

CENL in 2006 – 2007

Foundation CENL

Annual Meeting

The CENL annual meeting 2006 took place from 27 – 29 September 2006 at the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg. This year CENL celebrated its 20th anniversary: CENL started as an informal meeting of a few western European national librarians in 1987 and developed to a lively and active foundation comprising 47 members from 45 European countries.

The main topics at the annual meeting were the creation of a European digital library, digitization and long-term preservation of digital objects. The annual meeting was preceded by the workshop “Towards the European digital library” to open the discussion on what members of CENL think to be the positive and the negative aspects of the vision of a European digital library.

The CENL working groups gave an update on their activities. The CENL/FEP Working Group on Electronic Publications presented the revised version of the “Statement on the development and establishment of voluntary deposit schemes for electronic publications” which can be found on the CENL website (www.cenl.org).

The working Group on Persistent Identifiers for National Libraries presented its plans for activities regarding the creation of a European Resolution Infrastructure and the idea and possibility of and the conditions for “last resort resolving” to be discussed with a few individual publishers and the DOI Foundation.

The Working Group on Performance Evaluation is in close contact with the Sub Committee 8 of the Technical Committee 46 of the International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO TC 46, SC 8) Information and documentation – quality, statistics and performance evaluation and will act as an advisory body for the ISO work. The preparation of a technical report on performance indicators for national libraries will be done by the ISO group whereas CENL members should volunteer as evaluators of the proposed performance indicators.

The newly established Content Working Group works on how contents for mass digitisation in Europe can be selected and created for the European Digital Library and is actively involved in the European Digital Library project (EDLproject; work package 3).

Armenia and Georgia were formally accepted as new members of CENL.

Logo

The National Library of Estonia created a new logo for CENL which can be used for the website as well as for the letterhead.

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Finances

Thanks to the director of the Swiss National Library Marie-Christine Doffey and the former CENL secretary Geneviève Clavel, the Swiss Development Agency will grant a second donation to CENL in 2008 – 2010. With this donation the Agency will fund the integration of the national libraries of the following countries as full members into The European Library: Albania, Armenia, Azerbaijan, Bosnia Herzegovina, Georgia, Macedonia, Moldova, Ukraine.

The European Library

The European Library (www.theeuropeanlibrary.org), the web service of CENL, successfully completed its first three-year-period. All founder members except two renewed their membership for another three years and the national libraries of Cyprus, Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland and Slovakia joined as full members. By the end of 2007, more than 30 of the 47 CENL libraries will be full members in The European Library. The National Library of the Netherlands prolonged the Service Level Agreement to host The European Library service until the end of 2009.

The European Library saw three new releases since March 2006. The website and the services improve continuously, the traffic increases about 12% per month and the website continuously has a page rank of 8 out of 10.

The static content of the website underwent a large review and a new version of The European Library Handbook was released as well as the Metadata Registry version 2.0.

The collection descriptions of about 250 collections are being translated which will improve the quality of search results. The help texts of the website were translated into 10 languages.

Since February 2007 an electronic brochure about The European Library service and a mini The European Library search box for individual implementation are available.

The Chair of The European Library Management Board changed in March 2007. Fernanda Campos from the National Library of Portugal had to step down when she took over another position in her library and Lynne Brindley from the British Library was appointed as Interim Chair. Tiit Valm from the National Library of Estonia was appointed as Vice-Chair.

European digital library initiative

The Digital Libraries Initiative is a flagship project of the Commission's overall strategy to boost the digital economy, the i2010 strategy. The initiative aims at making Europe's diverse cultural and scientific heritage (books, films, maps, photographs, music, etc.) easier and more interesting to use online for work, leisure and/or study. It builds on Europe's rich heritage combining multicultural and multilingual environments with technological advances and new business models.

One of the key aims of the initiative is to come to a common European Digital Library, a multilingual internet access point to cultural collections from all Member States. This aim was endorsed by the EU Ministers responsible for culture in their Council conclusions of 13 November 2006.

The primary purpose of the European Digital Library is to give access to European cultural heritage. It is desirable that such access is multilingual and reflects the diversity of culture existing in Europe. It is also seen to be important that the authoritative resources of Europe's cultural heritage institutions can be properly represented in the virtual world.

