



Workshop delivers more pieces for the European digital library jigsaw

Using video and sound archives, searching within old maps, reading rare texts and manuscripts held by the National Libraries of Europe: it should all be possible online within 12 to 18 months from now! This is one of the results of a workshop held at the [Austrian National Library](#) and a major step towards building the “European digital library”.

The European digital library, being built over the next 3 to 4 years, will serve as an entry point to Europe’s digital content in libraries, archives and museums. It is part of the [“digital libraries” flagship initiative](#), within the i2010 programme of the

European Commission. The initiative addresses all types of material: books, audio, video, photographs, documents in archives etc. The European digital library does not start from scratch, but will build upon [The European Library](#) service (TEL), already bringing together the collections of Europe’s National Libraries.



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The two day workshop in Vienna was part of [EDLproject](#), funded under the Commission’s [eContentplus programme](#); creating access to more digital collections more quickly than would otherwise be the case. It assembled

representatives from several eContentplus projects ranging from video and sound archives to paper memory and a history textbook database able to portray history from different nations’ viewpoints. The workshop concentrated on the practical issues of bringing these materials and networks into The European Library, in preparation for a European digital library.

According to Hans Petschar, Director of the Austrian National Library’s Picture Archive, the nine projects ‘created an atmosphere of enormous willingness to work together with The European Library to achieve a European *digital* library’. The Austrian National Library was pleased to host this event as it considers the European digital library initiative a major step in widening access to Europe’s immense cultural and scientific heritage and for the development of new information services. The Austrian National Library joined TEL in 2005 and actively contributes to the initiative.

The workshop was very successful with most of the projects able to conform easily to the technical requirements of The European Library service. Enabling therefore, structured searching across the cultural heritage of Europe. This allows a researcher, for example, to find the footage of film of The Beatles' European tour as well as hearing the songs from the tour and reading about the effect on the youth in the various toured countries in one search. The highly structured nature of the material held in libraries and other European cultural heritage repositories means such searches can be conducted thematically as well as searching on time and place which is difficult to achieve with the mass search engines.

Jill Cousins, Director of The European Library was pleased that the "metadata" standards which enable cross collection searching for libraries needed little if any adjustment to work for these more varied media types. 'It is a tribute to the work undertaken and continuing to be done, by the National Libraries and the international metadata community, that the system is flexible enough to encompass a wider range of materials than text.'

Next EDLproject will work on creating a sustainable organisational and business model for the European digital library to be able to keep such content and access available and maintainable. A second workshop on this subject will take place, again at the Austrian National Library, at the end of January 2007. Working with national and pan-European networks in museums, archives, libraries and cultural heritage repositories, the aim will be to air the issues of creating a framework for such bodies to work together and lay down a timeline for resolving them.

The pieces of the jigsaw are widely dispersed but this first workshop showed that with the right spirit of collaboration the picture stands a very good chance of being realised in the timelines set by the European Commission.

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References:

- Austrian National Library, <http://www.onb.ac.at/>
- The European Library, <http://www.theeuropeanlibrary.org/>
- EDLproject, <http://www.edlproject.eu/>
- I2010 Digital Libraries initiative, http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/digital_libraries/
- eContentplus Programme, http://europa.eu.int/information_society/activities/econtentplus/

Notes for Editors

*The **Austrian National Library** is the Republic of Austria's main scientific library and the legal successor to the Imperial Royal Court Library of the Austrian Empire. The library's main obligations include: Archival storage and access to all writings from Austria; collecting and making accessible literature on Austria or Austrians from abroad; making accessible valuable treasures from the special collections and fulfilling obligations to Austrian librarianship.*

<http://www.onb.ac.at/>

***EDLproject** is a Targeted Project funded by the European Commission under the [eContentplus Programme](#) and coordinated by the [German National Library](#). It started in September 2006 and works towards the integration of the bibliographic catalogues and digital collections of the National Libraries of [Belgium](#), [Greece](#), [Iceland](#), [Ireland](#), [Liechtenstein](#), [Luxembourg](#), [Norway](#), [Spain](#) and [Sweden](#), into [The European Library](#).*

EDLproject 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. <http://www.EDLproject.eu>

***The European Library** (TEL) is a service of the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) offering free, item level, access to the combined resources, books, magazines, journals, manuscripts, sound and video archives, both digital and non-digital, from 23 of the 47 national libraries of Europe. <http://www.TheEuropeanLibrary.org>*