



Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche
Association of European Research Libraries

ANNUAL REPORT (2015-2016)

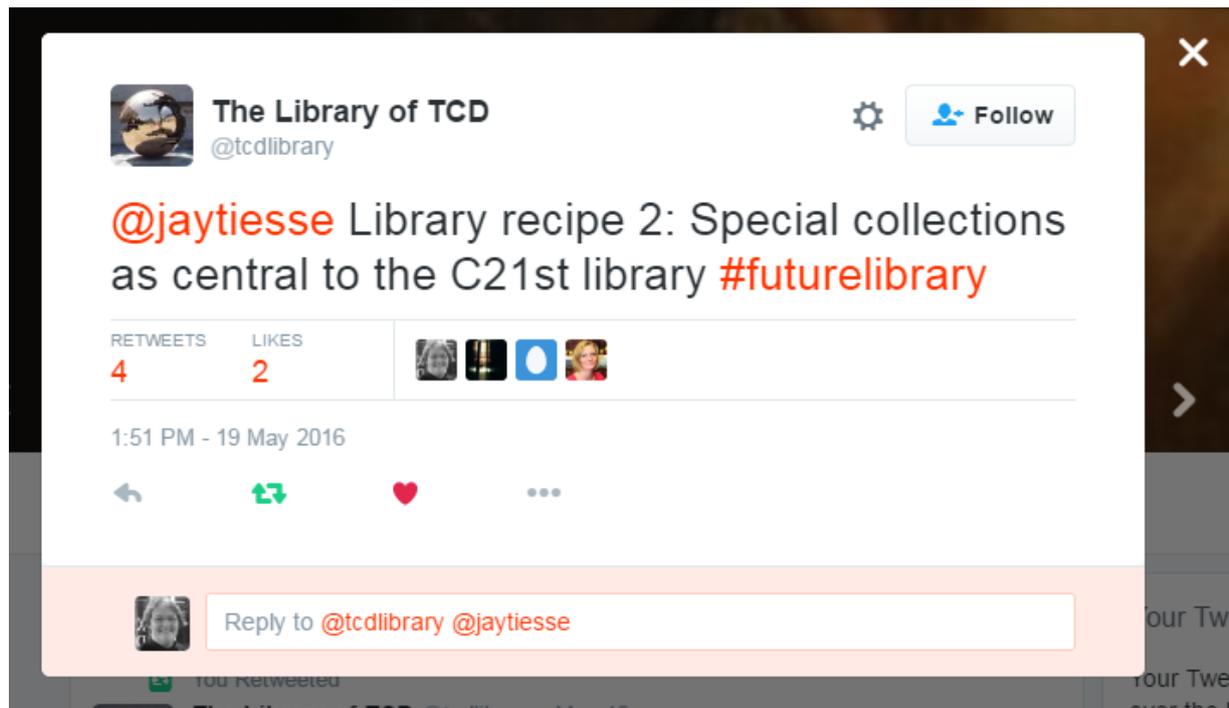
NAME: Digital Cultural Heritage Forum

CHAIR: Dr Claudia Fabian, Drs Marian Lefferts

- **SUMMARY**

The Forum is a shared LIBER/CERL activity. Its focus is on the transfer, role, place and exploitation of cultural heritage collections, as this is the most valuable asset for a research library which assures the library's uniqueness, distinctiveness and identity in the digital environment.

At the Library Futures Symposium, held on 19 May 2016 (see also <http://www.tcd.ie/Library/news/future-library/library-futures-symposium/>), Jeffrey Schnapp, Founder/faculty director of metaLAB at Harvard University, was reported to have said that he sees 'Special collections as central to the 21st-century library'



The Forum works to allow better insights and sharing of these collections. The remit includes the challenges of the new, digital-born cultural heritage assets which need to be identified, cared for, described and preserved. For this, close co-operation takes place not only with CERL and the Digital Collections Working Group of the Reshaping the Research Library Steering Committee but also with IFLA and relevant EU projects.

The Forum serves within LIBER as an awareness guarantee and exchange space for best practices and ideas, to encourage practitioners in their daily concerns, and to support each other in common approaches, to develop strong networks, and meaningful collaboration.

