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## EDITORIAL

Welcome to the latest edition of ALISS Quarterly. It has been published by ALISS (Association of Librarians and Information Professionals in the Social Sciences).

This special issue addresses Information and resources relating to Europe. It arose from our December 2009 Xmas event which focused upon information resources relating to European Social policy. Papers from this event can be viewed online.

EU social Agenda – Grace Hudson  
(<http://www.slideshare.net/heatherdawson/eu-social-agenda>) University of Bradford – a really useful summary of the history of EU social policy agendas.

European Information sources for Social care –  
(<http://www.slideshare.net/heatherdawson/european-information-sources-for-social-care>) an overview of good sites from Julie Robinson of SCIE

EU online Information usage 2009 –  
(<http://www.slideshare.net/heatherdawson/eu-online-information-usage-2009>) a survey of usage of EU sites by Angela Joyce University of Bristol.

The journal contains extended versions of all of these. In the first section Grace Hudson offers an informative overview of the history and current nature of the EU social Agenda. She also provides useful tips on starting points for research. Julie Robinson of Scie details a mind map of useful sites covering EU social care which every researcher should know about! And Angela Joyce from the University of Bristol shares the results of her survey of user's perceptions of EU internet sites. Find out what they recommend and what they don't like!

The second section highlights the services offered by a number of specialist EU libraries: The British Library's European Documentation centre and the European Commission Library.

Finally the issue moves on to highlight a number of pan-European projects. The European elections web archive project which involved a number of key European libraries working collaboratively to capture and create digital archives of websites relating to the June 2009 European elections. The DART project which is seeking to increase access to online theses in Europe. The issue does not neglect information literacy as finally we hear from Jane Alderson-Rice how the university of Kent is helping to support researchers in European studies based in Brussels.

Remember that you can keep up to date with ALISS news by subscribing to our free electronic mailing list

LIS\_SOCIAL SCIENCE at <http://www.jiscmail.ac.uk/lists/LIS-SOCIALSCIENCE.html> or consulting our website at: <http://www.alissnet.org.uk>

We hope you enjoy the issue!

Heather Dawson.  
ALISS Secretary



## EU Social Agenda: policies, initiatives and sources

Grace Hudson, Head of Library Services, University of Bradford

### EU Context

Social policy in the European Union sits within a different framework from that of national governments. Policies and, more specifically, legislative measures may only be proposed within the competencies of the EU as laid down in the treaties. Outside these areas, the EU has no legal base to introduce regulation. The principles of subsidiarity and proportionality must also be observed. This means in practice that measures should not be taken at EU level which are better dealt with at national level and that they should be proportionate to the need, rather than creating excessive and unnecessary regulation. The treaties also determine the decision making process to be followed, whether that be by unanimous decision or by qualified majority voting. With the expansion from a founding group of six countries to the current membership of twenty-seven member states, this can make a significant impact on the successful adoption of changes.

In contrast to the American economic model, the European social model demonstrates a strong commitment to social policy by all member states with the exception of Britain under the Conservative government of 1979-1997. Even there however Britain was closer to the European model with social security provision, health care, social housing, unemployment benefits and more in place.

### Founding Treaty

Right from the original founding treaty, the Treaty of Rome 1957, there has been provision for social policy. The definition however was a narrow one with the focus simply on:

- Working conditions
- Standard of living
- Equal pay for equal work
- Social security of migrants
- Increased mobility for workers

Wider policy remained in the hands of the member states. In practice in the 1960s policy focused mainly on labour mobility, but with subsequent treaty reforms the scope of social policy was extended and changes were made to the way in which decisions were made so that it was no longer dependent on unanimity.

### Policies and Initiatives

In response to the difficult economic climate of the 1970s the first Social Action Programme was launched in 1974 – the first of a number of such four year programmes. Its aim was to promote full employment, better living and working conditions, workers' participation in decision making and equal treatment of men and women in the workplace. It also established two important agencies, the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions and the European Centre for the Development of

Vocational Training (CEDEFOP). Despite the flush of enthusiasm little legislation was passed: only measures on workers' consultation rights and equal pay and treatment for women were adopted. Key concerns were the disparities between rich and poor regions. To combat this money was made available through the structural funds to aid the development of poorer regions and to tackle unemployment, promote education and training, develop skills and encourage the employment of under-represented groups such as women and young people. The European Social Fund was established in the founding treaty in 1957 but was expanded in the 1970s; the European Regional Development Fund was set up in 1975 to reduce regional disparities; and later, the Cohesion Fund was created in 1992 with the aim of reducing social and economic disparities through focusing mainly on environmental and transport issues.

The late 1980s and early 1990s were the hey days of an ideological approach to social policy. The Single European Act 1986 introduced a new title (chapter) on economic and social cohesion. It established the principle of qualified majority voting on issues relating to the health and safety of workers, instead of a requirement for unanimous agreement. This opportunity was used by the European Commission to enact a range of social policy legislation but it raised a number of legal challenges. Britain, for example, objected to the Working Time Directive 1993<sup>1</sup> being adopted under the legal base of health and safety but this challenge was rejected by the Court of Justice<sup>2</sup>.

The Single European Act also brought in the concept of Social Dialogue where the Commission was required to develop a dialogue between employers and employees, involving trade unions at a European level. A review of the structural funds resulted in a substantial increase in funding to fight long-term unemployment and draw young people in particular into work through vocational training.

Countering the emphasis on economic development through the achievement of the single market reforms, there was renewed focus on the social dimension. Social policy needed to be developed without losing competitiveness outside Europe and there were also fears of 'social dumping' with concerns that companies would relocate to countries with lower labour costs or that countries would lose market share because of their progressive social policies and higher costs. Delors reviewed the social consequences of the single market and in an attempt to promote the social dimension introduced the Community Charter on the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers (Social Charter)<sup>3</sup> – described by Thatcher as the 'socialist charter'. This was adopted in 1989 by eleven member states, but not the UK. The resulting annual report was a useful guide to the current status of social policy but the action programme which identified forty-seven measures, only seventeen of which were new, was an indication of the poor performance in implementation and produced disappointing results with the adoption of only eight less contentious directives. Unanimity on draft directives such as works councils, transport for the disabled, length of the working week, and atypical work was blocked, not always by the UK.

In a further treaty reform it was proposed that the provisions of the Social Charter should be incorporated into the Maastricht Treaty. This social chapter was strongly opposed by Major and as a result the chapter was taken out of the treaty and added as a protocol to which the UK did not subscribe. Despite opting out of the Social Protocol, Britain was



still bound by the terms of the Treaty of Rome as revised by later treaties. Under the Maastricht Treaty 1992 social issues were now core policy and included such concerns as the protection of children and young people, freedom of association, public health, and help for the elderly and disabled. A number of programmes stemmed from these terms.

This resulted in an anomalous situation for the UK, a two tier process which was to foreshadow future arrangements with the Euro zone. In practice little legislation was adopted under the Social Protocol: only two directives on European works councils<sup>4</sup> and parental leave<sup>5</sup> used this legal base, while other legal bases were used where possible. Further negotiations on treaty reform coincided with the election of the Labour government in 1997 and a policy swing which brought agreement to the full incorporation of the Social Protocol into the Amsterdam Treaty 1997 and the implementation by the UK of these two directives. The new Treaty also broadened the objectives of equality from equal pay for equal work to wider equal opportunities and combating discrimination based not just on sex but also on race, religion, age, ethnicity and sexual orientation.

This was a pragmatic approach by the Labour government, rather than a commitment to a major socialist change, and it signalled also a more pragmatic approach by the EU. The 1990s produced serious concerns about unemployment and competitiveness. A White Paper on the development of social policy in the period 1995-1999 (1994) focused on job creation, labour mobility, equal opportunity, and integration of social and economic policies. There was no significant legislative agenda in the next social action programme; instead the focus was more on discussion.

The Social Policy Agenda was adopted in 2000 as part of the Lisbon Strategy for jobs and growth. Key objectives were:

- More and better jobs
- New balance between flexibility and security in a changing work environment
- Combating poverty, social exclusion, and discrimination
- Modernising social security protection systems
- Promoting equality between men and women
- Reinforcing the social dimension of enlargement and external relations

The Lisbon Strategy<sup>6</sup> was aimed at 'modernising the European social model, investing in people and combating social exclusion'. To this end it adopted the use of the Open Method of Co-ordination. Instead of the normal legislative process, OMC relies on regular reports, benchmarking, comparing best practice, setting targets, scorecards, and peer pressure. This has been applied particularly in the area of employment but is being extended to other area including education and training, and youth policy. For employment it has deployed methods such as National Reform Programmes, Joint Employment Reports, Action Plans and Annual Progress Reports and has proved more effective in achieving progress than trying to introduce binding legislation through traditional procedures.

As a follow up from the revised Lisbon Strategy, the Communication on the Social Agenda<sup>7</sup> identified two key priorities: employment, and fighting poverty and promoting equal opportunities. This encompasses employment of women, managing restructuring through social dialogue, and promoting the inclusion of older people in the workplace

('active aging'). After completion of the legislative programme ahead of schedule, a Renewed Social Agenda<sup>8</sup> has been introduced in 2008, promoting the concept of 'flexicurity' designed to ensure flexibility of employment while ensuring security of opportunities. At the same time the European Social Fund budget for 2007-13 has been expanded to 75 billion euros to support this objective.

### Next steps

There is a target for eradicating poverty by 2010. To that end 2010 is to be the European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion<sup>9</sup>. Beyond that, with the appointment of a new Commission and the setting of new priorities for a future legislative programme, a consultative process has been launched based on the draft consultation on the future EU 2020 strategy<sup>10</sup>. Progress on EU objectives has been slow, as indicated by the fact that labour mobility has been an explicit aim since the Treaty of Rome, yet there remain blocks to employment through the lack of recognition of qualifications across the EU. Nevertheless significant progress has been made and there is scope for important progress as social policy remains a central plank of EU policy.

### Sources of information

The Europa website<sup>11</sup>, though not an intuitive site to use, has a wealth of information giving the official perspective on EU social policy together with legislation and statistical data but this needs to be balanced by comment and analysis, and critical peer reviewed academic studies. A key official site is that of the Directorate General for Employment and Social Affairs<sup>12</sup> which, in addition to background information, gives direct access to summaries of legislation<sup>13</sup>; the full text of the treaties, directives and other legislative measures through the EUR-Lex database<sup>14</sup>; MISSOC social security data<sup>15</sup>; and the progress achieved on employment under the Open Method of Co-ordination<sup>16</sup>. The European Commission has created a number of fact sheets<sup>17</sup> while the European Parliament<sup>18</sup> has produced its own take on this subject. The EU Bookshop<sup>19</sup> enables purchase or free download of publications on social policy (as opposed to 'documents' available via EUR-Lex) with new digital archive developments ensuring access to older out of print material. Agencies such as the European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions<sup>20</sup> together with CEDEFOP<sup>21</sup> have produced an invaluable range of publications, while Eurostat<sup>22</sup> (Statistical Office of the European Union) provides a depth of current and retrospective statistical data free of charge. Eurobarometer public opinion polls<sup>23</sup> offer interesting insights and portals such as the EURES<sup>24</sup> job mobility portal and Health-EU<sup>25</sup> are also good access points. In contrast to the official EU perspective, the database European Sources Online<sup>26</sup> has both a range of bibliographic data and full text information on this topic as well as a specific policy guide<sup>27</sup> with links to key texts.

