REPORT ROYAL LIBRARY OF BELGIUM

1996

1. Legislation : Legal deposit legislation

Belgian legal deposit legislation dates from 1965 and is almost outdated. At present one copy only has to be deposited and that only holds for printed publications. There is therefore a great need for a legislation which takes into account all data carriers. In a federalized country such as Belgium this calls for a constitutional problem. Libraries are considered to be a cultural matter. Legislation in that field therefore belongs to the competence of the Community governments and parliaments. When the Communities install there legal deposit collection, the federal authorities are no longer entitled to do the same, unless there has been a previous mutual agreement. Such has not yet been negotiated. A multiple deposit obligation of all data carriers is the aim, as well as a practical agreement involving all parties.

In 1996 there have been preliminary discussions in view of a new legislation

2. Public services and IT

The Royal Library gives free access to Internet. Four personal computers with Netscape-clients are at the disposal of the public in the main reading room.

Free training sessions are organised regularly for the public about Internet and navigation on it.

The WEB-site of the Royal Library will be moved to a modern NETRA (SUN)-computer.

A Z 39.50 server is under development.

3. Automation

In 1994 Geac Northern Europe has acquired the assets of ODIS in Eindhoven, Brussels and Paris. GEAC, active in the library automation field since many years, guarantees the maintenance and development of the VUBIS software, used in the Royal Library since July 1992. The operation is to be considered as an effort to enforce the role of GEAC as a seller of library automation software in Belgium and the Netherlands.

This year Geac realised further enhancements to the VUBIS software. The main new features are :

-new indices have been added, allowing improved retrieval possibilities ;

-navigation through names of authors and LCSH -subject headings has been implemented ;

-the management facilities for the creation of the headings and for the indexing of the books has been installed.

4. Retroconversion

Retroconversion of the complete Belgian Bibliography (1875-1974) continued. The whole operation will be finished halfway 1997. The technique used has been developed on the EU More-project about OCR/ICR retrospective conversion on basis of the printed Belgian Bibliography .

5. The Belgian Bibliography printed and on CD-rom

As from 1994 the Belgian Bibliography appears in print as well as on CD-rom . From 1998 on, the national bibliography will only appear on CD-ROM !

After completion of the retroconversion, the complete Belgian bibliography (1875-1997) will be available on CD-rom.

6. Conservation and preservation

All library departments have been trying to find a balance between the usual binding programme (e.g. reference books) and restoration. The Rare Books Department especially has used special binding boxes.

In 1996, the Royal Library chaired the meetings of EROMM. The annual assembly was held in Brussels. Theme of the discussion was the cooperation agreement with RLG. This agreeement on the exchange of bibliographic records was ratified later on that year.

7. National cooperation and research projects

The Royal Library, together with two other libraries (the Library of the Free University of Brussels and of the University of Antwerp) and the software company IRIS (Image Recognition Integrated System), has set up the VIRLIB-project, which aims to create the virtual library (including document delivery) based on telecommunications technology. The project will run for 4 years and has started in October 1995. The prototype will be developed in the first phase of two years. The Royal Library ensures the coordination of the project.

The VirLib projects is a cooperative project between the Royal Library Albert I, the libraries of the the University of Antwerp and the Université Libre de Bruxelles and IRIS, a company specialised in digital image processing. It aims at creating a virtual library infrastructure using state-of-the-art telecommunications technology. The main emphasis is on the transparant integration of bibliographic retrieval (local catalogues) with electronic document ordering and delivery. User interfaces will be developed using WWW-technology.

General introduction to the VirLib project

The VirLib project will create a virtual library infrastructure giving users access over electronic networks to journals, books and electronic documents held by remote libraries.

At present users can search the catalogues of a number of Belgian libraries. They cannot order a document directly, though, and they have to learn the interface of each catalogue. When a users would like to consult a book or a journal article that is not available at his own library, he has to fill in a form and give it to his librarian, who will find a library that holds the document and order it. For ordering the librarian uses Impala the Belgian electronic document

ordering system,. The document is delivered by a shuttle service or by post to the library where the user can collect it.

VirLib will try to develop direct and integrated services to the end user. An end user should be able to search catalogues of different libraries, order a document online, and receive an electronic copy on his desktop computer. He will also be able to follow the progress of his request.

