

ROYAL LIBRARY OF BELGIUM. REPORT 2003-04

1. Management of the library

The appointment of a general director, which was planned to occur at the beginning of 2004, has been delayed owing to a legal tangle.

2. Handling of electronic publications and formats

The Royal Library is installing the necessary hardware and software for the implementation of a depot of electronic documents. A Linux server, with one Tb of hard disc memory, is used in order to store the documents and make the documents available.

The Digitool system, developed by Ex Libris has been chosen, in order to manage the system; Oracle is used for database management facilities. The user interface of the Digitool system is completely Web based.

The function allows a publisher to store electronic documents, and their metadata, in a "Temporary Collection". The electronic document is approved by a librarian and stored in the database. There are virtual databases for Belgian monographs, Belgian periodicals, monographs of international organisations and periodicals of international organisations. Bibliographic metadata are stored in Dublin Core format; indexes will be available for creator, title, publisher, subject, ... ; full text indexation is also implemented. The bibliographic database will be available on the Internet. The consultation of the electronic document is reserved for the patrons at the Royal Library.

Actually, the publishers are not obliged to deposit electronic documents. The Royal Library will contact the publishers for a voluntary deposit. Contacts will be arranged for in the second semester of 2004. Supplementary research and development will be undertaken in order to guarantee the long term availability of the electronic documents.

3. Information technology and networks

3.1. The Web site of the Royal Library

- - The Web site has been entirely reorganised. For this, we called upon a consultant.
- - **Continuous development:**
 - o o Updating (compiling and configuring new versions and new programs) of the open source software used by the Royal Library.
 - o o Installing new services.
 - o o Technical study of the possibility and the necessity of integrating a server of protected and watermarked high-resolution images (downloading is forbidden). Installing and activating this server (test version).
 - o o Updating the Web site (exhibitions, heritage days, concerts, guest organisations on the Web site and in the building of the Royal Library, publications of the Royal Library).
- - Creating html-pages regarding the exhibitions at the Royal Library of Belgium.

3.2. Realising a DVD on Rimbaud at the occasion of the exhibition *Arthur Rimbaud (1854-1891) A Season in Hell* at the Center for Fine Arts, Brussels, from 27 February to 16 May 2004, in cooperation with the Library's departments of Photography and Manuscripts.

Through the accounts of twenty persons who knew Rimbaud, this project aims to present Arthur Rimbaud's personality and writings thematically and chronologically.

3.3. Readers' management

The necessary material for the production of readers' cards has been purchased and tested: the program KBarcode, delivered with SuSE-Linux, gives satisfaction and is now being installed.

3.4. Updating of the servers and the firewall

Transfer of the mail server from «sendmail» to «qmail».
Installation of a spam filter and an anti-virus system on the central mail server.
Review of the firewall's functionalities.
Study and follow-up of the safety of the Royal Library's computer system.
Update of the servers following an attack of the computer system.

3.5. Retrospective conversion of the card catalogue

Due to financial restrictions this conversion is going rather slowly. This year the firm JOUVE converted 150,000 records into a MARC format.

3.6. The Library Management System (LMS)

In preparation of the adjustment or replacement of VUBIS, the system that is currently used, a report was written evaluating the actual operating procedures in the different sections and establishing new and future needs. The LMS has an enormous impact on the functioning of the entire institution. In addition to technical-computational problems, other essential items such as cooperation, standardisation and training have been discussed.
The market of library management systems has been explored.
The Department of Logistics began writing specifications for a library management system in view of replacing the current VUBIS system.
The specifications should be published in the fall of 2004.

3.7. The UniCat project

<http://www.kbr.be/unicat>

The general objective of the UniCat project is to establish a gateway allowing users to simultaneously search and retrieve bibliographic records from Belgian library catalogues. As such UniCat can be considered as a virtual union catalogue of Belgian libraries.

The first phase of the UniCat project has been finalised (cf. report 2002-03).
A team of international experts evaluated the work carried out within the framework of the UniCat project as being excellent. The project will run for another two years (2004-2006).
Many technical tasks remain to be carried out.

