



Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche
Association of European Research Libraries

ANNUAL REPORT (2016-2017)

NAME: Digital Cultural Heritage Forum

CHAIRS: Dr Claudia Fabian (LIBER), Drs Marian Lefferts (CERL)

● 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. 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 RBSC and a number of 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: *Organise a LIBER Digital Cultural Heritage Forum Workshop to take place during the LIBER Annual General Conference (Helsinki, Wednesday 29 June, am only)*

STATUS: *done*

SUMMARY: The theme of the workshop was 'Discoverability of Digital Collections'. Libraries, archives and museums are all actively digitising their collections, and providing access to digitised materials via their websites, VRE's, public-private partnerships with publishers, cross-sector platforms such as Europeana, Wikimedia, etc., all with the end-user firmly centre-stage. The investment has been huge, but the return-on-investment has proven hard to measure, and re-use is reported to be low. The papers given at the workshop are available via the Forum [section](#) on the LIBER website.

GOAL 2: *Prepare a workshop to take place during the LIBER Annual General Conference (Patras, Library & Information Centre, University of Patras, Wednesday 5 July 2017, am only)*

STATUS: *in progress*

SUMMARY: The theme of the Forum Workshop at the LIBER Patras event is 'Managing Bequests and Digital Estates: New Challenges for Libraries'. Preserving the literary, musical and scientific heritage of the past centuries has always been at the core of national, regional and academic libraries' missions. Today's writers, composers and scientists are no longer using the pen, but the computer to compose their work, challenging libraries to develop the appropriate strategy in order to preserve the digital manuscripts and all other kinds of documents related to the act of creation, from the basic text file until the e-mails and even the text messages sent and received by the author. This session explores what kind of answers libraries are beginning to put in place to respond to this challenge. Participants will hear contributions from libraries that are exploring operational solutions to address the management of digital estates, including the handling of all documents created by a person through her/his professional activity. The papers given at the workshop will be available via the Forum [section](#) on the LIBER website.

GOAL 3: Prepare the programme for the 4th Digital Curation Workshop

STATUS: *in progress*

SUMMARY: The preparations for the 4th Digital Curation Workshop were substantially carried forward during January to May 2017 through the efforts of the 4th Curation Workshop Organising Committee formed after the Helsinki Workshop. Members of the Organising Committee are: Frederic Blin, BN Luxembourg; Ioannis Clapsopoulos, University of Thessaly; Jennifer Edmond, Trinity College Dublin; Claudia Fabian, Bayerische Staatsbibliothek; Despoina Gkogkou, University of Patras; Marian Lefferts, CERL; Maaike Napolitano, KB National Library of the Netherlands, and Christine Wise, SOAS, London.

The Organising Committee liaised with the Chairs of the Steering Committees on Scholarly Communication and Research Infrastructures and Reshaping the Research Library.

The theme of the 4th Digital Curation Workshop (SUB Göttingen, 13-14 November 2017) is 'Data Stewardship and Data Curation'. This theme is on the agenda of both libraries and research teams and a focus area in LIBER's new Strategic Plan. It covers a broad variety of aspects. For this workshop three themes have been identified to compare and evaluate experiences in this emerging and rapidly evolving field in order to distil best practices, guidelines and identify areas of future concern.

We are planning to organise three sessions that each combine a paper introducing the topic, a short presenting successes (or failures), and a workshop. The themes for the three sessions are:

- Researcher in Residence programmes
- Re-integrating newly-created knowledge coming out of research projects back into the library
- What is required of a librarian (or a library team) that is tasked with data stewardship activities?

GOAL 4: Ensure that LIBER Libraries participate in the CERL Security Network

STATUS: *ongoing*

SUMMARY: As one of the activities of the [CERL Security Working Group](#) (which was a LIBER Group until January 2013), 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.

In the course of 2016, the CERL Security Working Group set strategic goals for the coming three-year period. These¹ include

- Work towards a funding application of a research project on the applicability of nanotechnology and DNA technologies in collection security for library collections.
- Organise two conferences in the period covered by this plan; possible themes includes insider theft
- Explore whether there is a market for tailored workshops on collection security for CERL members
- Explore whether there is a need for a post-theft support system (and how this can be financed)

A meeting to be held in Uppsala to prepare for a research project on the applicability of nanotechnology and DNA technologies in collection security for library collections had to be postponed as key representatives from member institutions were unable to attend.

