

2nd European Library Seminar / 3rd Gabriel Workshop, 4 – 6 June 2003 at the Biblioteca Nacional in Lisbon

From 4 – 6 June 2003 the 2nd European Library Seminar / 3rd Gabriel Workshop¹ was held at the Biblioteca Nacional in Lisbon, Portugal². 62 librarians and webmasters from 20 countries participated in that workshop, mainly Gabriel contacts but also quite a number of librarians from Portugal.

The European Library (TEL)

In the first session of the seminar presentations of intermediate results of the workpackages in "The European Library" (TEL) project³ were given. TEL is a pioneering collaboration between a number of European national libraries, created under the auspices of CENL, the Conference of European National Librarians. The objective of TEL is to set-up a co-operative framework which will lead to a system for access to the major national and deposit collections (mainly digital, but not precluding paper) in Europe's national libraries. TEL's principal aim is to establish a professionally designed and maintained single access point to selected parts of the libraries' holdings so that the informed citizen in any country can utilise the resources not only of his or her own national library but also, during the same session, the resources of any other partner national libraries which may hold material relevant to his or her interest. Initially, the feasibility of this venture is being tested, with part-funding of the European Commission as an 'accompanying measure' under the cultural heritage applications area of Key Action 3 of the Information Society Technologies (IST) research programme. The project started in February 2001 and will run until January 2004. The TEL partners are the national libraries of Finland, Germany, Italy, Netherlands, Portugal, Slovenia, Switzerland and the United Kingdom, along with ICCU, the national central cataloguing institute from Italy, and CENL. In time it is anticipated that more and more of the CENL member libraries will join the enterprise as full partners.

At the end of the project phase there will not be an operational service. However, the TEL partners have committed themselves to establish a TELService which will be launched at the Annual CENL Meeting in September 2004. The nature of the TELService will be a portal giving access to the combined resources of national libraries in Europe and allowing free resource discovery for digital and non-digital materials. For this purpose all title level metadata will be provided freely to TEL by the TEL partners and will be searchable freely by TEL users. It will offer integrated cross-collection searching and the delivery of both free and priced digital objects. The availability of legal deposit material via TEL is likely to be very limited, particularly in the short term. Therefore, the real potential will be in (digitised) heritage material and licensed material. To achieve this service the evaluation of different technical options is now under way. The solution to be found must be very robust, highly scaleable and widely accessible. Authentication and multilingual searching are in the early stages of development and will not be available within the TELService at launch, while the website of the TELService will be multilingual providing all languages of the TEL partners. Regarding metadata a TEL application profile was developed and the concept of a TEL metadata registry was introduced. The TELService will be funded by subscriptions of the TEL partner libraries and the costs comprise the hardware and software needed for the portal, the building and the maintenance of the database as well as personnel costs for

¹ <http://www.kb.nl/gabriel/2003workshop/index.html>

² <http://www.bn.pt>

³ <http://www.europeanlibrary.org>

a small team of support staff. TEL should be set up under the aegis of CENL and should be integrated with Gabriel at the service level.

Gabriel

Since its foundation in 1995 Gabriel⁴, the World Wide Web service of the European national libraries, has established itself as the official network service of the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) and has undergone a continuous development. The service is supervised and maintained by a European board and team which is co-ordinated by the National Library of the Netherlands. At present, 41 libraries from 39 European countries are represented in Gabriel. Via Gabriel access to varied information sources and numerous online catalogues and services provided by the European national libraries is offered. Gabriel is the only trans-European library service.

From 2001 the Gabriel website has been redesigned and restructured and was relaunched in summer 2002. The new Gabriel website offers a better navigation, an upgraded graphical lay-out and a search engine for searching the websites of all European national libraries.

Besides the maintenance of the website Gabriel offers a platform for European collaboration and activities: In 2001 a survey on international and European projects the CENL libraries are involved in was carried out and the results are published on the Gabriel website.⁵ This survey was very informative and CENL decided that it will be updated annually from 2004. In May and June 2003 a joint questionnaire about Gabriel and TEL was set up on the Gabriel website. The questionnaire comprised questions about the respondent, about the use of the Internet, of libraries and of the current Gabriel website, and about future requirements from Gabriel and TEL. At the beginning of June 550 users had already responded to the questionnaire. The results of this questionnaire will be analysed and published on the Gabriel website. They will be important for the further development of Gabriel and the integration of TEL at the service level.

The success of Gabriel depends heavily on the contribution of the Gabriel contacts in all CENL libraries. When Gabriel was introduced in 1997 an international Gabriel workshop and colloquium was held successfully in Warsaw for the Gabriel contacts. Topics were the World Wide Web services of the national libraries in general and of Gabriel in particular. In 2001 the second international Gabriel workshop was held in combination with the first European Library Seminar to introduce the TEL project in Ljubljana. Besides initial information on the TEL project, the event provided presentations on various topics concerning the web services of the national libraries which resulted in the adoption of the "Ljubljana Recommendations"⁶. This third Gabriel workshop in Lisbon presented intermediate results of TEL, actual information on Gabriel and aimed at stimulating international co-operation, sharing ideas and experience regarding the World Wide Web in general and Gabriel in particular.

Integration of Gabriel and TEL

It is anticipated that after the end of the project phase of TEL the Gabriel and TEL project websites will be maintained separately until the launch of the TELService. CENL

⁴ <http://www.kb.nl/gabriel/>

⁵ <http://www.kb.nl/gabriel/>; see „Projects and partnerships“

⁶ <http://www.europeanlibrary.org>; see Workshops and conferences, June 2001, "Recommendations for the National Libraries regarding the creation of European Information Portals"

member libraries will get access to the interoperability testbeds developed in TEL for testing purposes. After the expected launch of TELService in September 2004 a common homepage for both services at the URLs of the Gabriel mirror sites will be created and the integrational work will be started: one entrance for all services and collections of all CENL libraries, a uniform look-and-feel, one solution for searching collections and websites, one name for the whole service, probably a completely new one. The agreements about financial, organisational and technical arrangements will be reached between the CENL libraries and the TEL partners.

Digital Library

Besides news from TEL and Gabriel the 2nd European Library Seminar / 3rd Gabriel Workshop offered a wide range of presentations on various aspects of the Digital Library: starting with a presentation on various projects at the Biblioteca Nacional of Portugal, followed by the introduction of the digital deposit system developed by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in the Netherlands⁷ and an overview of digitization projects of the National Library of Russia⁸ on the first workshop day. On the second day the new local library system, the new web interface and the RFID technology for reading rooms of the Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana⁹ was presented, followed by an introduction to the InterParty project¹⁰ and ended with a spontaneous presentation of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina¹¹. All these projects and activities respond to the advantages the Internet offers for libraries and their user services. They enhance the online services of the European national libraries and consequently widen the range of services which are offered via Gabriel.

Conclusion

The participants judged the workshop to be very fruitful and informative and agreed on the continuation of the European Library Seminars / Gabriel Workshops every two years. The next one is expected to be in 2005 after the launch of TELService and at the beginning of the integration of TEL and Gabriel.

⁷ http://www.kb.nl/kb/resources/frameset_kenniscentrum.html

⁸ <http://www.nlr.ru:8101/eng/>

⁹ <http://www.vatlib.it/urbs/frsetPresentation.asp>

¹⁰ <http://www.interparty.org/>

¹¹ <http://www.bibalex.org>