● ANNUAL ACHIEVEMENTS

GOAL 1: *Participate in the Early European Books Library Advisory Board*

STATUS: *ongoing*

SUMMARY: *The role of this Board is to advise and support the development of ProQuest's EEB (Early European Books) collections. The terms of reference are that the Board should:*

- *Act in an advisory capacity on the digitisation of early printed books in Europe*
- *Help explore how such outputs could be used*
- *Identify standards to be used*

The link between ProQuest and LIBER is non-exclusive and LIBER reserves the right to discuss its principles on the digitisation of cultural heritage materials with any other suitable suppliers. Meetings have taken place in London on 23 June 2015 and 1 February 2016. LIBER Libraries interested in ProQuest's services can approach the Forum for advice.

GOAL 2: *Ensure that LIBER Libraries participate in the CERL Security Network.*

STATUS: *ongoing*

SUMMARY: *As one of the activities of the (now) [CERL Security Working Group](#), the Security Network mailing list was set up as a safe environment for members to exchange information on thefts and on patterns of theft, and to work closely together on methods of detection and prevention. Unfortunately, the list has had to be put to use several times in the period 2015-2016, to warn list members of potential danger to their collections posed by itinerant thieves. In the course of 2015, the ILAB community has indicated its interest in the Security Network, and the Working Group overseeing the Network is speaking with them to explore how communication between the libraries in the Network and ILAB could be strengthened. All LIBER Libraries are invited to nominate one member of staff (typically the Head of Security or equivalent) to join the mailing list. LIBER Libraries are encouraged to join the Security Network: please contact Marian Lefferts (marian.lefferts@cerl.org).*

GOAL 3: *Support an international exploration and discussion on how digitally-available provenance information is best recorded and exploited across collections*

STATUS: *ongoing*

SUMMARY: *The recording of provenance is a major concern for cultural heritage collections, as this is related to the uniqueness of a copy or object, an important part of its history and materiality which needs to be translated in the digital world. This also allows to go beyond physical collections, reconstituting historical contexts in the digital environment. The results of the numerous events of 2014-15 are taken up and followed on by CERL. After a first event to explore a coordinated approach to recording and searching provenance records and images ([presentations](#)), the Spanish REBIUN network, together with CERL, in March 2016 organised a follow-up event. Presentations may be accessed [here](#). A special [website](#) has been updated and promoted. Finally, plans for the development of a repository for images that record provenance evidence, including an extensive search facility is ongoing.*

GOAL 4: *Organise a LIBER Digital Cultural Heritage Forum Workshop to take place during the LIBER Annual General Conference (London, Senate House, Wednesday 24 June 2015, am only)*

STATUS: *done*

SUMMARY: *The theme of the workshop was the state of the art in Image recognition. This is a quite new feature which is extremely useful to support better discovery, comparison and description of images featuring cultural heritage materials, thanks to digital procedure and applying intelligent technical developments. The papers given at the workshop are available via the Forum [section](#) on the LIBER website.*

GOAL 5: *Prepare a workshop to take place during the LIBER Annual General Conference (Helsinki, Wednesday 29 June, am only) and prepare the programme for the 4th Digital Curation Workshop*

STATUS: *in progress*

SUMMARY: *The preparations for this workshop were substantially carried forward in the June 2015 meeting of Forum members. Cooperation is also ongoing with LIBER's digital collections working group, chaired by Dr Andreas Degkwitz. As this is a quickly moving area, with quite a number of meetings in*

different areas (e.g. the workshop “Digital collections” in the context of ELPUB on 7 June 2016 in Göttingen), the decision was taken to review the actual state of the art in the June 2016 meeting in Helsinki. The aim is to organise the 4th Digital Curation Workshop around the theme of Discoverability of Digital Collections. The Helsinki workshop (around the same theme) will help to identify a relevant focus for the 4th digital curation workshop and give the opportunity for digital curation related presentations during the [workshop session](#). Several speakers have agreed to present – and the list of speakers is still growing:

- Maaikje Napolitana, Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the National Library of the Netherlands - On Delpher, newspaper collections (www.delpher.nl)
- Frédéric Blin, Bibliothèque Nationale et Universitaire de Strasbourg - on Numistral (www.numistral.fr)
- Paola Marchionni, JISC - on JISC's Spotlight on the digital project (<https://digitisation.jiscinvolve.org/wp/category/spotlight/>)
- Colleen Campbell, JSTOR - on Livinstone's Zambezi Expedition (<http://labs.jstor.org/zambezi/>)

The Forum is also involved in the planning for a joint IFLA satellite meeting on Digital Humanities in 2017.

