

**American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies (ABSEES)
Annual Report, FY 2014**

Irene Kolchinsky, Managing Editor, ABSEES

I. Unit Narrative

EBSCO Agreement

In the spring of 2004, the UIUC Library entered into an agreement with EBSCOhost[®] regarding licensed access to the American Bibliography of Slavic and East European Studies (ABSEES), which has been compiled at UIUC since 1989. The online ABSEES records (1989 to the present) were moved to the EBSCOhost[®] platform, and EBSCOhost[®] became the vendor for the database, providing all marketing and distribution of the content. As of today, there are 143 ABSEES subscribers (102 subscribers reside in the U.S. and 41 in various European countries).

The agreement with EBSCO is automatically renewed every two years unless terminated upon notice at least 18 months in advance. The current term ends in April 2015. If we do not hear from EBSCO till November 2014, this will mean that the agreement has been automatically renewed until April 2017.

The agreement allows the Library to focus on the content creation and management of the database records and also ensures better access for researchers. Users benefit from the easy access offered by the EBSCOhost interface as well as from the up-to-date technology that underlies all EBSCO products.

The UIUC Library provides technical support for the database with the help of a research programmer in the Library Systems office and management support from the AUL for Information Technology Planning and Policy.

Staffing

ABSEES staff consists of the Managing Editor who reports to Beth Sandore, Associate Dean of Libraries & Associate University Librarian for Research and Technology, and four or five paid indexers, most of whom are current or former graduate students at UIUC. All of the staff

members are employed as part time FTE: the managing editor works 25-30 h/week; indexers work 45-50 h/week (total).

Since July 2013, one new indexer has been hired and trained.

Several Slavic scholars and library staff members from institutions across the U.S. and Canada support the work of ABSEES by submitting records on a volunteer basis.

ABSEES Database Updates and Plans for the Next Year

Submissions

The ABSEES staff and volunteers produce and send to EBSCO approximately 500-550 new records on a monthly basis. 6,500 new records have been added to the database since July 2013 for a total of more than 120,700. Next year, 6,000-6,500 new records are expected.

List of Journals

Currently, ABSEES covers 392 journals, most of which are published in the United States and Canada. Some of these journals, the so-called Core Journals, are indexed from cover to cover. The list of these journals can be found on the ABSEES website (<http://www.library.uiuc.edu/absees/>). Other titles are screened from cover to cover in search of materials related to Slavic and East European Studies.

The list of journals indexed by ABSEES has been revised and updated. Titles that either ceased publication or did not contain a sufficient amount of ABSEES-related materials (no records in two years) have been removed from the list. 17 new titles have been added since July 2013¹. Only 6 out of 392 titles (less than 2%) have average backlogs of 3 years, associated mainly with

¹ These titles are: "Revolutionary Russia," "Southeastern Europe," "Journal of Modern Russian History and Historiography," "Politics, Religion & Ideology," "Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding," "Public Art Dialogue," "Security Dialogue," "Critical Studies on Terrorism," "Dynamics of Asymmetric Conflict," "Global Crime," "Clio: A Journal of Literature, History and the Philosophy of History," "Media, War & Conflict," "Studies in Conflict and Terrorism," "Humanity: An International Journal of Human Rights, Humanitarianism and Development," "Journal of Public and International Affairs," "Journal of Contemporary European Studies," "Journal of International Security Affairs."

the addition of new titles. These backlogs should be eliminated within the next several months. The backlogs associated with the recent decision to cover materials in languages other than English (namely in Russian, Ukrainian, French, and German) have been significantly reduced.

ABSEES Retrospective Content

The Agreement with EBSCO (2004) mentioned the preliminary plan on the part of the Library to add the retrospective content from the print volumes of ABSEES (1956-1988) to the online database, and provided some funds for the project. For several years the back-file conversion was a relatively low priority for the ABSEES management, since there were more urgent goals of eliminating the existing backlogs, cleaning up the online subject thesaurus, and resolving a number of issues with the older records for edited volumes and book chapters. After these goals had been reached, the addition of the back-file content became the next important objective for enhancing the database. At the beginning of 2010, the decision was made to start the back-file conversion project, utilizing the funds provided by EBSCO in 2004.

This project has been carried out in cooperation with the Digital Content Creation staff and the Library Systems office staff. The Digital Content Creation staff was supposed to scan and OCR the printed volumes in house, and to do the OCR correction. The ABSEES staff was intended to proofread and edit the text files, eliminating numerous discrepancies between the format of the printed volumes and the format of the online database. Since the entries in the printed volumes did not have any subject headings (instead, they were grouped under general categories and sub-categories), the ABSEES staff was also supposed to assign subject headings once the entries in the text files have been converted into a fielded format. The tasks of converting the text files into a fielded format and importing them into the database were assigned to Tom Habing and Robert Manaster from the Library Systems office.

By summer of 2013, all 28 printed volumes of ABSEES had been scanned, OCRred, and the OCRred files corrected. The next stage of the project involves the proofreading and editing of the text files. As it turned out, the format of the printed volumes is not consistent because they were compiled at several different institutions, with each having its own system. Therefore it was decided to start with the text files of the printed volumes for 1986, 1987, and 1988, since their

format is the closest (but still far from being identical) to the current database format. This task involves the elimination of the discrepancies between the format of the printed volumes and the format of the online database. The assignment of subject headings will be started after the parsing of the corrected files.

Meanwhile the edited extract from one of the files was sent to Tom and Robert, who determined that the parsing of the edited files would present certain challenges for both the Library Systems staff and the ABSEES staff. Although an automated parser could be used for many entries, some complicated, manually formatted entries would need human review and manual correction.

At this point, we intend to have a follow-up conversation with EBSCO representatives regarding the back-file conversion project. We plan to give them an update on the project and discuss the feasibility of making the back-file content available through their interface.

II. Statistical Profile

1. Facilities

Irene Kolchinsky's office is located in 450u Library. The ABSEES indexers work from home, using the online workflow.

2. Personnel

Name	Title	Employment Dates
Irene Kolchinsky	Managing Editor Academic hourly; 25 h/w	April 2006 –
Anne Tempest	Lead Indexer Academic hourly; 10-15 h/w	September 2006 –
Emily Ewers	Indexer	June 2010 –

	Graduate hourly; 5-10 h/w	
Rosa Kleinman	Indexer Academic hourly; 5-10 h/w	May 2012 –
Jennifer Bylsma	Indexer Academic hourly; 5-15 h/w	July 2013 –
Svetlozara Stoycheva	Graduate hourly; 5-10 h/w	December 2013 – May 2014

The ABSEES Managing Editor supervises the staff, hires and trains indexers, determines the ABSEES editing production goals, determines coverage for the database indexing, updates the ABSEES website, cleans up the online subject thesaurus, works on the ABSEES back-file conversion project, corresponds with the AAASS ABSEES editorial committee (Slavic studies professional association), represents ABSEES at professional meetings, and interacts with professionals from other institutions.

The ABSEES indexers screen the journals assigned by the Managing Editor for articles related to Slavic and East European Studies, index articles using the ABSEES online workform, write abstracts for those articles which do not have “Abstracts from Author,” submit records to the Managing Editor, submit bi-weekly reports indicating the titles of journals covered during this period of time and the number of records completed, ensure the assigned journals do not have backlogs, and report if any of the assigned journals cease publication or undergo any other changes.

3. User Services

Irene Kolchinsky made a presentation on the current status of ABSEES to the ABSEES Advisory Committee at the American Association for Slavic, East European and Eurasian Studies (ASEEES) Annual Convention (November 2013).