### Additional reading

Büchs, M. (2007) *New governance in European social policy*. London: Palgrave Macmillan  
 European Commission. (2009) *Social situation in the European Union 2008*.  
 Luxembourg: EC (annual)

Hantrais, L. (2007) *Social policy in the European Union*. 3rd ed. London: Palgrave Macmillan  
 Marlier, E. et al. (2007) *The EU and social inclusion: facing the challenges*.  
 Bristol: Policy Press

### Useful Journals

*Forum 21: European Journal on Child and Youth Policy*.  
 Leicester: National Youth Agency, 2008-  
 [Continued from *Forum 21: European Journal on Youth Policy*, 2003-2008]  
*Forum 21: European Journal on Child and Youth Research*.  
 Leicester: National Youth Agency, 2008-  
*Social Agenda* [online]. Luxembourg: EC, 2002-  
 Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=737&langId=en>

### References

- 1 Council Directive 93/104/EC
- 2 Case C-84/94 ECR 1996 I-05755
- 3 Community Charter on the Fundamental Social Rights of Workers [http://aei.pitt.edu/4629/01/003998\\_1.pdf](http://aei.pitt.edu/4629/01/003998_1.pdf)
- 4 Council Directive 97/94/EC
- 5 Council Directive 96/34/EC
- 6 Lisbon Strategy for Growth and Jobs [http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/growthandjobs/index_en.htm)
- 7 European Commission (2005) *Communication from the Commission on the social agenda*. Luxembourg, EC. COM (2005) 33 final
- 8 European Commission (2008) *Renewed social agenda: opportunities, access and solidarity in 21st century Europe*. Luxembourg, EC. COM (2008) 412 final
- 9 European Year for Combating Poverty and Social Exclusion <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?langId=en&catId=637>
- 10 European Commission (2009) *Consultation on the future 'EU 2020' strategy*. Luxembourg: EC. COM (2009) 647 provisional
- 11 Europa <http://europa.eu>
- 12 European Commission. Directorate General for Employment, Social Affairs and Equal Opportunities <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=737&langId=en>
- 13 Summaries of EU legislation [http://europa.eu/legislation\\_summaries/employment\\_and\\_social\\_policy/index\\_en.htm](http://europa.eu/legislation_summaries/employment_and_social_policy/index_en.htm)
- 14 EUR-Lex – access to EU law <http://eur-lex.europa.eu/en/index.htm>
- 15 European Commission (2009) *Mutual information system on social protection* [online]. Available at [http://ec.europa.eu/employment\\_social/missoc/db/public/compareTables.do](http://ec.europa.eu/employment_social/missoc/db/public/compareTables.do) [Accessed 27th November 2009]
- 16 Open Method of Coordination <http://ec.europa.eu/social/main.jsp?catId=753&langId=en>
- 17 European Commission *What social Europe can do for you: factsheets* [online] Available at <http://ec.europa.eu/social/BlobServlet?docId=506&langId=en> [Accessed 9th December 2009]
- 18 European Parliament (2009) *Fact sheets on the European Union: common policies* [online]. Available at <http://www.europarl.europa.eu/parliament/expert/displayFtu.do?language=EN&id=74&ftId=index.html#theme4> [Accessed 9th December 2009]
- 19 EU Bookshop [http://bookshop.europa.eu/eubookshop/index.action?request\\_locale=EN](http://bookshop.europa.eu/eubookshop/index.action?request_locale=EN)
- 20 European Foundation for the Improvement of Living and Working Conditions <http://www.eurofound.europa.eu>
- 21 European Centre for the Development of Vocational Training (CEDEFOP) <http://www.cedefop.europa.eu/default.asp>
- 22 Eurostat <http://epp.eurostat.ec.europa.eu/portal/page/portal/eurostat/home>

- 23 Eurobarometer [http://ec.europa.eu/public\\_opinion/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/public_opinion/index_en.htm)
- 24 EURES – the European job mobility portal <http://ec.europa.eu/eures/home.jsp?lang=en>
- 25 Health-EU – the public health portal of the EU [http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/health-eu/index_en.htm)
- 26 European Sources Online <http://www.europeansources.info>
- 27 Davies, E. (2008) *Employment and labour market policy*. Cardiff: Cardiff University (European Sources Online, Information guide) Available at <http://www.europeansources.info/servlet/showDoc?ID=1041898>. [Accessed 9th December 2009]



## European Information resources for social care

Julie Robinson, Project Information Officer,  
Social Care Institute for Excellence

Finding information about Europe or the EU can make even the most experienced information professional break into a cold sweat. So finding European information on a specialised subject can be an even bigger headache.

'Social care' describes personal care services to children and adults who need help with aspects of daily living. Often, but not exclusively, people need this help as a result of disability, illness or aging. In the UK, 2.8 million people receive some form of social care.<sup>1</sup> There are many European related resources, but coverage is patchy.

This is a first attempt to draw together diverse resources, and I hope that it will provide a much needed map of knowledge on the subject. Having access to European information sources is important in order to try to overcome the Anglo-Saxon bias in key information sources. This is especially important when supporting research as it helps to make the sources selected for a study more relevant and reliable.

The results will be made available as a downloadable mind map<sup>2</sup> in FreeMind (freeware) from the ALISS website <http://www.alissnet.org.uk/> Alternatively, you can download the results as a word file with weblinks (also from the ALISS website).

### Resources selected

Resources selected include: journals; portals; databases (including library catalogues); organisations; and principal academic centres and researchers.

For practical reasons, I have tried to limit the resources selected to online information which is freely available, in the English language, and which is substantial.<sup>3</sup>

To help you make the most of the resource, it's worth making a few points about the resources I found and included in my selection, the reasons for my choices and suggestions for searching.

### Searching social care literature is challenging

The literature on social care generally is challenging for a number of reasons related to the nature of the literature. Firstly, it is very diverse and widely spread over a range of databases. Social Care Online is the only major database dedicated to this area, but although an excellent resource, it simply is not backed by the resources to be a social care equivalent of MEDLINE.<sup>4,5</sup>

Another feature of the literature is that is often grey or fugitive, making it even harder to find. SIGLE (System for Grey Literature in Europe), was a good resource for grey literature, but sadly no new material has been added since 2005.

A third feature of the literature is that the language used is often vague and fast-changing, and there is no equivalent to MESH for social care. There is not even a standard definition for 'social care'!

The larger commercial databases are US biased, with some not even indexing material from some continental European countries.<sup>6</sup>

The good news is that Social Care Online does index some of this material, including grey literature, making it a good one-stop shop.

### Deeper and deeper

Social care information is often included with (sometimes buried under) health information, so 'health' databases such as MEDLINE, EMBASE, and PschInfo are well worth searching.

The organisation of social welfare varies from country to county, so it is worth finding out about the country/countries you are researching as this may well influence your search strategy. Indeed, it might affect what you search for. This means you will need to think outside the health box and dig deeper.

### High level overviews

To help searchers who are unfamiliar with a country or its health and social care system get a handle on their searches, I have included websites which publish high-level overviews. The European Observatory's Health System Profiles are a good starting point. Reports follow a standard template, enabling cross-country comparisons to be made. These fully-referenced reports are written by experts with policy makers and analysts in mind - ideal for rapid reference harvesting.

### Focus on the Nordic/Norden countries\*

I have focused on the Nordic countries for a number of reasons. Firstly, they are broadly comparable to the UK in that they have a well-developed welfare state, and in that the fundamental social, economic and demographic trends are also broadly similar.<sup>7</sup> Secondly, the Nordic Model is based on progressive and innovative practice in social welfare.<sup>8</sup> The Norden also have a strong tradition of inter-regional co-operation which means that their research is often comparative, making it more likely to be useful.<sup>9</sup> This means that the UK can learn from the Norden. Nordic researchers and academics also tend to produce more material in English.

### National libraries -TEL me more

If you are looking for information from or about a particular country, that country's national library catalogue is probably worth a search. The European Library (TEL) makes this even easier. TEL searches the content of 48 of the national libraries in Europe, from Albania to the Vatican City. You can select which national library catalogue you want to search, and TEL also offers an online tutorial.

## Journals

I reviewed over one hundred, mainly peer-reviewed, English language journals by considering the contents of the latest issue, examining the journals own descriptions and/or aims, and scanning the composition of the editorial boards. Less than 10% of the social care related journals published in the English language have a genuinely European focus or significant European content. I have already noted the US bias in the larger, commercial databases. It would seem that this bias, or more accurately, an Anglo-Saxon bias, is also to be found in the journal literature. The continued dominance of the Anglo-Saxon world in published social welfare journals is striking.

## Conclusion

Yet, health and social care providers operate in an increasingly globalised context; researchers, students, policy makers and practitioners need information which is evidence-based.<sup>10</sup> This highlights the need

for information from all the best available evidence, not just some of it. Many of us work in a context stressing the need to share learning; and we all have a vested interest in improved public services. The information we find from European sources and about European countries has the potential to enhance this by transforming practice for the better.

## References

- 1 Author's definition.
  - 2 According to Wikipedia a mind map is 'a diagram used to represent words, ideas, tasks, or other items linked to and arranged around a central key word or idea.'  
<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mindmaps>. Accessed 2 September 2009.
  - 3 By substantial I mean longer documents such as research reports or journal articles, rather than information on the website itself or short articles. In addition, I have mainly selected sites that provide access to full text documents, rather than bibliographical lists.
  - 4 I am grateful to my colleague Janet Clapton, Project Information Manager, Social Care Institute for Excellence, for sharing these ideas with me.
  - 5 Social Care Online (<http://www.scie-socialcareonline.org.uk/>) is a database hosted by the Social Care Institute for Excellence which can be freely accessed at: Social Care Online is the UK's most extensive free database of social care information. There are over 110,000 records on Social Care Online (as of January 2009), including research briefings, reports, government documents, journal articles, and websites. Where possible a link is made to the full text of a document. When this is not available, an abstract is provided.
  - 6 Grayson, Lesley and Gomersall, Alan. A difficult business: finding the evidence for social science reviews. ESRC UK Centre for Evidence Based Policy and Practice: Working Paper 19. 2003, p5. It is worth noting that SIGLE was set up in part to counter-act this problem.
  - 7 At SCIE we regularly search at least one major health database such as MEDLINE when doing literature searches as standard procedure.
  - 8 The Nordic welfare model. Norden website.<http://www.norden.org/en/areas-of-co-operation/the-nordic-welfare-model>. Accessed 27 August 2009. Although it should be noted that the Nordic Model is distinctive.
  - 9 IBID.
  - 10 IBID. This is more complex than might first appear to the outsider; there are differences between the Nordic countries.
  - 11 Jacqui Lunday, Going global. Editorial. British Journal of Occupational Therapy. June 2009, 72(6), p237
- \*Nordic relates to Norway, Sweden, Denmark, Iceland and Finland. In Nordic languages, the term is 'Norden.'

