

REPORT ROYAL LIBRARY OF BELGIUM

1999

1. Information technology

- *New investments in hardware/software*

The institution continues to invest in digitization equipment. Several computers, scanners, printers, digital cameras and other specialized peripheral equipment have been installed. A small SUN Ultra server will be used to run the duplication of some important servers (like mail, web, etc).

- *Staff*

There is a lack of qualified IT staff at all levels. The number of computers, applications, services and users is growing very fastly. Most tasks require highly specialized staff which is not available in the institution.

- *OPAC*

The WebOpac has been redesigned and rewritten. New indices (trilingual Library of Congress Subject Headings, title words and keywords) and the implicit feature of Boolean AND-searches on word lists have been added. In order to render the WebOpac more intuitive the keyword searches are analyzed and the eventual phrases are recognized and searched for. Advanced Z.3950 search (already available at IP 193.190.242.200:22222) is now being extended to conform with the BATH profile.

The serials article database and the LC background database (containing the Library of Congress records) are now updated automatically. Both of them are accessible only on Intranet within the institution.

- *WebSite*

The WebSite of the Royal Library has been completely redesigned and. With a newly created solid base structure, it is now easier to expand and update the site and make it more alive and dynamic. The Belgian legislation requires the Website to be bilingual – French and Dutch. Nevertheless the English and German versions are under construction and will be available soon.

- *Y2K*

Most efforts of the already scarce computer staff have been spent last year on Y2K problems. The chief of the Logistics Department appointed a working group which analyzed the potential problems (not only in the computer center but in the whole technical infrastructure of the Royal Library), prepared the action plan and carried out the necessary software and hardware upgrades and modifications achieving a smooth passage to the year 2000.

planning

Instalation of :

- a new CD-ROM network (server software and hardware),
- specialized workstations for the visually disabled people,

a server for access to digitized documents.

2. The digital library

In 1999 a private company finished the scanning approximately 15,000 nineteenth-century pamphlets, mostly originating from Belgium, printed on paper of very poor quality and that may rightly be considered as "endangered". These pamphlets are bound in volumes on the spine of which is mentioned a common theme of all the titles brought together. Scanning: 300 dpi, bitonal, storage in Tiff G 4. The images are delivered on CD-ROMs that will be copied in the Royal Library's central database to allow for consultation through its internal network and later on the Internet. Access is minimal : only the shelf-number and the 'theme' mentioned on the volume are access points. Preliminary studies has been uindertaken to add metadata to the digitised documents.

The digitization of phtographs of Brussels and of ancient coins started.

CD-roms containing larger parts of the 270 manuscripts of the dukes of Burgundy (15th century) will be published in 2000.

This "digitization policy" has a double purpose:

1. To make rare documents accessible on a larger scale.
2. To make "endangered" documents accessible by providing a substitute copy.

Regarding the microfilming of newspapers, the phase of microfilming newspapers of the First World War has been completed.

3. Retroconversion

Retroconversion of the Belgian Bibliography has been done for the period 1875-1930. The retroconversion of the catalogue of the Royal Library of Belgium started

4. The Belgian Bibliography on CD-rom

In 1999 the Belgian Bibliography appeared only on CD-ROM. The Belgian bibliography is now available on CD-rom for the period 1875-1998.

5. Conservation and preservation

During the year 1999, the Royal Library staff charged with the follow-up of this problem studied the various evolutions in the field of mass deacidification, microfilming and digitizing. The decision was taken to consecrate each year a sum to the preservation by substitution of nineteenth-century Belgian brochures.

In the main reading room, each reader has to inscribe the author, title and reference of the work he is going to photocopy in a register to allow the staff to control the application of interdictions concerning the age and the state of conservation of the books.

In 1999, the Royal Library attended the meetings of EROMM.

6. National cooperation and research projects

The VirLib project 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.

The project continued his second phase. The developped software has been tested by the three libraries of the Consortium and 6 other university libraries. The 'research' will be finished in september 2000.

VIRLIB is a modular system wich means that it can be implemented independently from the informatics structure of a library. More information : <http://www.kbr.be/virlib2>.

7. International activities

7.1. CERL

The Royal Library participates in the CERL-project.

7.2. 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 (Paris, april 2000) focused on Archives, Libraries and Museums convergence .

7.3. Bibliotheca Universalis

7.4. EROMM

7.5. ISSN

7.6. RILM (Répertoire International de Littérature Musicale)

7.7. RISM (Répertoire International des Sources Musicales)

7.8. International Numismatic Commission

7.9. Fédération Internationale des Médailles (FIDEM)

7.10. Groupe des Cartothécaires de LIBER

7.11. Centre International de Codicologie

8. Public relations and exhibitions

8.1. 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.

8.2. Exhibitions and concerts

Exhibitions in 1999:

'Love in the library', 'Translations of the Bible in Dutch', Manuscript Van Hulthem', 'Wim Platteborze', 'Gisbert Combaz', '1000 years of hungarian coins', 'Maps of Finland', 'Messengers of heaven'.

Concerts in 1999:

One of the aims of the midday concerts at the Royal Library is to present rarely performed compositions to the public, the scores of which are conserved in the Music Department. In 1999, 6 concerts were organized.

Willy Vanderpijpen