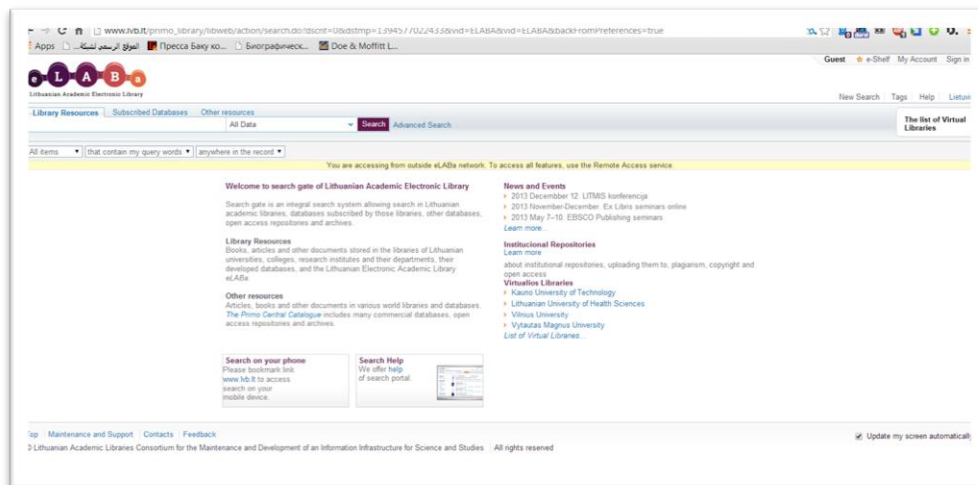
The VLB allows its user to create individual account where the user can store their references. The library also allows users to authenticate so that users of the library can access e-resources from off-campus locations.

Picture 3 The results of the search for term "Gediminas."
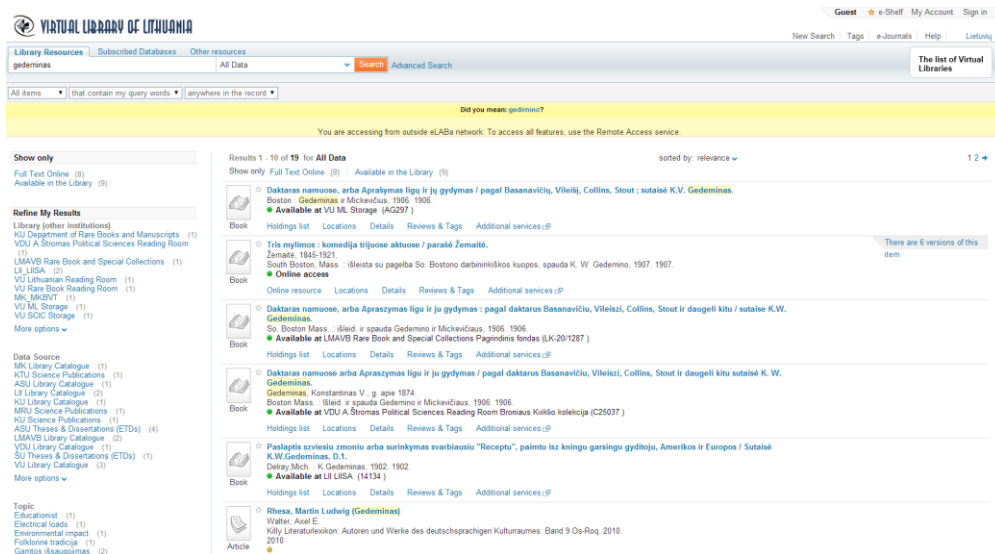
The VLB serves as one example that provides access to online OA materials in Lithuania. The materials are deposited in many cases as PDF files.

Picture 4: An example of OA text.

The VLB represents a consortium of Lithuanian libraries that currently has 32 participating library. Each library also has an individual virtual repository. [6] The participating institutions are universities, colleges and school libraries. The VLB thus represents an integrated

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[6] Lithuanian Virtual Library. "LVB." LVB. http://www.lvb.lt/primo_library/libweb/static_htmls/lvblist_lt_LT.html (accessed March 11, 2014).

search platform that allows users to search in Lithuanian libraries and proprietary databases, and the OA repositories and archives within Lithuania.

The second important OA initiative in Lithuania, that pertains to Lithuania's cultural and social memories, is called the virtual electronic heritage system (VEHS). The site is located at www.epaveldas.lt. The title ePaveldas can be translated as eHeritage. The self-description of the site is as follows:

> "The Virtual Electronic Heritage System (VEPS) holds an enormous wealth of digital objects created under the Strategy for Digitization of the Lithuanian Cultural Heritage, Digital Content Preservation and Access. The VEPS portal provides efficient and convenient access to thousands of cultural heritage objects for all who are interested in art, books, newspapers, manuscripts, maps and sound recordings. All this together creates a unique, rich and vivid panorama of the Lithuanian cultural heritage.
>
> The VEPS has the integrated thesaurus of personal names, geographical names and historical chronology as its conceptual backbone that serves as a rich knowledge base and effective tool for semantic search within the Virtual Electronic Heritage System."[7]

There are several institutions in Lithuania that have come together to create this integrated search and access system. These institutions are as follows: Martynas Mažvydas National Library of Lithuania; Ieva Simonaitytė Public Library of Klaipėda County; Gabrielė Petkevičaitė-Bitė Public LIbrary of Panevėžys County; Povilas Višinskis Public Library of Šiauliai County; Public Library of Kaunas County; Vilnius University Library; Lithuanian Theatre, Music and Cinema Museum; Lithuanian Art Museum; Wroblewski Library of the Lithuanian Academy of Sciences; Office of the Chief Archivist of Lithuania.