## EU online information usage – take two

Angela Joyce, Research Officer, Intute  
<http://www.intute.ac.uk/>

This survey was a follow-up to one conducted in 2008, published in the Journal of Contemporary European Research. It aimed to produce a snapshot view of researchers' and librarians' use of online and paper resources about the European Union.

## Why?

A literature search revealed that there was almost no research on this and as a European researcher myself, I thought it a good idea to find out more about current behaviour. Findings will be disseminated via ALISS, the Intute blog and Twitter, to alert the community to trends in usage and perhaps gain some improvements.

## How?

A short online survey was conducted this November, using University of Bristol's BOS software. This was publicised via email lists such as WESLINE, and on social networks like Facebook and Twitter. A mix of open and multiple choice questions were asked, all optional.

## Results

A fairly good response of 122 replies came in. The most striking findings were: much feedback on the new Europa website, paper resources were still relatively popular, frequency of access was less than expected; people varied in their opinions on services, with likes and dislikes split.

## Who are you?

The majority of respondents were engaged in research on EU law or politics. Others were working in international relations, economics, EU integration, energy or social sciences. 73% considered themselves 'experienced' in online usage, 26% were 'intermediate' and just 1% were 'novices'.

## Most popular services and frequency of usage

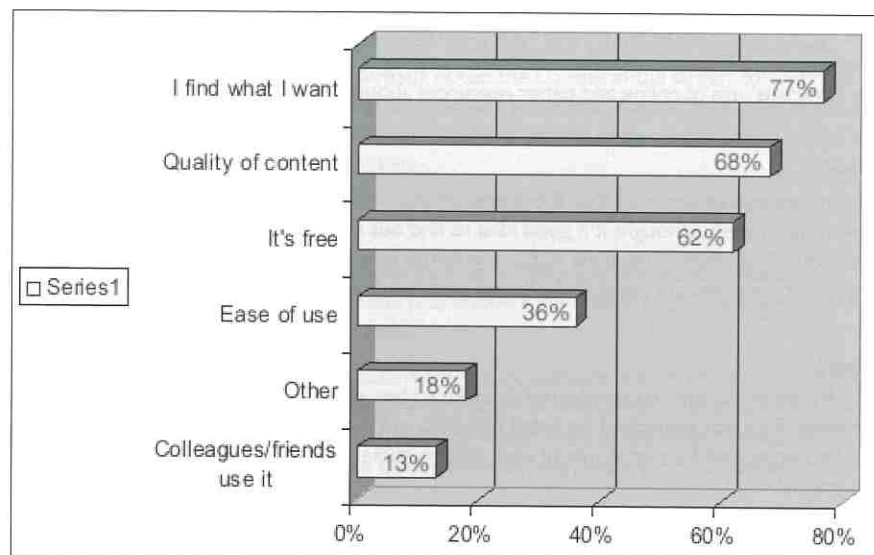
Only 50% of users accessed online information daily, with 33.9% going online weekly and 16.1% less. The most used services were the Europa website (103 people), then journals, search engines and news websites. Social networking services, eg. blogs, Twitter or Facebook were little used, with a mere 6 people claiming to use them!

## Your top five websites

There were no huge majority votes for the best website. 46 people picked Europa, but this compared with the 103 who used it most. EurLex came next (13). Others listed



included EUObserver, Eurostat, Google, Intute, Europarl, EurActiv, Curia, European Voice, BBC, ECLAS, EUtube, and Common Market Law Review. Why? See the table below for reasons:



Other reasons included:

*"It is updated daily*

*Many rss-feeds available.*

*Seriously useful library catalogue with supporting metadata for books and journals*

*The quality of the content is excellent; covers EU and non-EU sources; coverage is necessarily limited but it is always my first port of call when searching.*

*I often require primary sources from the EU institutions and bodies."*

(I did not ask them to match other comments to specific websites, which was a pity).

### Main issues with EU online services?

The main criticism was that sites were hard to navigate (52%) and that information was not available (22%). Sometimes no subscription was made by the person's own institution (12%). There were also some interesting open comments made:

*"On the Europa website they change the structure or the interface far too often. The EP has taken off its questions except those of the current year. The older Official Journals or their contents are not available.*

*Eur-lex is great but the search possibilities are completely inept for legal research.*

No top five in Question 5 as they are all poor. Websites are badly designed with poor search functions. Language used is not in plain English. The tone of many texts is patronising. Much information is badly communicated and presented. I could go on...

There is an overload of blogs and websites that have opinion articles, briefings and commentaries and a scarcity of pure informative sites.

As with any research, sometimes one must dig. The Europa site does tend to change URLs, but I can still usually find what I'm looking for with a little patience and ingenuity!"

### The new Europa website

This was launched in the Autumn and I was curious to gauge opinion on it. 54.5% did think it was easier to use, but 42.6% did not. 3% do not use it. Again, some enlightening comments were made. Out of 42 open responses, 21 were negative and 13 positive.

Some examples:

*"Better design.*

*Clearer headings. Less 'noise' on the homepage.*

*More attractive and user-friendly.*

*Website has clear headings and useful, relevant links.*

*It seemed to load faster. I also think it's easier for first-time users.*

*Looks prettier. Some things were easier to find.*

*Bureaucratic and tedious, usually wordy propaganda."*

Especially after the latest fundamental overhaul of the EU Commission's website quite a lot of real political substance (i.e. first hand political source, official documents and reports) seems to have been taken offline in favour of more PR-type content. The website lost much of its appeal and value for researchers working on the EU.

It is too gimmicky. In the attempt to make the site more 'user friendly' it is less of a useful resource for serious researchers. It seems to be much more aimed at casual users (eg with quizzes and games) and as a result it is much harder to find serious, official information eg policy documents or summaries of decisions.

Some of the material is out of date – particularly EUJHA. Some material is missing, e.g. Olaf. You need to know what should be there in order to find it.

Though maybe it's just a matter of getting used to the new website.

### How could EU online services be improved?

The most wanted things were better search facilities on sites, clearer layouts, easier access to the treaties, more joined-up EU websites and more up to date content. In terms of the style of sites, opinions differed: many people wanted a more serious approach



suitable for researchers, but others wanted more everyday language for the lay person. One potentially good suggestion was to have two interfaces for Europa – one for the public and one for researchers. This comment was made about Europarl:

*"European Parliament site needs to be easier to use – it's hard to find particular documents. Often the EU website in general only gives very general information without links to the actual documents (with some exceptions) – for example it would be wonderful if Rapid would link to all the documents they mention instead of just giving general information on their content. Also the documents from particular institutions need to be more freely available. It is very difficult to identify a particular document through the Commission register and sometimes even harder to get hold of the document (I have many times asked for documents and got the answer that they can not be obtained)."*

### **Paperless office?**

Usage varied, but one respondent used paper resources 75% of the time as 'Too much online searching is bad for the eyes.' Most did use online resources more, but a surprising number favoured paper: 'I prefer to read longer documents/articles on paper where possible so I can make notes etc.' The main trend was towards online however.

### **So – what main trends?**

To summarise: 59 respondents answered the final question, 'Have you noticed any changes or trends in EU online information in the last year?' 23 said there were no clear trends. Others commented on the growing number of services, which many welcomed, and some also thought quality was good. One comment, which we can probably all identify with was 'nothing, only that I'm sometimes too busy to read everything that I should read!'

One person was very impressed by Votewatch.eu, "exactly the kind of information I missed on the Parliament website.' They added 'Also the digital archive of EU Bookshop is a great step towards making the information more freely available (although I think it's an exaggeration that it contains ALL the publications, I have not been able to find everything there). I hope these examples show that we are on our way towards making EU documents more freely available and EU decision-making more transparent."

Of course this survey was fairly small, and one must be cautious about interpreting feedback. It is perhaps easier to make negative comments about websites, and for such a large and complex organisation as the EU, it is indeed hard to make available all the information in a simple format which will please the majority. However, it is hoped that this feedback has uncovered some interesting trends, and also that it may be taken up by providers of EU online services.

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## Finding articles on contemporary France

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For twenty-four years librarians from four UK university libraries have scanned a mixture of French, British and American periodicals in order to index articles dealing with aspects of France from 1789 onwards. Periodicals include academic journals such as French Politics, Culture and Society and French Cultural Studies, La Documentation Française publications such as *Problèmes politiques et sociaux* and *Regards sur l'actualité* but also weekly magazines such as *L'Express* and *Le Point*. Index terms cover topics ranging from agriculture to cinema, education, history, economics, consumer culture/standard of living, environmental issues, women, health, immigration, social problems and Francophonie (French language and culture outside France). Politics also features prominently; as well as the general politics heading, individual index terms are included for elections, President/government, left and right.

In October 1984 the first 'Index to selected periodical articles on contemporary France' appeared at the back of the Review published by the Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France. The founding contributors were Roger Macdonald of Portsmouth Polytechnic Library and Rosemary Moore of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Polytechnic Library who scanned nineteen periodicals between them with thirty-seven index terms covering the period April-June 1984. By the time of the second index in December 1984, Rosemary Smith of Leeds Polytechnic Library was named as contributor along with Roger Macdonald. The journal became *Modern and Contemporary France* in 1985 and by November that year, Jonathan Willson of Newcastle-upon-Tyne Polytechnic Library had joined the team. In April 1988 Grace Hudson of Bradford University Library replaced earlier participants and collaborated with Roger Macdonald on the index until he retired in 1996. David Francis of University of Portsmouth Library then stepped in to keep the Index running smoothly with Grace until Anne Worden took over the work at Portsmouth in Spring 1997. Anne and Grace then worked together on the Quarterly Periodical Index for 12 years.

Throughout this time entries were collected every three months using ProCite reference management software, with a typical quarter containing between 400 and 520 entries. Using ProCite meant that once entries from the different contributors had been combined and sent off to the journal publishers, students at Portsmouth and Bradford were able to benefit from a searchable version of the index, finding references to help with the successful completion of essays and dissertations. An online demonstration of one quarterly index, finished and uploaded just days earlier, was even demonstrated by one of the French lecturers at Portsmouth to a Teaching Quality Assessment auditor in 1996 (French at Portsmouth gained the joint highest mark in the country under that assessment regime).

Unlike commercial databases the structure of the records remains very basic due to constraints on time available from contributors but also due to the fact that whilst the index was being published in *Modern and Contemporary France*, space in the journal was limited. Thus, a typical record comprises article title, a very abbreviated form of

the journal title (e.g. RPP=Revue politique et parlementaire), volume, part, date and page numbers and finally up to three index terms chosen from the thirty-nine available (although most records have only one index term assigned, again, in order to save space within the printed journal). A sample record from the published index looks like this:

L'immigration: quel modèle Français? RPP 1017-1018, 03-04 2002, 050-059 (A full list of journal abbreviations was published each time the index appeared.)