Documents such as journal articles will be scanned for transmission. The project will also investigate ways by which documents already existing in electronic form - suc as reports published by the institution ("grey literature"), collections that a library has digitised, journals that publishers are increasingly supplying in electronic format - can be delivered to the end user. The searching and ordering interface of the system will also allow users to place requests for postal delivery of photocopies or for interlibrary loan of books.

Key technical requirements of such a system are:

* Uniformity and ease of use of the interfaces for searching different databases and for ordering, delivery, and payment. Interfaces will use World Wide Web technology

* Integration of different components to avoid re-keying of data

* Adherence to internationally agreed or widely used standards and formats (under review are Z39.50 for search and retrieval of bibliographic data; ISO ILL and GEDI recommendations for ordering; CCITT group 4 and JPEG for compression of images; TIFF and PDF as document formats; LDAP for storage of user data)

The project delivers a number of components:

* Gateways to the local catalogues of the three libraries and to a number of union catalogues:

> o the CCB (Collectieve Catalogus van BelgiÙ / Catalogue Collectif de Belgique), with books of 40 university and special libraries

> o Antilope, listing the periodicals at 100 institutions (Belgian university, research, and special libraries and important foreign document suppliers).

* Enhancements to the existing Impala ordering system (identification of end users, ordering by end users, validation of their request by librarians, reports on the status of the request to users, delivery to their pc, billing)

* Development of an image processing workstation for scanning requested documents and creation of a test database with digitised documents (including non-textual collections, such as photographs).

* A study of the status of electronic storage and delivery of documents in the copyright legislation.

Workplan

deliverables of the VirLib project

o T01- Review of Electronic Document Ordering and Delivery Systems

o T02 - Research into Existing Standards

o T03 - Evaluation of User Requirements

o T04 - Study of Digital Storing Techniques for the Creation of Image Databases

o T05 - Prototype WWW application for Search and Retrieve

o T06 - Prototype Scanning/Compression/Storage of Documents

o T07 - Prototype of the WWW Application for Document Ordering and Delivery

o T08 - Implementation of Pilot Application

o T09 - Testing of the Application

o T10 - Copyright Study

o T11 - Study of Social and Economic Aspects

8. International activities

8.1. CERL

The Royal Library participates in the CERL-project.

8.2. COBRA

The Royal Library is a partner in 3 Cobra-projects :

-AUTHOR : the Royal library has a lot of experience in the field of authority-control. Since the beginning of the eighties authority files are an integrated part of the automation system.

-UNIMARC : the objective is a feasibility study of the application of UNIMARC to multinational databases. The work database will mainly consist of records from the CERL-database.

-METRIC : the project aims at developping standards for statistics on the national production of printed publications. Together with a consultant, the Royal Library was responsible for the development of a European format.

-The Royal Library steered the committee preparing a study on 'New Bibliographic Services'. The study has been performed by the French consultant TOSCA.

8.3. DELICAT

The Royal Library is one of the partners in this European project which will try to solve the problem of errors in bibliographic databases. Other library partners are the British Library and the Bibliotheca Nacional of Spain.

8.4. ELAG (European Library Automation Group))

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 (Berlin, April 1996) was on 'Quality of electronic services'. About 120 members joined. The most important issues where : Z39.50, WWW, electronic publishing, electronic document delivery and INTERNET resources discovery.

8.4. Incipit

The Royal Library is a partner in the Incipit project of the Libraries action programme of the European Commission. The project seeks to investigate the feasibility and viability of producing a CD-ROM product combining textual bibliographic records with images of selected pages to extend the methodology of bibliographical description. Even though the project itself applies to materials printed in the 15th century, the methodology could be extended to printed materials of later periods.

9. Public relations and exhibitions

9.1. Public relations

Public-relation policy contains : 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 bookfairs.

9.2. Exhibitions and concerts

Concerts

There are six concerts annually : music based on (old) scares belonging tot the collections of the Library.

Exhibitions

In 1996, there have been exhibitions on 'Icons from Mount Athos', 'Mark Severin, 'the alphabet', 'Medals and the Belgian presence in Africa' , 'Verhaeren', 'Chris Brand' 'Emblembooks', 'The Order of the Golden Fleece', 'Les très belles Heures du Duc ce Berry', 'The Female Book'.

10. Acquisitions

Purchase :

- 8.431 monographs
- 7.239 periodicals

Exchange :

- 5.697 monographs
- 5.325 international official publications
- 686 periodicals

Legal deposit :

- 22.070 monographs
- 13.235 periodicals

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