GOAL 6: Bring together an active group of participants, promotion, advocacy

STATUS: ongoing

SUMMARY: The [LinkedIn Group](#) on 20 May 2016 had 574 members. The Forum has a dual approach with a small flexible core group (to initiate activities, to coordinate events, and bring together relevant information) feeding into a much larger group who are informed, invited to participate in (the organisation of) events, and called upon to share all manner of relevant information. The transfer of information between LIBER, CERL and IFLA works well.

There have been several projects revolving around digital cultural heritage, and several proposals were prepared (and some already turned down). Liaison took place with the [CENDARI](#) project which created a Virtual Research Environment to support researchers in the fields of medieval studies and World War I transnational studies. The Forum participated in a project proposal called ‘Explore- Dispersed collections and distinct places’ looking at digital documentation and dissemination of objects in cultural heritage collections – but this was sadly not successful. We are hopeful that projects such as ICARUS, which builds on the CENDARI project, and aims at integrated access to a large number of digital resources related to manuscripts and early printed materials may fare better.

Contact has been taken up at the request of the NUL Zagreb for a future oriented digital cultural heritage seminar in Zagreb. The library offers its premises, coordination with major European events is welcome.

GOAL 7: liaise with the CERL Working Group on Book bindings

STATUS: ongoing

SUMMARY: At the time of the LIBER Annual General Meeting in London (June 2015), CERL and [LIGATUS](#) organised a [satellite event](#) with expert seminar on describing book bindings, and highlighting CERL's activities in the field. The CERL Working Group on Book bindings has followed up on this event, and has planned an ambitious programme of work, which includes:

- Greater advocacy for publishing (images and descriptions of) book bindings on the internet
- Instructions on how this can be done (incl. varying level of detail in the descriptions, and suggested standards for digitising bindings)
- Include rubbings collections in the Working Group's remit
- Work with collections to implement the LIGATUS glossary for describing bindings

Recently, the Working Group has brought together an extensive list of electronic resources for book bindings already available via the internet:

<https://www.cerl.org/collaboration/work/binding/main#resources>.

GOAL 8: work with the LIBER Office to update and improve the Forum's section on the LIBER website and prepare fact sheets

STATUS: ongoing

SUMMARY: The website is an excellent place for sharing information with LIBER Libraries. The general information and record of past activities about the Forum are present, but need updating. We particularly welcome the possibility of integrating subject-oriented fact sheets, but there has been no progress during this year due to the many involvements of the small core group. Nevertheless, the advertising of webpages for particular projects may be considered as a valuable replacement. We continue to invite LIBER Libraries to submit ideas and fact sheets on relevant information to the Forum.

The following events and publications are worthy of note:

- The 11th [Digital Approaches to Cartographic Material](#) took place in Riga (April 2016), and the [conference proceedings](#) have been published.
- LIBER Quarterly has published several relevant articles, including:
 - Weisbrod, D., (2016). Cloud-supported preservation of digital papers: A solution for special collections?. LIBER Quarterly. 25(3), pp.136–151. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18352/lq.10114>
 - Lahti, L., Ilomäki, N. & Tolonen, M., (2015). A Quantitative Study of History in the English Short-Title Catalogue (ESTC), 1470-1800. LIBER Quarterly. 25(2), pp.87–116. DOI: <http://doi.org/10.18352/lq.10112>. **NB** These authors are now working on a similar analysis of CERL's Heritage of the Printed Book database.

• **ADDITIONAL FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

The Forum will identify issues of common concern in its working session in Helsinki and throughout the Annual Conference and liaise with LIBER's Steering Committees and Working Groups in this area.

The Forum continues to plan to prepare a high-level overview of technical issues that are being approached in a variety of projects and library workflows and to present these in an appropriate way (links to dedicated projects, websites, or factsheets) through the LIBER website (e.g. Digital curation, Image recognition, Viewers for cultural heritage material). The aim is to raise awareness of these activities to ensure that work is not duplicated and to stimulate collaboration rather than parallel developments.

• **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

All LIBER members are warmly invited to attend the CERL Annual Seminar on 'Innovation and collaboration - Digital manuscripts' in the Bibliothèque nationale de France, Paris, 20 October 2016. For more information consult the CERL website.

• **INVITATION TO JOIN AND HOW TO SEND FEEDBACK TO THE SC?**

If you would like to join the Forum, would be prepared to work with us on preparing a fact sheet on technical developments in the field, or would like to share your news with us, then please write to Marian Lefferts at marian.lefferts@cerl.org.

May 2016