The last printed index published in the journal *Modern and Contemporary France* appeared in May 2008 and covered Oct-Dec 2007. At this point the Index had grown to cover twenty-nine periodicals and thirty-nine index terms. Articles continued to be indexed at Portsmouth and Bradford for a further year so that an online version of the index containing 35,859 records covering 1989-2008 could then be made available on the Association for the Study of Modern and Contemporary France (ASMCF) website. The index is available as a fully searchable PDF document by logging into the Members' Area of the website <http://www.asmcf.org/members/> In order to access this online version, individual membership of ASMCF is needed (contact the membership secretary, Maggie Allison [m.e.allison@bradford.ac.uk](mailto:m.e.allison@bradford.ac.uk) to join).

Unfortunately, as most remaining language librarians now cover far more than just languages, competing demands on their time mean that the luxury of providing a free indexing service, useful though the contemporary France index is, is no longer sustainable. Many of the periodicals indexed are now available in other databases such as Nexis UK (for the weekly news magazines), International Bibliography of the Social Sciences, Persée or Web of Science, although no single database covers the range of publications – from academic journals to weekly news magazines – that used to be covered by the *Modern and Contemporary France* index.



## European Documentation Centres in the Digital Age

Ian Thomson, Director, European Documentation Centre, Cardiff University

### Introduction

The role of librarians in higher education libraries is evolving. This affects those librarians who have responsibility for 'special collections' within their library as much as for colleagues covering other areas of operation. In this article I discuss the evolving service that is provided by the European Documentation Centre at Cardiff University (Cardiff EDC). This includes the creation and publishing of a major electronic information service called *European Sources Online (ESO)*, the organising of 'events', active engagement with the wider community in South Wales, external training and consultancy work, as well as extensive information literacy sessions with students and researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines (as well as answering enquiries).

### European Documentation Centres

European Documentation Centres (EDCs) are the oldest of the information networks established by the European Commission. They are primarily based in higher education institutions across the European Union (EU) Member States. They are intended to encourage and facilitate the study of, and research into, the EU and the European integration process. This is achieved by providing expertise on searching for information on the European Union and access to the primary information sources of the EU. In the United Kingdom there are currently forty two EDCs.<sup>1</sup> EDCs are not propaganda centres for the EU and are intended to provide a professional and objective information service.

Needless to say, the role of EDCs in the digital age has been questioned by the European Commission, by library managers and by EDC personnel. The very name 'European Documentation Centre' seems redolent of another age. For many EDCs the professional librarian nominally responsible for the Centre has also many additional responsibilities. The massive expansion of electronic availability of both EU documents and publications, plus other information about the EU, reduces the need for the maintenance of numerous, large (but not comprehensive) paper collections of EU documentation. There has been a significant expansion of other EU information networks to serve other sectors, in particular the Europe Direct Information Centres serving the general public.<sup>2</sup>

The role of the EDC in the digital age is a question which I ask myself regularly – partly because I am one of the few EDC Librarians who has fashioned a career out of 'specialising' in this small corner of the information world and would like to maintain his 'value' for a few more years. Partly also because I fear that the EDCs continue to exist because no-one can actually be bothered to either seriously work out a new role for their future or to abolish them.

### A day in the life of...

Cardiff University celebrated its 125th anniversary in 2008. As one small part of the associated celebrations Information Services of the university asked ten of its staff to

write 'A Day in the Life of' accounts which it placed on a website to mark the very wide range of its activities and services in the 21st century. I was one of the ten chosen and my account duly appeared.<sup>3</sup>

### Enquiries

This account has raised a fair amount of comment from fellow professionals for the range and nature of activities covered. Enquiries received by the Cardiff EDC can be from a very wide range of academic disciplines within the university as 'Europe' impacts on so many aspects of study and research – journalism, city and regional planning, and transport studies, as much as the more obvious European Studies, law and politics. Enquiries can also arise from anywhere in the world – partly because as a 'specialist' you get known and partly because there is a flourishing EDC network in which enquiries are often circulated on various lists.

As a European information specialist I feel it is necessary to be familiar with the subject of 'Europe' itself not just the information sources about the subject. Thus students come to the EDC both for help with finding information *and* to discuss the nature of the subject of their research. The librarian of today in a university library has to work hard to gain the respect of their users.

At Cardiff the EDC is a self-contained collection physically separate to other parts of the library. So, it is essential that we create and maintain a profile with our potential users to encourage use.

The EDC comprises far more than a collection of official EU documents, which would not draw a large number of students. Substantial monograph, journal and other material has been added to the Cardiff EDC to make it one of the most comprehensive sources of information and expertise about Europe in the UK.

In addition, the EDC is involved in many other activities outlined below.

### European Sources Online

In 1980 I began compiling and publishing a paper-based bibliographical service about the European Union called *European Access*. Nearly thirty years this has evolved into *European Sources Online (ESO)*, which has become the largest electronic information service in the world that focuses specifically on providing information on Europe.<sup>4</sup>

For many years ESO was published by ProQuest Information and Learning. In 2006 it was decided that the Cardiff EDC within Information Services of Cardiff University would take over the publishing of ESO in addition to its editorial compilation. JISC Collections has given strong support to this initiative as an example of a substantive information product produced by the UK higher education sector for the UK higher education sector (and others). Since the Cardiff EDC took over the publishing of ESO we have offered daily updating, email alert services, a new series of unique EU information guides and access to approximately 20,000 new items of information every year.

Why is ESO compiled and published? Firstly, it is a primary service to help Cardiff EDC users find information for their studies and research. Secondly, there is a market for such a (subscription based) information service in the wider community. ESO is very resource intensive and there are challenges when we are directly responsible for editorial issues, marketing and sales, and technical functionality. The ideal model for ESO going forward would be for more 'ownership' of the service amongst those who find its useful.

### Events

Passively awaiting enquiries is simply not enough for a specialist centre such as the Cardiff EDC. Actively offering a wide range of information literacy training is an obvious next step. Training is given to students and researchers from a wide range of academic disciplines.

However, I am keen to go beyond that to raise the profile of the Centre both within the university and the wider community. On that basis we have been organising a series of events to draw people to the Centre.

In November 2009, for example, we held two events – 110 students and others attended a reception to promote the Erasmus Programme of European higher education exchanges. Food and drink were offered and a music group offered European folk music and dancing. Later in November we held a showing of a film and discussion of European cinema to mark the 20th anniversary of the coming together of Eastern and Western Europe.

In May 2010 we will hold our annual Euro Quiz and we also take part in many external events with other local partners. We have also organised debates on contentious European issues. These events raise the awareness of what the Cardiff EDC can offer to students and researchers, who go on to make more traditional use of the Centre.

### External training and consultancy

A small but significant part of my time is being involved in training and consultancy for external organisations. It is clearly important that such work is mutually beneficial to Cardiff University and the external organisations.

Such work can be hugely stimulating and learning experiences – for example, one of my regular assignments is to run information training sessions at the prestigious College of Europe in Bruges and Natolin (Warsaw). Over the last year or so, I have started offering a large number of timetabled, short sessions where I provide targeted advice to individual postgraduates as they start researching for dissertation topics. In twenty minutes I need to understand from the student the nature of their topic and then provide meaningful specific help in their information needs. This has been consistently praised as a useful service by the students involved – and is a concept that can be adapted to users of the Cardiff EDC.

Similarly, the research involved in preparing for a week-long module I provide to global journalists at the University of Örebro in Sweden is useful preparation for significantly more condensed sessions given to journalism students at Cardiff.

Added value handouts painstakingly produced for training purposes and conference papers for external organisations can also be adapted and added to the website of the EDC for anyone to profit from.<sup>5</sup>

### Conclusion

Involvement in this wide range of activities has been a response to the question of the relevance of European Documentation Centres in the digital age – the question will be as relevant to other 'special collections' as well as to the other roles of librarians.

The activities carried out at the Cardiff EDC must conform to the strategic direction of the university library – innovation and creativity in operations, engagement with the wider community, the marketing and promotion of the value of the service – these are all considerations in my mind when trying to reinvent the functions and operations of the Cardiff EDC.

The involvement in external training and consultancy, the events organised and the publishing of European Sources Online are all attempts to rise to those challenges.

### References

- 1 Full contact details of UK EDCs can be obtained on the website of the European Commission Representation in London at: [http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/information/eu\\_information\\_in\\_the\\_uk/index\\_en.htm#3](http://ec.europa.eu/unitedkingdom/information/eu_information_in_the_uk/index_en.htm#3)
- 2 Details of Europe Direct Information Centres can be found at: [http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/europedirect/index_en.htm)
- 3 A day in the life of a European information specialist can be found at: <http://www.cf.ac.uk/insrv/aboutus/dayinthelife/ianthomson.html>
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## The British Library's European Documentation Centre: Connecting Collections and Connecting Researchers

Jeremy Jenkins, British Library

The British Library has been a European Documentation Centre (EDC) since July 2007. An EDC is a depository collection of the Official Publications and Documents of the European Union. There are over forty libraries in the EDC network (<http://www.europe.org.uk/infolinks/-/ctid/5/>) across the UK. Their purpose is to support research into and the study of European integration. In essence we at the British Library interpret this brief to make information on the European Union available to anyone who is interested in it. At the present time as we prepare for a new departure in European politics with the recent ratification of the Lisbon Treaty (<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/offpubs/eudoc/lisbon/lisbontreaty.html>) by the last of the member states. It is possibly a good time to explore and evaluate some of the library's activities over the past year and look forward to future developments.

In short, what have we done in the last year? Politically, the highlight of the European Union year was the European Parliamentary Elections. (<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/offpubs/eudoc/euelections/euelections.html>) The elections offered a rare opportunity where the EU was more visible in the news. This struck us as the ideal opportunity for us to launch our new Guide to European Union Collections in the British Library. (<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/offpubs/eudoc/eucollguide/edc-collguide.pdf>) The week preceding the elections we held the European Parliamentary Elections Symposium. In addition to launching the new reader guide the symposium gave us an opportunity to discuss and debate the outcomes of the elections. The symposium comprised of speakers representing the European Parliament Representation in London, Academia and the British Library. The subjects that were discussed ranged from a first impression of the election results presented by Dermot Scott, Head of the European Parliament Representation, Professor Engin Isin who introduced his work on the ENACT programme of Enacting European Citizenship focusing on how citizens (and non-citizens) make use of their rights in a European context, and how states enact European law. Christian Salm, a PhD Student with Portsmouth University, delivered a paper on a aspect of his research about The role of European socialist networks in European policy-making in the 1970s. Jennie Grimshaw and Alison Hill from the BL gave an introduction to the Library's web archiving activities dedicated to web archiving the European Parliament Elections. All these talks are available to listen to online via the European Parliamentary Elections Symposium web pages. (<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/offpubs/eudoc/euelections/eusymposium/symposium.html>)

Ultimately the purpose of this symposium was to promote the EDC collection in the context of current events and within the greater Social Sciences Collection it illustrates the great diversity of subject areas that the European Union publishes across. The spectrum of European Union publication could possibly be seen as a microcosm of subject areas in the Social Sciences. In fact this is demonstrated well when examining a Dewey Subject Guide of the EDC collection which is situated in the Social Sciences Reading Room. (<http://www.bl.uk/reshelp/findhelprestype/offpubs/eudoc/euopen/openaccess.html>) Furthermore,

the depth of research areas is further reinforced by the layout of the theme in the EU Bookshop (<http://bookshop.europa.eu/eubookshop/listThemes.action>) areas listed includes topics from Social Policy, Development Policy and Working Conditions to Culture and Sport. Additionally, with the recent completion of the European Union Publications Office Digital Library Archive, EU Official Publications since 1957 are now available digitally. This ultimately means we have fifty years of research, policy and comment which is directly relevant to social science research freely available at the click of a mouse.

