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Feel free to pass this newsletter on to anyone you think might be interested.

### News

This newsletter is becoming more and more irregular, it is supposed to come out every 2 months, the last was December 2005 and if you have been waiting with uncontrollable desire for the next update on The European Library I can only apologise. I will try not to make this newsletter overly long as a result!

Many of you will have seen the [EC](#) and [CENL](#) press releases, placing The European Library at the heart of the proposed European Digital Library. This represents a very exciting opportunity and we are looking at ways of making it happen within the timescales published.

We welcome 3 new Executive Group members resulting from the Management Board decision to broaden this decision making group of The European Library. The new members are: Lucien Scotti of the Bibliothèque nationale de France as a permanent member together with Marie-Christine Doffey of the Swiss National Library and Hans Petschar of the Österreichische Nationalbibliothek, who are serving for 1 year and 6 months respectively as part of a rotation through the members to gain wider understanding. These new representatives join Fernanda Campos, The European Library Chair of the Biblioteca Nacional, Portugal, Lynne Brindley of the British Library and Wim van Drimmelen from the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, Netherlands.

We are in negotiation with the EU to agree on the proposed European Digital Library (EDL) project under eContentPlus. This project will bring within 18 months the digitised content of the rest of the EU member state libraries, plus the 2 EFTA libraries into The European Library. Adding 9 more national libraries in the shape of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain and Sweden.

Our second user survey has been completed with many thanks to those of you who took the time to reply. We received 765 replies from 20 countries so hope to have some useful information on how to proceed next. This also means that we raised 1530 euros for [Book Aid International](#) .

[Next Page Foundation](#) has asked The European Library to create a Romany collection. This involves asking all the partner libraries to digitise their Romany holdings, so that their data can be held centrally and searched. This project will be managed by the Serbian National Library, on behalf of The European Library.

### The European Library Portal

#### Usability

One of our greatest problems is making the site usable for the uninitiated user. We are very aware that the user would like to be able to search across all the information held in the libraries and retrieve integrated results. However until we can take the metadata from the national libraries and hold it separately, this goal remains elusive. At the moment a large percentage of the partners are only accessible as z39:50

targets, with un-harvestable data. Therefore at the last Management Board the need for national libraries to make their data OAI harvestable and where possible to concentrate on the creation of full text was approved. This means that eventually The European Library will harvest and index the data in its central index, together with any other metadata supplied by the library, but the item itself will remain located at the library. We are therefore also reinvestigating the use of permanent identifiers to ensure that the links to the items remain valid.

From the user point of view this will mean they do not have to choose collections before they search as most of the searching will be undertaken centrally in the manner of large search engines, and the user will receive integrated results that can be sorted or ranked as preferred. An example of this can be seen now in The European Library. If you run a simple search, using the default collections, the first collection that appears in the results is all the digitised material that we have harvested from partner libraries. This covers some of the collections of Slovenia, Serbia, Portugal, Italy, France and the Netherlands. The aim is to be able to access all the collections in this way.

A new version of the site will be launched on May 2<sup>nd</sup>. This version has been subjected to testing by users, as the home page has altered to include direct access to collections by subject and media type. This version aims to improve the understanding of the type of material accessible through The European Library and how to search it, until we can index everything centrally. Other presentation and navigation improvements have been made again in line with feedback and user tests, we welcome your feedback on this new version – for a preview go to [www.dev.theeuropeanlibrary.org/el\\_eric](http://www.dev.theeuropeanlibrary.org/el_eric)

### Digital Material

Our other large problem is the lack of digitised items; the amount currently digitised of the national library holdings is we think under 3% of the total possible. All the libraries have digitised their catalogues, but this can be very frustrating to the user who ends up at the library doors unable to see the item that is there in a digital format. But more on this in the next newsletter...

### Multilingual Search

The European Library has begun to investigate the use of MACS – Multilingual ACcess to Subjects – in the portal. MACS aims to provide multilingual subject access to library catalogues. MACS enables users to simultaneously search the catalogues of the project's partner libraries in the language of their choice (English, French, and German). We would like to integrate the service seamlessly into the search query, so the user searching peace will also automatically retrieve records mentioning paix and Frieden.

### Collection Descriptions

One of the means of accessing the rich resources on the site is via the Collection Descriptions; these also allow us to create a degree of multilingual searching. We have upgraded the site to use the NISO standard for Collection Descriptions and are in the process of upgrading all and improving all of them. The Contacts should expect to hear from a freelancer undertaking this work for us in the next couple of weeks.

## Metadata Registry

One of the projects that came to light as a result of TEL ME MOR was the need to make The European Library Metadata Registry easier for new partners to understand and use. A metadata registry group has been formed. This is a cross working group formation, using experts from both the Technical Working Group and the Contacts Group of The European Library, together with the expertise of UKOLN and CORES. A requirements analysis has been undertaken so that a new functional specification can be written and implemented. We aim to have a new version by September of this year.

The need to get our own metadata registry in order, set us to thinking of the benefits of being able to crosswalk automatically between metadata schemas within the library world and outside. We have therefore started a project that will be launched at ELAG 2006 in Budapest, in the form of a workshop. Julie Verleyen of The European Library and Oliver Greening on behalf of UKOLN will be running a workshop to determine if a European Metadata Registry is necessary and if so what it should be. All contributions from experts and non-experts will be very gratefully received. If you are going to be at ELAG please support Julie and Oliver in trying to make world more interoperable.

## **Working Groups**

The Contacts Working Group met in a snowy Frankfurt on the 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> March. Topics were wide ranging and including a fruitful high level meeting with MICHAEL, to discuss ways we might consider working together.

The Technical Working Group met at the Bibliothèque nationale de France, where we also had a joint workshop with [DELOS](#) resulting in the launching of the following joint projects:

1. Validation and refinement of the digital library reference model through interaction with The European Library
2. Multi-Lingual Information Access in The European Library
3. Personalization capabilities in The European Library
4. Improving the user interface design for The European Library, navigation and visualization services

For details on the progress of these projects check out the 'joint projects' link under 'About us', on The European Library.

The Editorial Working Group will meet in May in Croatia to develop ways of creating more content for The European Library and to look at ways of marketing the site to all the countries within [CENL](#). The programme for the 2 days can be found at <http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/croatia2006/> and we welcome participants from every member of CENL.

## **People**

We have a new Marketer on board, Fleur Stigter. Fleur is concentrating on our search engine promotion, to make the resource [www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org](http://www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org) more widely known. This includes a large scale linking programme, so if anyone would like a reciprocal link to The European Library, please sign up on our new links page at

[www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org/links](http://www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org/links). Fleur has been working on optimising the pages of The European Library for English language researchers. In the next phase they will be optimised for French and German and we hope to follow this with all the partner languages. In addition we are using a freelancer to improve our links in Italy.

## **Jobs**

The European Library is looking to fill 2 new posts – a Technical Developer, to join our team of two in the Office and an Editor to take on the role of creating and organising content on the site, and maybe getting this newsletter out in reasonable, regular time slots! Both these jobs can be viewed at <http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/jobs>

## **TEL ME MOR**

Finally The European Library will be speaking at the three regional expert workshops being held in Poland, Hungary and Slovenia in April and May. For more details please go to <http://www.telmemor.net/dec05.php#3>

Warm Regards, Jill

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