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[7] "General information about the Virtual Electronic Heritage System." ePaveldas.
http://www.epaveldas.lt/en/home (accessed March 12, 2014).

The landing page of the ePaveldas is depicted below in picture 5.

Picture 5 The Landing page of the ePaveldas.

Under the framework of this project, several Lithuanian books from the 16th through 20th century were digitized. The periodicals, cartographic publications, small press publications, posters, and other print objects were also digitized to a limited extent. This collection is available under the OA model to multiple users. This OA resource contains currently access to the full-text version of 1881 periodicals.

Picture 6 Periodicals in ePaveldas
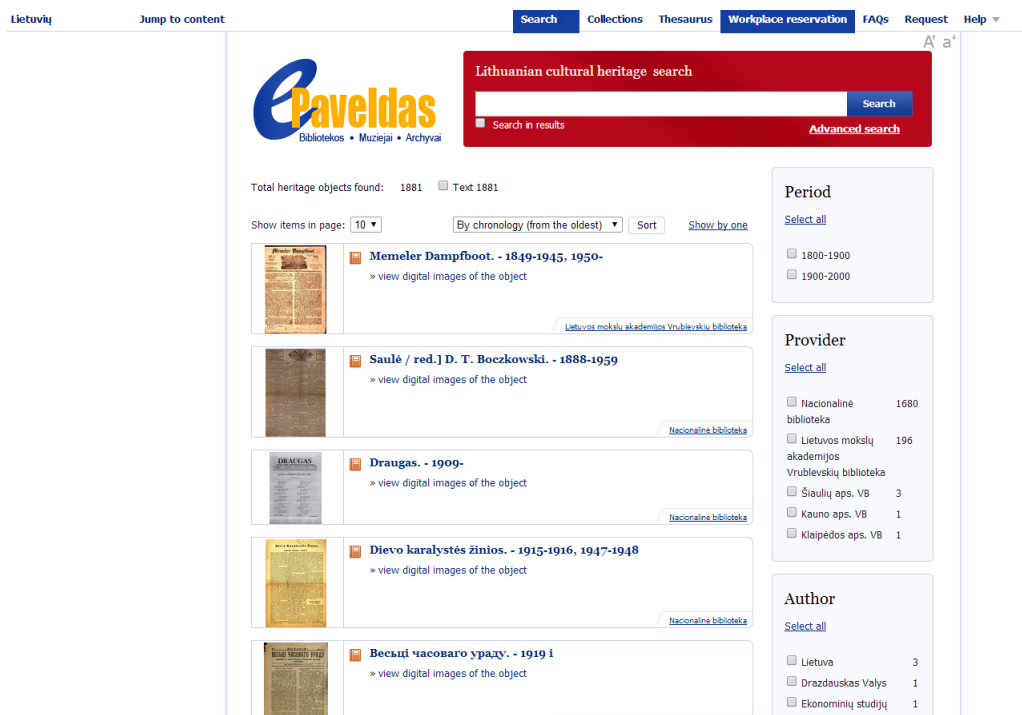
The oldest periodical contained in this collection is Memeler Dampfboot. - 1849-1945, 1950-. Memel was the German name of the Lithuania city Klaipeda. As one can see in the picture 7, there is a picture of a steamboat (Dampfboot) on the front-page of this periodical. Epaveldas provides access not only to the images but also to the full-text of these periodicals. The Memel was located north of the Neman River, was detached from the East Prussia of the German Empire by the Treaty of Versailles and became a mandate of the League of Nations. It eventually became the part of Lithuania in the aftermath of 1924 negotiations. It became once again the part the Third Reich until the end of the war in 1945.[8]

Picture 7 Memler Dampfboot.

The interface allows users to browse and view high resolution images of these digitized periodicals.

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[8] *The Question of Memel: Diplomatic and Other Documents from the Versailles Peace Conference Till the Reference of the Question by the Conference of Ambassadors to the Council of the League of Nations (1919-1923), Including Historical Sketches of the Memel Region, and Other Introductory Statements*. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1924

Picture 8 Larger image of Memeler Dampfpboot.

If both the eLABa and ePaveldas represent access to information and preservation related facets of OA for monographs and out of copyright periodicals, OA journals represent a sustained Lithuanian effort to disseminate the scientific knowledge to its audience at no cost. For the purpose of this paper, I took in consideration Lithuanian journals indexed in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ). Currently there are a total of 1873 Lithuanian journal titles that are indexed in the DOAJ.[9] The distribution of journals by subject areas is below:

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[9] "Directory of Open Access Journals." Directory of Open Access Journals. http://www.doaj.org (accessed March 12, 2014).