Now the political dentistry of the Lisbon Treaty is finally completed and the new European Parliament has been elected. The arguing over treaties can be concluded for the meantime.

Now the European focus can shift on to more constructive activities. To demonstrate the importance of what the European Union does and the impact it has on the wider world.

An illustration of this is the example of Norway, who despite not being a EU member state, finds itself in the position of having the best record in adopting EU legislation, as a member of the European Economic Area (EEA) it must fall in with EU legislation to ensure trade may continue between Norway and a EU member state partner under the provisions of international law. Policy overlaps to the wider world in areas such as security, trade, environment and energy are central issues from local and domestic issues to international relations. Therefore the EDC collections allow the researcher to engage in and access a rich vein of resources in a number of formats and exploit material relating to a range of subjects.

For time immemorial we have been indexing, cataloguing, abstracting and qualifying information for our users and patrons. Today the underlying principles of our role as librarians are evermore utilised by the torrents of information immersing modern research. We now find ourselves in a situation where one and all can become involved in cataloguing, description and reviewing. Whatever the pros and cons of such developments, Web 2.0 has ensured that such interactivity between libraries, their users and anyone else is here to stay. Ultimately developments of Web 2.0 have successfully blurred the line between the institution and the audience allowing a real time public dialogue to develop. From a collection perspective this is indeed an interesting and exciting situation. More and more institutions such as the BL are offering users Beta versions of Catalogues ([http://pdslogin.bl.uk/pds?func=sso&calling\\_system=primo&url=http://searchbeta.bl.uk:80/primo\\_library/libweb/action/login.do?afterPDS=true&vid=BLVUI&targetURL=http://searchbeta.bl.uk/primo\\_library/libweb/action/display.do?mode=Basic&fn=search&doc=BLL01013218406&vl\(174399379UI0\)=any&indx=1&tab=local\\_tab&dum=true&vl\(149624059UI1\)=all\\_items&srt=rank&vid=BLVUI&frbg=&ct=display&vl\(freeText0\)=Aliss+quarterly](http://pdslogin.bl.uk/pds?func=sso&calling_system=primo&url=http://searchbeta.bl.uk:80/primo_library/libweb/action/login.do?afterPDS=true&vid=BLVUI&targetURL=http://searchbeta.bl.uk/primo_library/libweb/action/display.do?mode=Basic&fn=search&doc=BLL01013218406&vl(174399379UI0)=any&indx=1&tab=local_tab&dum=true&vl(149624059UI1)=all_items&srt=rank&vid=BLVUI&frbg=&ct=display&vl(freeText0)=Aliss+quarterly)) which allows the user to log in review, comment and 'tag' works. Such facilities transforms the demarcation between the 'official' electronic presence of an organisation, in one instance allowing the democratisation of a exhibition where the public may join in the debate via the Curator's Blog. (<http://britishlibrary.typepad.co.uk/takingliberties/>) or add tags to a catalogue record. This democratisation is by no means a new concept, in 1550 Francesco Doni published his bibliography – La Libreria del Doni Fiorentino – in which he left space for annotations under entries by the reader. These issues raise interesting and pertinent



questions around integrity, authority and sustainability while embracing currency, flexibility and accessibility, and have had Cilip's Chief Executive in 'All of a Twitter' in recent months. (<http://communities.cilip.org.uk/blogs/cesdesk/archive/2009/02/18/all-of-a-twitter.aspx> )

So how is this relevant to an EDC collection? The EU along with many other International Organisations are making more and more of their official publications and material available online in some cases they forego the necessity to publish a print copy altogether. The next stage of our programme of development and marketing of the EDC collection in the BL is to attempt to open access to the rich resources available digitally from a subject perspective. This in turn will hopefully broaden the appeal of collections such as Eurostat and the Digital Archive. (<http://bookshop.europa.eu/eubookshop/search.action>) In the current climate it will allow the researcher to interact with, comment on or define the usefulness of the material for their purposes and in so doing make this information available to others. Clearly Web 2.0 is a central concept in the curation and management of a collection which is residing more and more in the realm of cyberspace.

Over the last year there have been an active engagement of the information and academic communities in online networks such as Twitter. This utilisation of Web 2.0 technology is particularly illustrated by articles appearing in the July 2009 edition of ALISS Quarterly which provides a user guide to Twitter. Additionally, the Resources for American Studies most recent issue, 62, provides an introduction to the usefulness of Twitter in relation to information and resource discovery. In connection to the BL's EDC collection, in an effort to raise awareness of the diversity of material produced by the European Union and other international organisations we have set up a Twitter feed of our own, IntOrgsBL (<http://twitter.com/IntOrgsBL> ). In addition to posting links to current news stories and the publishing output of these organisations it also raises awareness of the British Library's extensive collections holdings from organisations such as the European Union and the United Nations. A further benefit of Twitter is that it puts you in direct and immediate contact with other parties with similar interests allowing information to be shared and discussed in real time.

To conclude, with the bewildering array of new technology at our finger tips and the new and creative ways users disseminate information it is no longer enough to depend on catalogue records to market collections. It is necessary to work together in multiple formats in an effort to interweave sources into the framework where the twenty-first century researcher works. By connecting and integrating the EDC collection with the European and Social Science collections relationships and connections will develop between the researcher and their requirements.

## **The Central Library of the European Commission**

*The Central Library of the European Commission staff  
Carol Bream, Aleph System Librarian/Réseaubib Service Manager,  
Central Library, European Commission*

### **Introduction**

The Central Library of the European Commission was established in 1958 when the EU institutions were founded.

As the European project has developed, so have the Library's collections. The variety of subjects covered reflects the role that the EU has gradually come to assume nowadays. Also, with the successive enlargements and growing interest in EU affairs, the number of languages represented in the collections has grown dramatically. The Library has now over 650,000 books, and a wide selection of reference works and specialist periodicals, of which an ever-growing number are available in electronic format.

The Central Library occupies two sites – one in Brussels, which hosts the central services, and the other in Luxembourg.

The Library is positioned administratively within the Directorate-General for Education and Culture as part of the Directorate for 'Culture, Multilingualism and Education'. Thus, while the Central Library is a central horizontal service for all the Commission staff, it is not located 'centrally' within the organisational structure of the Commission.

The demands for the highest levels of transparency and accountability, which the European institutions must respect, have created complex administrative and financial procedures. Indeed, considerable staff resources and time are necessary in order to meet these particular demands.

Through its unique collection of resources related to European Integration, the Central Library can be considered as the 'organisational and institutional memory' of the European Commission and, moreover, of the European integration process itself.

### **The Library's Mission**

Over the last 50 years, the Library's primary goal has remained unchanged: to be at the service of the Commission's staff in order to help them to obtain timely and specific information on a given subject as effectively as possible. By networking with the specialist libraries of the various Directorates-General, the Library has built up wide-ranging collections over the years, which can be used to monitor current developments or explore Community history in depth.

At the same time, the Library has gradually opened up to citizens. Providing access to the relevant Community information is one of the ways in which a European 'consciousness' can gradually develop, without which the European project would be built on shaky foundations. For this reason, those particularly interested in European affairs, such as teachers, researchers, students, lawyers and economists have access to the reading rooms.



The Library's means of providing information have modernized and expanded beyond all recognition. Nowadays, collections can be consulted online and loans and copies can be requested remotely. In short, it has become a global virtual Library at the service of all Europeans.

### **The building and Library's collections**

In 2001 the Library in Brussels moved to newly refurbished accommodation at 18, rue Van Maerlant, a 19th century red brick neo-gothic former convent.

The reading rooms of the Library are located on the 3rd and 4th floors of the former church and provide space for 63 readers.

Open shelves provide a selected range of the Library's physical holdings: some of the most consulted current journals are on display, as well as a wide range of dictionaries, reference books and encyclopaedias. Newspapers, CD-ROMs, and selected databases may also be consulted on-line.

The main on-site book storage area is in the VM 18 building complex. Mobile stacks are installed in the storage areas to maximise space utilisation. In addition to the 'on-site' storage area (1,200m<sup>2</sup> containing nearly 335,000 volumes) there is an 'off-site' storage centre at Kortenberg (970m<sup>2</sup> containing over 200,000 volumes).

Computers are available in the reading room for bibliographic searches in the online catalogue and/or other websites of the European institutions.

Wifi connections to the Internet for portable computers will be available soon.

The reading room in the Library's Luxembourg branch has space for 28 readers and is equipped with computers. The Luxembourg branch has more than 100,000 volumes.

The Library's collections started in 1958, at the very beginning of the European integration project.

Initially spread across the European Coal and Steel Community (ECSC), the European Economic Community (EEC), and European Atomic Energy Community (EURATOM), the collections were brought together in the Commission's Central Library in 1968 when these three structures merged. The Commission's Directorates-General also have specialist libraries of their own.

The Library's collections have steadily grown in proportion to the increase in the number of policies that fall within the Community's remit. Whereas the subjects covered were initially almost exclusively economic and legal in nature, they now encompass all fields covered by European integration, namely international relations, economic and social policy, law and administration, politics, culture, society, education, training, agriculture, industry, trade, transport, public finances, banking, international monetary relations, labour, management, demography, biology, health, the environment, science and research, and information and communication.

The collections track the entire post-World War II period, comprising almost all official EU

publications, significant EU documents and the EU Official<sup>1</sup> Journal in all its languages. They also include some of the 'grey' literature produced within the Commission.

Apart from official publications, the Library has more than 500,000 books as well as reference works, magazines and newspapers. Through the Library, the Commission subscribes to more than 2,000 periodicals. Successive enlargements, the increased role of the EU in international affairs and the growing interest of third countries in EU affairs, have all led to an ever-greater number of languages represented in the collections.

Between 1958 and the 1990s works were only available in paper format. This has gradually been supplemented by microfiches, CD-ROMs and videos, and, more recently, Internet links to the full texts of documents or articles from periodicals whenever this is possible.

The Central Library's general collections and the specialised collections of the Commission's Directorates-General are gathered in a single on-line catalogue: ECLAS.

