

CENL Recommendations regarding the creation of the European Digital Library

Recommendation 1: For the European Commission on digitisation:
Large scale digitisation of books held in libraries should be funded by the Commission. The EU needs to overcome the obstacles preventing such funding currently.

Over half of the holdings of national libraries are books, the costs of digitising these are extremely high compared to flat, single materials. The duty of national libraries is to preserve and give access to printed material and this role can only be fulfilled in the web world through digital access and therefore digitisation of books.

Money is available for research and development and not for production, greater pressure needs to be levied upon the Commission to create the conditions that enable ease of production and overcome the obstacles of copyright and financing.

Recommendation 2: For the European Commission on users:
More emphasis to be placed on putting the user at the forefront of all digital library development and research.

This requires better understanding of what users really use (facebook, learning environments etc), how online communities are built and become sustainable and how trusted information is best delivered to ensure its use over the mass of un-validated information.

Recommendation 3: For the national libraries on users:
User needs and wishes must be the driver in the creation of any website, national or international.

National library material has been traditionally organised in ways that help the trained librarian to find information on the shelves. Content needs to be organised for a web audience. This means granularity of data to allow full text searching, the use of protocols allowing data to be crawled and harvested and the organisation of data to ensure maximum discovery. A balance needs to be found between metadata creation and search of the material itself. Data should be format neutral.

Recommendation 4: For the national libraries on innovation:
Innovate or die. National libraries must continue to innovate to be able to continue to provide information where and when the users needs it.

It is therefore important to innovate both in the organisation and dissemination of knowledge – this is the expertise of the libraries – and in finding new technical answers.

CENL Secretariat

Deutsche Nationalbibliothek • Adickesallee 1 • 60322 Frankfurt am Main • Germany

Telephone +49 69 1525 1541 • Fax +49 69 1525 1010 • E-mail cenl@d-nb.de

The CENL is registered at the Chamber of Commerce Haaglanden, NL, # 27177490

Recommendation 5: For the national libraries on position:

Smarter marketing using the networks national libraries already have in place.

There is a need to disseminate more widely the work that has been done in The European Library by the national libraries. More active work to make other libraries and users aware of the free resource to European cultural heritage will consolidate the leadership position national libraries have obtained and help ensure that the standards created and used by libraries become de facto. Libraries have the multimedia materials and should therefore use and promote the knowledge and experience of these for standards elsewhere.

Recommendation 6: For the national libraries and the European Commission on position:

Managing the expectation of the Commission with reference to the European Digital Library and what CENL can be held responsible for.

For EDL to be a true success the other sectors need to produce digitised, searchable, interoperable data – the national libraries cannot be held responsible for the other cultural domains.