4. The digital library

4.1. Telematic Network for Teaching Art History in Universities

<http://telemat.kbr.be>

The aim of the project is to organise an information exchange network for teaching and research in the field of art history in Belgium. It involves setting up an operational structure within the partner universities that will make it possible gradually to transform the old slide libraries into “digital libraries” or libraries of digital photographs. In order to achieve this, the universities will be working with two specific image providers, the Institut Royal du Patrimoine Artistique and the Bibliothèque royale de Belgique. These two providers make available to the universities a selection of digitised images of major works forming part of Belgium’s artistic heritage, as raw material for courses on Belgian art history. In return, the universities will make efforts to supplement the textual scientific data for these two image providers, in accordance with the progress of research.

The first phase of this project ended. The variety of the constitution of the partners consortium (teachers, librarians, museum staff) proved to have been an interesting experience. In the first phase a number of aspects have been studied that profoundly affect the final product (existing standards, user inquiry, metadata, legal aspects, preservation, ...). A first pilot has been realised and will be tested. The work that has been carried out within the framework of the Telemat project was considered of being of great value. The green light was given (and funding was granted) to continue the work for another two years (2004-2006).

4.2. System for analysis of the development of a structured high-performance system for the availability of historical atlases via metadata and digitising

The Royal Library of Belgium possesses an important historical cartographic collection that reflects, in a sense, the two periods that were crucial for the development of the cartography in Belgium as it exists today. The first period begins in the 16th century and Louvain was an internationally recognised center of scientific cartography, whereas Antwerp was a center of commercial cartographic activities. A second period that was equally important for the cartography in Belgium coincides more or less with the Belgian independence and the origins of the Royal Library of Belgium. One of the pioneers in this development was Philippe Vandermaelen, founder of the *Etablissement Géographique de Bruxelles* (1830). This collection contains important and rare atlases.

There are no Belgian institutions (university libraries, Museum Plantijn-Moretus, Mercator museum, ...) where a specific cataloguing and/or digitising project of atlases is currently running. In the Royal Library of Belgium these documents are insufficiently catalogued and hence difficultly accessible to researchers.

Within the framework of historical research, it is important that this rich heritage of historic atlases is made available via extensive search possibilities and “just in time”. This availability does not only concern a detailed database of bibliographic records of the documents, but also the actual documents in a (substitute) digitised form that is in its turn stored in a structured database. Both databases should be linked.

4.3. EVAMP: International project

The Royal Library of Belgium participates in the European EVAMP project (EVA Market Validation Project) within the framework of the TEN Telecom Call 2001/2 of the European Commission. It concerns the continuation of the EVA project in which a certain amount of historical images were already digitised and made accessible. EVAMP aims at further developing the EVA prototype and elaborating a Business Plan. The Royal Library of Belgium adhered to the following work packages:

- - WP 2: Market validation survey
- - WP 3: Refine the prototype
- - WP 4: Business Plan
- - WP 5: Dissemination

The partners:

- - Telepolis Antwerp

- - Municipal Archives Antwerp
- - Dutch Institute for Scientific Information
- - London Metropolitan Archives
- - The University of London Computer Centre
- - Programma (software and consultancy organisation)
- - Pictura (organisation specialised in digitising and image databases)
- - The Royal Library of Belgium

Within the framework of the project, 2,500 pictures dating from the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th century (preserved at the Drawings Room) have been digitised.

5. Acquisitions

Outstanding new acquisitions

- - A *Psalterium*, printed in Antwerp with Hubertus Someren in 1526;
- - an oration of Peutinger, printed with Simon Cock in 1521;
- - a rare Plantin edition, *letters of Cicero*, printed in 1567;
- - a medical publication of T. Damianus, *Theoricae medicinae*, printed with Antonius Dumaëus in 1541;
- - one incunabulum originating from the Arenberg library: Livius' *Historiae Romanae decades*, printed in Venice with Vindelinus de Spira in 1470.
- - Historical maps:
 - o o Hondius, *Nova Europe descriptio*, Paris, 1659;
 - o o van de Keere, *Leo Belgicus*, Amsterdam, ca. 1617;
 - o o Hondius, *Germaniae nova ac accurata descriptio*, Amsterdam, 1625;
 - o o Nicolas de Fer, *Les frontières de France et des Pais Bas...*, 1743.
- - Musical archives and scores:
 - o o the opera *Pier li houyeu* by Eugène Ysaye;
 - o o The extensive archives of Franz André, principal first director of the Great Symphonic Orchestra of the N.I.R. (National Broadcast Institute).
- - Coins:
 - o o A golden coin (florin) of Mathias Corvinus (1458-1490);
 - o o An interesting tetradrachm of Ptolemaeus Soter from Egypt, overstruck on a coin of Alexander the Great;
 - o o A series of 17 unedited Antoniniani originating from an important find;
 - o o A unique silver coin struck in the 12th century in an unidentified Mosan workplace;
 - o o An unedited double farthing of Philip the Fair;