The Library participates actively in the Publications Office's 'Working Group on Legal Deposit' which aims to develop collaboration and compliance relating to deposit and cataloguing of EU documents and publications. In addition, the Library works informally with interested partners in other Directorates-General to solve the problem of long term access to grey literature, which is not covered by the remit of either the Publications Office or the European Commission document management system.

### **Cataloguing and indexing the collections**

Over the years, the Library has enriched and fine-tuned its collections in all aspects of Community policies. These titles can be found in the catalogue thanks to the cataloguing and indexing carried out by the librarians of the Central Library and of the Directorates-General.

The Library uses the Anglo-American rules in the MARC21 format.

Indexing is done on the basis of the ECLAS thesaurus, developed from the macro-thesaurus of the OECD and enhanced with descriptors from the thesaurus of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) or Eurovoc. The ECLAS thesaurus regularly incorporates new descriptors whenever new concepts are identified.

The enlargement of the European Union to the current 27 Member States places significant demands on the Central Library, as librarians need to have language specialisations for the literature to be identified in the 23 official languages of the different Member States.

Cataloguing of works in less widely known languages poses particularly problems. However, the latter has been partially resolved since records can be imported from OCLC.

### **ECLAS catalogue**

ECLAS stands for European Commission Library Automated System. ECLAS lists the holdings held by RéseauBIB, the collaborative network associating the European



Commission's Central Library and the libraries or documentation centres in its Directorates-General or departments.

More specifically, ECLAS lists the complete holdings of the Central Library since 1978. Details of library holdings for the period 1958-1978 can be consulted in the card catalogues available on microform in the reading rooms.

In 2006, the Library decided to update its library management system in order to adapt its services fully to web technology. The software chosen was ALEPH500. The new ECLAS catalogue was opened to internal Commission users on the IntraComm server in September 2006 and to external users on EUROPA at the beginning of 2007.

Users do not need to sign in to search ECLAS. However, access to some areas or services requires prior identification.

Commission-based employees are automatically registered as internal ECLAS users.

User IDs and passwords for external users can be obtained on-line via the catalogue. This User ID is valid for a year, and entitles registered users to save searches and records for later use and set up bibliographic alerts. However, registration does not give access to loan and photocopy services.

Searches can be limited to specialised sub-catalogues, such as periodicals and electronic journals. A structured list of all the journals is available through these sub-catalogues.

One of the strengths of ECLAS is the collection of articles on EU-related matters, selected by our staff from the most relevant journals.

Bibliographic records provide links to online content, if available. For copyright and licensing reasons, some documents (especially journals) are available only for internal users.

The user-friendly interface is available both in French and English, and the various search options have been developed to meet the needs of both beginners and experienced searchers.

ECLAS has been at the core of the Library service development over recent years. It is still being developed and improvements will be made by providing new functions in line with technical developments as well as feedback from users. In particular, the Library is at present studying the possibilities for developing search tools that are easier and more intuitive to use.

### Who uses the Library?

At its foundation in 1958, the Library operated exclusively as a service to the employees of the European Commission in order to help them to obtain information on a given subject as effectively as possible.

In 1973, it opened up to a wider specialist readership.

Today, in keeping with this trend towards greater openness, the Library makes its collections accessible not only to the staff of the European Commission and of the

European Union's other institutions or bodies (called 'internal readers'), but as well to the so-called external readers, i.e. the business community, teachers, experts and researchers, postgraduate students, lawyers, diplomats, civil servants from the Member States.

Readers can access the Library's services either electronically via ECLAS or by physically visiting the Library. Electronic services are particularly important as Commission staff is scattered over a wide geographical area, mainly in Brussels and Luxembourg, but also in other parts of Europe and the world. More and more internal readers are using the electronic services provided by the Library, so that visits to the Library's premises have become less common, except for those used to consult newspapers and periodicals on the spot.

Most of the people using the reading rooms are external users. As they cannot make requests for loans or photocopies via ECLAS, they are able to visit the Library by prior appointment and consult the collections on the spot.

### The Library Services

The Library has proved its ability to adapt to the new requirements of researchers, whose profile has changed radically over the years. The ways of accessing information have undergone a major change due to the constant evolution of Internet-related tools.

- Loans: only internal users may make loan requests (either via ECLAS, or by email/phone). The material is physically dispatched directly to the user's office. In 2008, 32,102 loans and 7,762 renewals were made for Commission staff.
- Photocopies: only internal users may make photocopy requests, mainly for reference works and periodicals which are not available for loan. Materials are scanned to a PDF file and sent by email. In 2008, 81,092 pages were scanned for this purpose. The scanner logs are used for copyright licensing and payment reasons. Photocopiers are also available in the reading rooms.
- Consultation of works in the reading rooms: documents not available on the shelves of the reading rooms are usually in the on-site stacks. The maximum waiting time for a work requested by readers is one hour, with the average being twenty minutes. Older and less-used documents are stored in the off-site store located in Kortenberg and are accessible on request.
- Reference service: the Library aims to respond rapidly and effectively to information needs of internal users across the Commission as well as from visitors. The Library offers a quick-reference service to check availability of material, detailed bibliographic research, help in using the library catalogue, searching of other Community databases (some of them internal).
- Online access to more than 1,000 periodical titles (November 2009). All the titles are available via ECLAS. Online sources to which the Library currently subscribes include:
- SWETS Online Content: periodicals, mainly in English, in the areas of European law and policies and international relations, all available online in full text. Access to the tables of contents of some 25,000 other periodicals.



- CAIRN: periodicals in French in the areas of politics, economics and the social sciences.
- CEEOL: periodicals from Eastern, Central and Southeast Europe in the areas of the human and social sciences.

In 2008, 52,133 online articles were downloaded.

The use of electronic resources is strictly subject to copyright law. External users may consult certain sources in the reading rooms under certain conditions: they may view on screen and/or make copies of documents on the computers available, as long as this is done for reasons of study or not-for-profit academic research. Downloading documents and/or disseminating content to non-authorized third parties and any use of the electronic resources available for commercial ends is strictly forbidden.

- Email 'profile' service: registered users may set up 'profiles' in order to receive regular updates based on predefined searches in their field of interest.
- Email 'alerts' service: internal users may receive systematically table-of-contents alerts for periodicals to which they are subscribed or subjects in which they are interested, so that they are constantly kept up-to-date in their field of interest.
- Inter-Library Loan: documents which are not in Commission library collections may be requested by internal users from external libraries through the inter-library loan service (ILL). In 2008, 950 requests were made for internal users.

External readers may only borrow material via the inter-library loan system. In 2008, 109 requests were made by external libraries.

### Promoting Library services

In general, the needs of potential users of information have changed in recent years. The 'Google generation' is now accustomed to getting information easily and quickly. Libraries are becoming just one of the sources of information available. To ensure that the Library's services are visible and always present in potential users' minds, the Central Library takes the following actions.

A personalised 'welcome letter' detailing Library services is sent by email to all new members of staff and this gives them access to ECLAS as internal users.

The Library also publishes **two series of quarterly bibliographies** containing references to a selection of recent articles from periodicals: the **EUR series** (articles relating to the EU and its policies) and the **INT series** (articles on international politics and economics affecting the EU).

At present, the BIBLIO series are published exclusively in electronic form for EC staff. Each title in the list has a link to the ECLAS bibliographic record in order to facilitate the ordering of photocopies.

A weekly **list of new acquisitions** is published on the Library's intranet.

The Library has developed and maintains **two web sites** which deliver information and services to internal and external users.

Promotional and awareness-raising activities are regularly organised:

- Interactive information stands – 'The Dynamic Library' – in key Commission buildings. The aim is to meet established readers or potential new ones, to get a better idea of information needs and to explain the services on offer.
- Half-day training courses for EC staff in 'Using library and electronic information resources effectively';
- Presentations of ECLAS;
- Conferences organised around the presentation of books in the presence of the author;
- Publication of articles about the Library's activities and services;
- Open days;
- Distributions of leaflets on services of the Central Library for both internal and external users.
- Participation in various international events relating to library affairs (such as Online Information 2009).

Promotional material is available in the form of posters, pamphlets, bookmarks, notepads and place-mats bearing the Library's logo.

### Library networks

The Central Library of the Commission works in partnership with other libraries, both within internal and external networks.

The Library acts at the core of **RéseauBIB**, the collaborative network established between the European Commission's Central Library and the libraries or documentation centers in its Directorates-General or departments.

RéseauBIB holds an annual General Assembly, and maintains a user group communication facility and frequent less formal contacts.

The Central Library provides significant support to members of the network in areas such as library management and bibliographic practice.

The ALEPH 500 Integrated Library Management System, managed by the Central Library, is shared by the libraries of the Council of the EU (CEU), the European Economic and Social Committee (EESC), and the European Committee of the Regions (ECR). The Central Library is responsible for overall system administration and ARC, the newly acquired statistical tool.

ALEPH is used by all members of RéseauBIB members and the Library provides training courses for all the modules, such as cataloguing, indexing, circulation and acquisitions. A help-desk facility is provided for ALEPH users.

The Central Library participates actively in the **EUROLIB** network, a grouping of European institutional libraries created in 1997 to exchange experiences of developments and to share knowledge of new Library innovations by developing inter-library contacts of all kinds.



The fact that the libraries of the Council of the European Union, of the Committee of the Regions and of the European Economic and Social Committee already use the same software as the Commission helps to strengthen cooperation between the institutions and expand the range of services on offer. This may be considered as a first, though important, step towards the creation of a 'virtual' interinstitutional library.

### Conclusions

Users are confronted more and more with the problem of information overload. They need help and guidance in choosing the most reliable information. It is one of library professionals' new roles to filter this information and present it in an easily accessible way, while ensuring that only relevant sources are made available. This kind of role has to be founded on librarians' shared professional experience. For this reason, the Central Library has an internal shared drive accessible to all librarians and organises many 'workshops' where professional experiences are shared in order to enhance the quality of services to readers.

Library staff read the messages posted in various email discussion forums, such as Eurodoc. The Library intervenes whenever it considers that it can be of help. Any important news is circulated among colleagues. Every day brings something new whether it is a complex research question from a library user, the need to learn some new IT skill, the need to fix the photocopier (again!), or just to sit down quietly and catalogue a few books in a previously unknown language.

The staff of the Central Library is a close-knit team. Colleagues tend to stay in library and information posts for much if not all their career. A fund of intangible knowledge and experience is thus passed on from one generation to the next. What other job provides such a stimulating mix of tasks, culture, language, and challenges to learn new skills in order to provide the best services possible to fellow officials, young researchers and trainees, long and short-term visitors, all with different needs and interests?