One of the foundations for the European Digital Library has been provided by The European Library, as the EU Ministers responsible for culture clearly state in their Council conclusions of 13 November 2006.

CENL has been encouraged by the European Commission to work towards the establishment of a legal body able to represent the four domains of Archives, Audio-visual Archives, Libraries and Museums. As well as facilitating formal agreement across the four domains on how to cooperate in the delivery and sustainability of a joint access point, a legal body would also have the advantage of being able to apply for funds to ensure an equal distribution of benefits to all cultural sectors and EU countries. The first meeting of potential founders will take place on 29 June 2007. The aim of the meeting will be to come to a common understanding about the goal of a European Digital Library, the desirability of a cross domain foundation to govern the future direction of a European digital library and to decide how best to achieve it.

CENL shares the vision of a European Digital Library and has been working towards this goal by creating The European Library. CENL contributes to the vision with the projects TEL-ME-MOR, EDLproject, EDLnet and TELplus as well as actively engaging in establishing a legal body for a European digital library.

Projects

TEL-ME-MOR

The follow-up to the TEL project TEL-ME-MOR (<http://libraries.theeuropeanlibrary.org/cooperation/archive/telmemor/index.php>) with the goal of increasing New Member State (NMS) participation in EU-funded projects and extending The European Library service to the NMS started on 1 February 2005 and was successfully completed on 31 January 2007.

On 19 – 20 October 2006 TEL-ME-MOR carried out a Policy Conference in the National Library of Estonia, Tallinn. The conference focused on the digital future of cultural and scientific heritage, providing a forum for discussion of the latest digital library developments in Europe and the world. Conference website: <http://libraries.theeuropeanlibrary.org/cooperation/archive/telmemor/conference/index.php>

EDLproject

The European Digital Library project (EDLproject, www.edlproject.eu) is an EU-funded project with the goal of extending The European Library service to the national libraries of Belgium, Greece, Iceland, Ireland, Liechtenstein, Luxembourg, Norway, Spain and Sweden. It also addresses the enhancement of multilingual capabilities of The European Library portal, takes first steps towards collaboration between The European Library and other non-library cultural initiatives, and expands the marketing and communication activities of The European Library service. It started in September 2006 and will last 18 months.

In November 2006 and January 2007 two workshops were organized by the Austrian National Library in Vienna. The first workshop brought together

representatives of a number of projects funded by the eContent*plus* programme of the European Commission to discuss practical collaboration between them to support the development of the "European digital library" as envisaged by the "i2010 digital libraries" initiative of the European Commission. The workshop was a great success with participants actively wishing to collaborate on a future European digital library and to work cooperatively with its current form The European Library. The eContent*plus* projects at the workshop were a mix of content and technique but all offer something of value for the creation of a European digital library.

The goals of the second workshop were to reach a common understanding of the issues involved in the governance, organisation, communication and objectives of a European digital library. The participants were representatives from associations and organisations from the libraries, archives and museums sectors.

EDLnet

EDLnet is a proposal for a Thematic Network within the area of cultural and scientific/scholarly content of the eContent Plus programme. The network will build on The European Library and the results of the projects TEL-ME-MOR and EDLproject. The European Library and CENL wish to set up a thematic network to work towards the interoperability of the cultural content held by the major museums, archives and research and public libraries under the umbrella of The European Library as it moves towards the European Digital Library. EDLnet will develop a first proposal for the organisational and structural issues of a European Digital Library and aims at getting started with a group of interested institutions to build bridges across the sectors. EDLnet will facilitate workshops and meetings to achieve the aim of a multi-institutional cultural network. It was evaluated positively and may start in early summer 2007, running for 2 years. It will be jointly coordinated by The European Library Office / National Library of the Netherlands and Eremo srl.

TELplus

TELplus is a proposal for a 50% funded project under eContentPlus. The work packages are:

1. OCR-ing of previously digitised material
2. Making library content OAI compliant
3. Clustering – a means of bringing together all the information on a subject in one set of results that is not listed by library
4. Semantic Interoperability – automatic mapping of metadata schemas, solvable multilingual issues
5. Developing and adding user services to The European Library
6. User personalisation and annotation services

The project was evaluated positively and may start in early summer 2007, running for 2 years. It will be jointly coordinated by the National Library of Estonia and Eremo srl.

Britta Woldering, CENL secretary, June 2007

