

PRESS RELEASE - February 2006

Constantly Seeking User Feedback

The second The European Library user opinion survey

The European Library (www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org) conducted a user survey on its Beta site last summer to find out user opinion and requirements. All the user responses were incorporated into the first release of The European Library in November of 2005. We now want to find out from users what they think our next areas of improvement should be.

Our greatest issue is making a portal work for the user. The European Library conducts a very useful service in bringing together in one place digital collections and catalogues from national libraries across Europe. It uses what is available in terms of metadata and search protocols rather than waiting for each library to have crawl-able data. Therefore it is bringing to the web information that would otherwise only be accessible within the library itself. This does however give rise to issues in user expectations. Can we persuade the Google generation to use a portal i.e. choose the collections they want to search in before launching their query, and if so how?

Together with IRN Research (www.irn-research.com) and in co-operation with the national libraries of Austria, Britain, Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Netherlands, Portugal, Serbia, Slovenia and Switzerland an online survey has been created and is available in:

Croatian: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_croatian.htm

English: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_english.htm

Estonian: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_estonian.htm

Finnish: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_finnish.htm

French: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_french.htm

German: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_german.htm

Italian: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_italian.htm

Latvian: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_latvian.htm

Portuguese: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_portuguese.htm

Serbian: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_serbian.htm

Slovenian: www.irn-research.com/EuroLib/europeanlibrary2_slovenian.htm

The survey is mainly about the understanding the portal structure of choosing collections prior to searching and the developers would be very grateful to any researcher able to give 10-15 minutes worth of time checking the site and answering the 7 minute questionnaire. As last time, The European Library will donate 2 Euros to Book Aid International (www.bookaid.org/cms.cgi/site/index.htm) for every completed questionnaire it receives. The answers given will help The European Library to decide the best way to develop the portal for the benefit of its users.

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The European Library is a portal for accessing the digital collections of 15 of the National Libraries of Europe. The European Library is owned by the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) (www.cenl.org) and aims to access digital collections from all 45 member libraries within the next 5 years.

IRN provides market research and business information consultancy to large and small organisations across a broad range of industry sectors.