### Some useful links

ECLAS: <http://ec.europa.eu/eclas/F>

Central Library website: [http://ec.europa.eu/libraries/doc/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/libraries/doc/index_en.htm)

EUROLIB: <http://www.eurolibnet.eu/>

### Training in information searching for postgraduate students in Brussels

*Jane Alderson-Rice, Academic Liaison Librarian, University of Kent.*

The University of Kent has a small study centre in Brussels, known as BSIS (Brussels School of International Studies) that caters for about 220 postgraduate students. Students taking taught programmes study a range of quite specialised legal and social science modules, mostly with European or international content. The subject areas are international relations, migration, European social policy, law, politics and international relations, all taught in English. Students use the online resources from the main library in Canterbury, and local physical collections at two local university libraries in Brussels, at VUB (Vrije Universiteit Brussel) and ULB (Université libre de Bruxelles). I visit twice a year to give training in getting the best from the online resources. I thought at first that it would be a distance learning relationship, but as these students take all their courses in Brussels and do not have to visit the Canterbury campus there are very significant differences. Designing training in e-resources for postgraduate work for students who will not start by looking round the physical resources of the main library presents many more challenges than I had anticipated.

### User group

The student body appears to be a mixture of mature working people who live permanently in Brussels and much younger students who are there for a relatively short time. There is wide variation within each group in respect of:

- Previous library experience
- Computer skills
- Knowledge of online resources

The one thing that is common to all of them is that they are new to the University of Kent. Written work is submitted in English, and the students like to read in English most of the time. They are all English speaking, but not necessarily as a first language.

### Training

The local libraries contain some essay texts in English but this does not include many journals, and there is relatively little to browse for dissertations. Online resources are a lifeline, and this puts a great deal of pressure on training.

I give a 55 minute induction talk to each cohort, taking all the subject disciplines together, to show students the range of bibliography they are likely to need for postgraduate work, and how to gain access to it online. This induction talk is followed by a drop-in workshop and for the LLM students by some additional training in the specialist services, and a specialist legal enquiries service provided by the subject librarian. 55 minutes is a very short time to make the students independent users of complex resources, but it has the advantage of being incorporated into a research skills module that is attended by all students. Training takes place at 7pm, but is well attended.



In Canterbury I would normally show students the physical collections of books, journals, newspapers and official publications to place everything in context and move from there to online equivalents, followed by online indexes and subject collections. As the students have to get to grips with the online resources without first seeing the physical collections, I aim to orientate them in the library online services, and to get the fundamental things crystal clear. I think these are:

- 1 Using the e-mail enquiry services
- 2 Resource selection
- 3 Distinctions between:
  - Online journals and online journal indexes
  - Subscribed services and unregulated material that is just out there
  - policy documents and research about policy
  - browsing and retrieval
- 4 Searching strategies
- 5 Reliability and perspective in different kinds of text: journal article; newspaper; reports from institutions and organisations.

The key to getting all of this clear seems to be to say as little as possible, but to choose one representative resource in each category, to demonstrate searching and filtering very thoroughly in the indexes, or browsing and selection in the large public websites, then to provide a list of alternatives for the students to try in the future. It also seems to be crucial to tackle the students' discomfort about asking very basic questions of the enquiries services, and to reassure them that we realise there may be too much to remember, and that they may easily misremember the stages in the right order and need to ask.

On campus we have put some thought into complying with the SCONUL guidelines for international students (and have adapted training delivery to make language more accessible and to cater for students' possible unfamiliarity with independent information searching. This approach has worked well for the Brussels' students; there is a very receptive atmosphere at training sessions, they bring their own laptops and have very little difficulty trying out the searches that I demonstrate on the screen.

## Resources

The following are the main resources demonstrated in training:

- Subscribed e-books
- Subscribed e-journals
- IBSS
- International Political Science Abstracts
- Indexes to legal periodicals and foreign legal periodicals
- Web of Science

- European Sources Online
- Nexis
- Intute
- IISS Armed Conflict Database
- Europa
- Eurostat

## Recurring enquiries

The following are some examples of enquiries that occur frequently from Brussels, and do also occur on the main campus:

- 1 The student does not grasp the difference between the article title and the journal title, and searches the online journals list for the article title.
- 2 The student thinks we have everything on the Web of Science, can't download something because we don't have it, and wants me to fix the link.
- 3 The student cannot find a particular title because we don't have it, but thinks the reason would be that s/he has searched incorrectly.
- 4 The student has been told not to use Wikipedia, doesn't understand what the problem is, and wants an explanation. Isn't Wikipedia an online resource?

Students often e-mail asking for one article that they claim is crucial. It appears that they Google the exact words of the essay title, then retrieve a reference to one article which we do not have. This kind of enquiry is difficult to answer remotely, because of the need to get the student to explain by e-mail what the topic is. The student thinks the essay title is the topic. There is plenty of goodwill on both sides, but it can be difficult to pin down subjects and subdivisions of subject areas by e-mail.

## Future improvements to training and enquiry support

Many of the questions the students ask would be easier to deal with in person at an enquiry desk, because the student can demonstrate how s/he has attempted to find the information, and the staff member can see what the student has not understood, and can demonstrate how to put things right. Training needs to illuminate the stages in information searching that enquiries have shown the students find difficult to grasp.

Enquiries suggest that the students need to understand subject definition, as opposed to words from an essay title. This is the part of the training I would really like to make clearer, and am still working on. The solution may be to work through a few examples of how to generate keywords for essay questions, not giving out the answers, but asking the students what is the topic, how do we turn this into keywords, then to give out some worked examples setting out topics, broader terms, narrower terms and synonyms for the students to refer to afterwards.

Some of the enquires that take several e-mails to resolve are generated by students not understanding that a journal index shows all the references from a range of journals, not just those from our library's subscriptions.

The students will always have questions and problems that they need to send to the librarians by e-mail. Training under these conditions needs to be as relevant as possible to the way students work as well as the subject matter, but even still it would not be possible for people attending training to retain everything. The next steps in improving this will be a) to prepare more guidance notes for students to refer to during the year; b) to prepare step by step e-mail answers to the frequently asked questions.

## Reference

SENIOR, K., BENT, M., SCOPES, M. and SUNUODULA, M., 2008. *Library Services for International Students*. London: SCONUL.

## DART-Europe: pan-European networking and services

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<http://www.ucl.ac.uk/Library>

<http://www.dart-europe.eu>

## Introduction

DART-Europe (Digital Access to Research Theses – Europe) is a partnership of European research organisations with a shared interest in the collection, management and dissemination of open access electronic research theses. The partnership was founded in 2005, with the over-arching purpose of

*supporting the management, discoverability, re-usability and preservation of Europe's electronic research theses.*

DART-Europe's membership primarily consists of consortia and national libraries, although individual Universities are increasingly becoming involved. DART-Europe is both a networking organisation and a service provider: in the latter regard, the partnership maintains the DART-Europe E-theses Portal, which is a discovery and access service for Open Access theses which have been approved for higher degrees in European Universities. The DART partnership has no external funders, and any work carried out in the name of the consortium rests entirely on the willingness of its members to contribute time and other resources: the Portal, for instance, is managed by UCL (University College London) on behalf of the partners. DART-Europe works very closely with LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche),<sup>1</sup> and the Portal carries LIBER's official endorsement. DART-Europe is also the European Working Group of the NDLTD (Networked Digital Library of Dissertations).<sup>2</sup>

## Managing European collaboration

At the time of writing, DART-Europe has participants in 15 European countries. The cohesion of the DART-Europe consortium is achieved through the principle of partnership. In support of this, a Partnership Agreement<sup>3</sup> has been devised. The Agreement, which every partner is asked to sign, is designed to be 'light-touch'. Signatories agree to support 7 general principles and to help to achieve the aims of DART-Europe: in summary, they are invited to contribute metadata to the DART-Europe Portal, they are invited to contribute resources to support DART-Europe's work, they agree to help DART-Europe to be an effective network for e-thesis information, expertise and resources, and they agree to nominate a representative to serve on the DART-Europe Board. Partnership costs nothing. The intentions behind the Partnership Agreement are to define a shared vision, and to help to create a sense of community, rather than to place any significant resource commitments on the partners.

Every partner is represented on the DART-Europe Board,<sup>4</sup> which governs the work of the consortium, and which meets once or twice a year. The Board is augmented by invited members (representing, for instance, LIBER).



Between meetings, an Executive Group comprising the Board's Co-chairs and the Portal service manager meet more frequently to expedite actions agreed by the Board, to discuss progress, to review new collaboration opportunities, and generally to ensure that the strategic questions which are put before the Board at its meetings are the right ones.

In addition to its partners, DART-Europe has another category of member: contributors. Contributors are organisations which supply metadata to the DART-Europe Portal, but which do not sign the Partnership Agreement. Although not full, decision-making partners, DART-Europe's contributors obviously have a very important role to play in the development of the consortium and its services.

For an unfunded organisation such as DART-Europe, this inclusive structure is a neatly pragmatic solution to the challenges of international cohesion and governance.

### Open Access electronic theses

Before looking at DART-Europe's E-theses Portal in more detail, it is probably worth touching quickly on the subject of Open Access e-theses in general. There are several good reasons why authors should be encouraged to make their theses available on an Open Access basis. Theses can contain cutting-edge research, and yet in the print world they are often partially-hidden and difficult to access. OA theses make new research available to researchers in a timely way. Moreover, they help to highlight the work of early-career researchers, as well as acting as a showcase for the quality and currency of the research activities of research groups and universities. In this way they can help to raise the impact of academic institutions, and to stimulate new research income from academic and industrial collaborations. Meanwhile, public visibility helps with the detection of plagiarism, and of course that ease of detection also acts as a deterrent. The electronic model also facilitates the open dissemination of supplementary data, animations, 3D-models and other multimedia to support and enrich the core thesis.

Many examples from UCL's institutional repository help to support the argument that open access theses can raise research impact. Two are mentioned here. The first example, Thomson, Catherine Claire (2003) *Danmarkshistorier: National imagination and novel in late twentieth-century Denmark*<sup>5</sup> has been in the UCL repository for some three years. Since the collection of download statistics began in January 2008, it has been downloaded over 1400 times. A second example is a recent thesis: Wang, H. (2009) *New strategies for low noise, agile PLL frequency synthesis*.<sup>6</sup> It was deposited in June 2009, and has already received over 300 downloads. It is clearly not the case that every repository download translates into a citation in the research literature. However, how many times is the average thesis consulted in hard copy at the University library over a lifetime? Open access e-theses are much more visible and more frequently accessed than print theses. They can help to showcase the work of researchers and their institutions. Including details of such theses in the DART-Europe Portal helps to increase this exposure.

### The DART-Europe E-theses Portal<sup>7</sup>

The DART Portal provides discovery services for open access research e-theses. The Portal collects data from repositories from all over Europe. The content changes daily, but currently stands at over 120,000 theses approved by some 200 different Universities, sourced from repositories in 15 European countries. New records are added daily. The Portal holds metadata about theses, but the full text is always served to the researcher from the originating repository: the Portal's role is to enhance the discoverability of those full texts. Metadata is collected using OAI-PMH, and various standardisation and indexing routines are applied to support services. Simple Dublin Core is used as the data collection format, in order to make participation in the Portal as easy as possible for content-holding Universities and consortia.

The Portal has a simple interface with a single search box. A more advanced, form-filling search is also available. Boolean searching is supported. Results lists present brief details about each thesis – title, author and date of award – and also credit both the University that awarded the thesis, and the contributing organisation. This helps consortial contributors to keep their own identity in the Portal alongside those of their members. Browsing is also offered, by author, awarding University, contributor, country and year of award.

