

Press Release [www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org](http://www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org)

## **The European Library – European Digital Library in Action** *More Libraries, More Collections, More Speed*

The European Library [www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org](http://www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org) launched version 1.1 last week. First launched as a Beta site in March this year, the service has used the intervening time to gather feedback and conduct surveys on the live site in order to improve the offering in line with user needs and desires.

There are now 113 searchable collections across 12 libraries, with access to a further 30 as hyperlinks. Early 2006 will see the addition of 3 more national libraries and their collections and by the end of 2006 there will be at least 23 libraries and more than 200 searchable collections online.

This access to millions of documents and digital items across Europe represents the true beginnings of a European Digital Library. By participating in this service the national libraries involved have to make their collections conform to metadata and searching standards which makes the service interoperable in practice. Over time improvements are made to the basic metadata and remote servers therefore increasing the accuracy of search and retrieval on the portal.

Searches can be launched across geographical borders into collections that cannot be crawled and indexed by the big search engines. Some wonderful images can be seen online e.g.: a search for army in the posters collections or for Africa in the maps and atlases collections, but the researcher can also find references to their interests held in libraries other than their own national one.

All based on very simple, very cheap portal in the browser technology that gives access to rich data seams for all interested in being able to use Europe's cultural heritage at their desktops. The software for this solution is available for free and we would encourage others in the cultural sectors to use it so that interoperability between sectors can be given a kick start.

We welcome further feedback and will conduct another user survey in the spring of 2006 to decide what our next priorities should be for searchers.

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