6. Preservation and conservation

Preservation policy for 'printed books and reference books':

- - Reference books are systematically controlled: in 2003, 363 severely damaged volumes were committed to professional bookbinders;
- - Minor reparations are carried out by employees of the Royal Library.

Preservation and conservation of newspaper collections:

- - Agreements are being made with other depositary institutions regarding microfilming. Many years ago, a collaboration agreement was concluded between the Royal Library and the library of the Belgian Parliament;
- - The Royal Library of Belgium co-ordinates a 'National project for the conservation of Belgian newspapers'. Agreements have been made regarding:
 - o o an electronic database of Belgian newspapers;
 - o o development of a working method and of criteria for programming the microfilming policy.

Preservation and conservation of precious books:

- - Since 1999 the emphasis is on the restoration of books in a very poor state.

7. Services to readers

7.1. New CD-ROM server

The old network CD-ROM server was out of use since August 1999. A new machine and software were purchased, but special client software was required for the installation. Among other things thanks to the advice of the consultant of the company B.A. this machine has been converted into a Linux Samba Server.

The CD-ROM images are read into a Samba partition on the machine's hard disk and are installed in another Samba partition.

The Windows clients see the Samba Server as «//cd-tower» (intranet address: 10.2.0.150) and can mount the installation partition as W: drive. Next, the bat files in this partition mount the CD-ROM image-partition as L: drive and the contents of the CD can be viewed.

For an average user it is difficult to mount the W: drive. This can be done with a simple icon, but this results in a partition where all structure is lost. In order to make its use more flexible, a menu programme is being written.

The CD's can also be consulted on the Linux JavaStations, using an intermediary Windows machine and remote desktop. However, the JavaStations go back to 1998 and are being considered as working very slowly by readers and catalogue librarians alike. This approach is being realised on faster clients.

7.2. Possibility of on-line reservation for readers

The possibility of making on-line reservation available for the readers has been mentioned repeatedly. In the current Vubis software, this possibility is integrated in the borrowing module. Our library does not possess that module and it is not easy to incorporate it in our outdated software.

A preliminary study has been carried out. Most problems are of organisational nature, e.g. the lack of standard identification of the readers by means of a unique number. The ideal solution consists of using the new electronic identity cards, but these are far from widespread. The deviant opening hours of the sub-libraries are another difficulty.

It has been convened to make it possible for anyone (including non-registered readers) to reserve 3 works per day.

Most of the software is ready and the system can be tested according to plan in the second part of 2004.

8. Cultural events, exhibitions and publishing

Public-relation policy includes: guided tours 'on measure', the yearly 'Open House day', the publication of the semi-annual Bulletin, participation in the Brussels cultural events and the participation in book fairs, exhibitions and concerts.

9. Library cooperation

9.1. CERL

The Royal Library participates in the CERL project.

9.2. ELAG (European Library Automation Group)

<http://www.elag2003.ch/main.htm>

The Royal Library coordinates the organisation of the ELAG activities and chairs the yearly meeting. ELAG brings together once a year colleagues involved in library automation in leading European libraries and information centres. The last seminar (9-11 June 2004, Oslo) focused on *Interoperability : new challenges and solutions*.

9.3. Bibliotheca Universalis

9.4. EROMM

9.5. ISSN

9.6. RILM (Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale)

9.7. RISM (Répertoire International des Sources Musicales)

9.8. International Numismatic Commission

9.9. Fédération Internationale des Médailles (FIDEM)

9.10. Groupe des Cartothécaires de LIBER

9.11. Centre International de Codicologie

9.12. PUC work group within IFLA

9.13. ICC (International Cataloguing Code) for bibliographic description