Clicking any title will bring up full details of a thesis. The full records are displayed exactly as they are received by the DART-Europe harvester. Abstracts, keywords and other information are often included; each record always includes at least one http identifier, which provides access to the full text at the source repository.

The Portal has 'marked list' and search history facilities. New records are displayed on the home page in daily and weekly lists, and are available as a RSS feed. The home page has a feedback form, which is surprisingly well used. The content of the Portal is also crawled and indexed by search engines. This adds yet another level of discoverability to the theses whose details are held in the Portal.

It would be difficult to achieve richer services than those which are already in place without either imposing a DART-specific metadata standard on contributors, with which many would not have the time, resources or technical expertise to comply, or greatly escalating the levels of post-aggregation intervention, which the consortium is not in a position to resource. The DART Portal is currently designed to strike a balance between ease of contribution, complexity of maintenance, and helpfulness to users. The aim might be characterised as to do the simple things well.

Usage reports attached to the Portal appear to show healthy patterns of use. It is pleasing to see that usage is steadily increasing, particularly as DART-Europe does not have a dedicated marketing budget. Many of the users are based in Europe, but the 'top ten countries' for recent months shows a mixture of European and non-European countries (including the US, Mexico and Brazil). A sample of recent feedback shows comments – complimentary! – originating in Thailand, France, Brazil, Germany and Slovakia. Usage and feedback data tend to confirm that the European research covered by the Portal is of worldwide interest, and that DART-Europe's role in disseminating this research is an effective one.



The DART-Europe E-theses Portal benefits the entire research community in a number of ways. It helps to raise the visibility of participating consortia and Universities, and because it is designed with simplicity in mind, it does so at a low cost to those participants. It helps to expose the work of early-career researchers, and to introduce them at the beginning of their academic lives to important issues of open access and copyright. It also helps researchers in general: by aggregating content, DART-Europe provides a single entry point to a large quantity of consistently high-level research in an orderly and easily-searchable format and, because of open access, that research is immediately available in full anywhere in the world.

## Conclusion

The DART-Europe E-theses Portal is a simple discovery tool, but a useful one. It holds a growing body of content, and is becoming increasingly well-used. The Portal is good for researchers and good for research. However, there is more to DART-Europe than the Portal service. The consortium has an expanding partnership which includes representatives of a growing number of European countries, and it has strong links with LIBER and the NDLTD. DART-Europe is becoming an effective e-theses networking organisation: for instance, the partners will be holding an e-theses Master Class as part of the 2010 LIBER Annual General Conference.<sup>8</sup> Within the consortium there is a wealth of experience and expertise in the field of electronic theses and DART-Europe, supported by a practical and inclusive organisational structure, is well placed to harness some of these interests for the benefit of all European Universities.

## References

- 1 LIBER: <http://www.libereurope.eu/>
- 2 NDLTD: <http://www.ndltd.org/>
- 3 DART-Europe Partnership Agreement: <http://www.dart-europe.eu/About/documents/docs.php>
- 4 DART-Europe Board: <http://www.dart-europe.eu/About/contacts/board.php>
- 5 <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/1940>
- 6 <http://eprints.ucl.ac.uk/15830>
- 7 DART-Europe E-theses Portal: <http://www.dart-europe.eu>
- 8 LIBER 2010 Annual General Conference: <http://www.libereurope.eu/node/434>

## European Election 2009: Web Harvesting Project

*J. Grimshaw, British Library*

### Background: Web Archiving at the British Library

The British Library (BL) has been archiving websites in the UK domain since 2003, and has built up in the UK Web Archive a collection of 5876 sites, which are gathered on average twice a year. Successive instances or downloads of each site can be viewed at the UK Web Archive (<http://www.webarchive.org.uk>). As well as day to day selection of sites that reflect UK society and culture, demonstrate innovative use of the web, or are used to publish research results, the BL forms special collections centred on specific subjects or events such as national election campaigns. The BL respects the intellectual property rights of website publishers, and normally seeks written permission to both archive a selected site and to make it accessible to the public. If permission is refused, or if no response is received, the site is not gathered. When archiving sites or content associated with a particular event, whose lifespan may therefore be shorter than the norm, the BL occasionally moves to a 'notice and take down' approach. That involves informing the rights holder that the BL intends to gather the site unless they contact us to register an objection. If we do not hear, we assume that 'silence gives consent' and go ahead with the gathers. However, we will remove the site immediately from the archive on the rare occasion that an objection is raised later.

### The European Election 2009 Project

The European Parliamentary elections took place across all member states in June 2009. Recent national elections (UK general election 2005, France 2007) have demonstrated that websites, produced by political parties, candidates, government agencies, campaigning charities, pressure groups, think tanks, the media and the citizen, play an increasing role in every campaign.

The European Commission along with the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) have expressed great interest in the promotion of web archiving and digital preservation in recent years. During October 2008 IPRES conference Horst Forster (Information Society and Media Directorate-General) called for more collaboration between European countries in this field. The International Internet Preservation Consortium (IIPC) is also interested in promoting collaborative initiatives based on world events such as the London Olympics 2012. In response, the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF) contacted representatives of all European national libraries which are also members of the IIPC with the aim of gathering a group of partners interested in working together to harvest a collection of websites related to the European Parliament Election of 2009.

The project aimed to share best practice, information and data at various levels, including:

- Collection management and methodology (policy guidelines, selection criteria, internal organization, distribution of tasks, cost analysis)



- Technical monitoring of operations (sharing information about workflows, tools and technologies, e.g software settings, scheduling strategies)
- Seeds (URLs and other relevant harvesting information)

Eight libraries eventually agreed to participate: the British Library, the national libraries of France, Austria, Germany, Poland, the Czech Republic and Catalunya, and Netarchiv.dk/Royal Library of Denmark.

### Phase 1: Event Planning (March – April 2009)

During this initial stage of the project, partners shared information about the way they planned to harvest the event, including collection scope (legal framework, selection criteria and guidelines, language, territory and political issues, target number of sites), distribution of tasks (internal organization of web watch, seed selection, QA and processing, profiles of staff involved, internal decision making mechanisms), planned resources and technical strategy (staff, hardware, software, workflow) and time frame (number and dates of captures, overall calendar for the harvesting campaign).

The stated goal of the British Library's collection of European Election related websites was to show how the web was used by key players to communicate their messages at both UK and EU levels. Key players were identified as:

- 1 The European Parliament & EU institutions, including the European Parliament election web pages, which offers basic facts about the election and the institution, and encourages citizens to take an interest.
- 2 National political parties of the left, right and centre & their candidates. The candidates' sites include events reports, position statements on various issues, biographies and campaign photographs.
- 3 Newly emerging Pan European political parties such as Libertas and New Europeans, and existing cross-national groupings in the European Parliament such as PES (Party of European Socialists) and European Liberal Democrats. These cross-national groupings were found to be producing Pan-European campaign sites. For example, the PES campaign site offers a blog, the manifesto, an election toolkit and a list of candidates in all member states with biographies.
- 4 Interest groups, including think tanks, pressure groups and campaigning charities at both national and Pan European levels. Pan-European interest groups based in Brussels and international non-governmental organisations are increasingly seeking to influence policy at the EU level. For example, the European Network of Ombudspersons for Children demands in its manifesto that all MEPs commit to championing the rights and interests of children across Europe. Birdlife International calls on all candidates to commit to restoring ecosystems, promoting healthy food and a healthy rural environment, preventing climate chaos and championing productive and healthy seas.

- 5 Commentators in the traditional press and academia; and individuals and communities sharing their thoughts online through social media. Commentary selected included BBC news pages, UK opinion polls, Pan-European news services and political blogs such as that produced by Julian Frisch. Julian describes himself as 'a young European cosmopolitan' and comments as a European citizen. The Pan European news service EurActiv provides articles on the 2009 campaign in all member states. Coverage includes a report on the impact of Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi's high profile divorce on the campaign. Apparently Italian voters were more interested in Signora Berlusconi's filing for divorce over reports that her husband was considering putting forward a string of young women with no political experience as candidates than in the substance of the campaign.

Sites were selected mainly through keyword searching on Google and monitoring of current awareness services such as the Intute EP Election Blog. Directories of candidates and their websites produced by parties and interest groups were also very useful, as were links from sites such as the European Parliament Election Pages. Although the date of the election was known well in advance, most groups did not load their campaign materials until quite late, and so selection continued well into May, which presented challenges for scheduling the gathers.

### Event Harvesting (April – July 2009).

At this stage the actual harvesting of selected sites took place. Major national political party sites were gathered weekly before and after the election from May to the end of July in order to record changes as the campaign advanced. Candidates' sites were captured twice and the election pages of interest groups, which were more likely to be static and to consist of their manifesto, were gathered at least once.

Initially the BL followed its normal practice of seeking written permission from rightsholders before archiving. However, getting the attention of politicians and lobbyists during an election campaign, when their minds are on other matters, is difficult if not impossible. It became obvious from the lack of responses that if we were to achieve our aim of creating a balanced collection of election-related sites before their disappearance after the event, the 'notice and takedown' approach would have to be adopted. 'Notice and Takedown' was a resounding success, with no objections and 14 very positive responses. This approach enabled us to create a representative selection of 211 sites from all of the target groups covering all shades of opinion from left to right at the local, national and Pan-European levels.

Use of the web for election communication had evolved significantly since the General Election of 2005. Candidates and political parties now make extensive use of streamed videos presenting their positions on a range of issues. They have also discovered social networking sites, and it is possible to get a blow-by-blow account of a candidate's day on the campaign trail via blogs and tweets on Twitter. Jim McAllister, standing for election for Northern Ireland, tells the world via Twitter that he had a great reception when

canvassing in Lisburn market on June 2nd. The Ulster Unionists have a photostream on Flickr, which includes images of their manifesto launch, starring William Hague. Key players are also seeking to engage the voters through the introduction of interactivity on their websites. For example, VoteMatch Europe 2009, a network of 15 participants from across the EU, established an interactive website which enabled citizens to determine which party to vote for by indicating whether they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements. The results screen showed which party's policies most closely matched the user's preferences.

The move of the election campaign into the realms of interactivity and social media presents challenges for the web archiving software. In its present state of development, the crawler cannot capture streamed video, and can only gather the front page of Twitter sites. There are also obvious difficulties with interactive sites such as VoteMatch Europe, where responses are generated 'on the fly' following user input.

### **The Collection**

The resulting collection of 211 European Election 2009 websites gathered by the British Library is freely available to view at the UK Web Archive at <http://www.webarchive.org.uk/ukwa/collection>. National legislation restricts access to the collections gathered by the project partners. The Bibliotheque nationale de France collection can only be viewed on site by personal visitors. The Austrian collection can be accessed by personal visitors to the national library and at certain universities. The other collections are closed under national laws, with the exception of that created by the National Library of Catalunya, which will be freely available at <http://www.padicat.cat/en/europees2009.php>