Table 1: The distribution of OA journals from Lithuania in DOAJ as of March 2014.

Subject	Frequency
Language and Literature: (626)	626
Languages and Literatures (510)	510
Literature (General) (350)	350
Philology. Linguistics (224)	224
Social Sciences (117)	117
Philosophy. Psychology. Religion (116)	116
Philosophy and Religion (116)	116
Philosophy (General) (116)	116
Philosophy (116)	116
Media and communication (116)	116
	2407

Some of the journals have multiple subject coverage. Thus the number of OA journal titles from Lithuania that are distributed is higher than the actual number of 1873. However, when one searches ROAD: Directory of Open Access Scholarly Resources, one finds only seven Lithuanian OA titles indexed in it.[10]

The review of the current literature on OA in Lithuania as it is indexed in the Library and Information Studies Abstracts (LISA) remains minimal. If one searches for keywords like Lithuania* and Open Access, one gets only 7 hits as depicted below in picture 9.

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[10] "Search in ROAD directory." ROAD Home page.
http://road.issn.org/issn_search?afs:filter=country%3D%22LTU%22 (accessed March 13, 2014).

Picture 9 Lithuanian OA related articles in LISA.

I argue that this lack of OA literature on Lithuania in LISA is not an indicator of the importance of OA for Lithuania. It might be simply the function of limited North American interests in Lithuanian OA initiatives. However, as my paper argues, OA remains very important in an Lithuanian context with respect to the dissemination of heritage and scientific information. For example, Lithuanian Classical Literature, once restricted to books that were stored in the vaults of libraries, now is available at no cost or little cost on various sites. One such site that demonstrated the point about the benefits of the OA was antologija.lt of the Classic Lithuanian Literature. The site has not been updated since 2012, yet in my opinion, it demonstrates the possibilities of benefits of OA.

Picture 10 antologija.lt
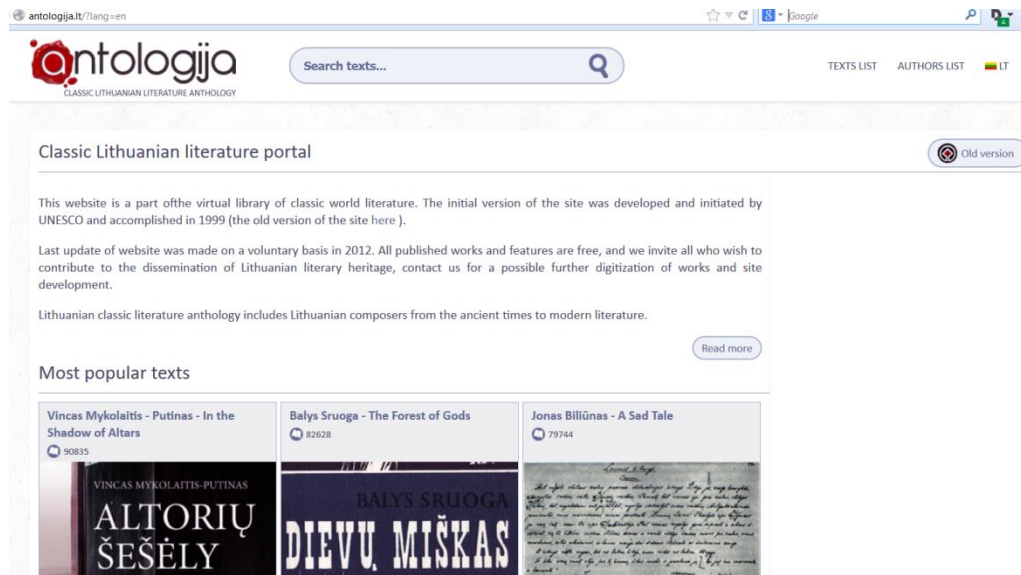
This site allows various users to access the transcribed texts of Lithuanian fiction in both online and PDF forms. Currently the site contains works of fifty-one Lithuanian writers. There are several other projects in progress such as digitization of Lithuanian music, and music related manuscripts that will allow users to access and stream the out of copyright protected Lithuanian music.[11]

I used, as an example, various online OA sites that were established in Lithuania since 2005 to highlight different positive aspects of the Lithuanian OA development. The OA model allows Lithuania users to access information at no cost. Secondly, the digital versions are easier to edit for the Lithuanian artists, musicians and writer who might consider releasing several editions of their works. OA in Lithuanian context also has allowed the Lithuanians to have unfettered access to various aspects of their cultural, historical and social heritage.

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[11] "NATIONAL REPORTS." *Fontes Artis Musicae - Journal of the International Association of Music Libraries, Archives, and Documentation Centres* 59, no. 4 (10, 2012): 353-385.
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The Question of Memel: Diplomatic and Other Documents from the Versailles Peace Conference Till the Reference of the Question by the Conference of Ambassadors to the Council of the League of Nations (1919-1923), Including Historical Sketches of the Memel Region, and Other Introductory Statements. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1924