The Security Network has embarked on a programme of summer schools on Security issues. Curators and security officers from libraries and archives are invited to spend a few days at a course where we aim to share knowledge on topics like collection security, reading the behaviour of readers, legal aspects, national and international collaboration, what to do after a theft, embedding security in the wider organisation, and digital security. The invitation has been forwarded to the LIBER Mailing list.

¹ Published in the CERL Strategic Plan : <https://www.cerl.org/about/development>

The aim is to organise this summer school annually, always in a different part of Europe. The first summer school will be held at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the National Library of the Netherlands, aimed at (but not exclusively open to) colleagues from the Netherlands and Flanders; the 2018 Summer School will be in Rome. Details for The Hague Summer School (6-8 September) are available here: <https://www.cerl.org/collaboration/security/2017thehaguesummerschool>.

All LIBER Libraries are invited to nominate one member of staff (typically the Head of Security or equivalent) to join the Security Network mailing list. LIBER Libraries are encouraged to join: please contact Marian Lefferts (marian.lefferts@cerl.org).

GOAL 5: *Liaise with other CERL Working Groups: the [Manuscript Expert Group](#), [Book Bindings Working Group](#) and [Provenance Working Group](#)*

STATUS: *ongoing*

SUMMARY:

Manuscripts Expert Group (a LIBER Group until January 2013)

The Manuscripts Expert has started to organise its eighth conference to be held in Vienna in 2018. Since April 2017, Dr Claudia Fabian, a representative of the CERL Portal for Manuscripts and Early Printed Books, and the RDA (Resource description and access) community, have been involved in an initiative to define an identifier for Manuscripts as unique cultural objects, in order to organise access to digital copies and structure research (findings). Dr Claudia Fabian will report on progress at the Forum public meeting in Patras (Tuesday 4 July 2017 from 15-17hr).

Book Bindings Working Group

The main objective of the Working Group was to recommend standards for describing book bindings. It would like to do this on the basis of the work Dr Nicholas Pickwood (London) was doing in the context of [LIGATUS](#). LIGATUS has a strong support for structural descriptions, a feature that historically has been very weak, whereas decoration descriptions are plentiful. The aim of the WG is to facilitate more bindings on the internet by, for example, suggesting methods and techniques which will enable libraries to publish more. The Group has acknowledged that advocacy is of great importance for promoting the use of book bindings. We wish to encourage research on bindings, and we wish to know more of current practices and uses of the metadata and the images that are being published on bindings. Advocacy can take many forms and, as a start, we have brought together a [list of electronic resources related to book bindings](#) on the CERL website.

Provenance Working Group

The aim of the Working Group is to support an international exploration and discussion on how digitally-available provenance information is best recorded and exploited across collections. 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 going beyond physical collections, reconstituting historical contexts in the digital environment. A special [website](#) is being maintained to record relevant information. Plans for the development of a repository for images that record provenance evidence, including an extensive search facility, is ongoing – the development of such a repository has been included in the proposals for funded projects.

LIBER members are encouraged to use these resources, share in their maintenance and address CERL for any further initiatives.

GOAL 6: *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. The last meeting took place on 1 February 2016. LIBER Libraries interested in ProQuest's services can approach the Forum for advice.

GOAL 7: *Work with the LIBER Office to update and improve the Forum's section on the LIBER website*

STATUS: *ongoing*

SUMMARY: The website is an excellent place for sharing information with LIBER Libraries. We continue to invite LIBER Libraries to submit ideas and share relevant information with the Forum.

GOAL 8: *Bring together an active group of participants, promotion, advocacy*

STATUS: *ongoing*

SUMMARY: The [LinkedIn Group](#) on 30 May 2017 had 583 members. The Forum has a dual approach with a small, flexible, varying 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. The LIBER general mailing list is an excellent vehicle for disseminating Forum information to the LIBER community at large.

GOAL 9: *Future planning – reviewing the position of the Forum*

STATUS: *ongoing*

SUMMARY: The Forum has a special remit within LIBER assuring the ongoing concern, independently from a focused remit within the Strategic Plan, about cultural heritage in the digital age, and doing this in a close relationship with CERL.

The current Forum Chair's time on the LIBER Executive Board ends in July 2017, CERL will elect a new Chair in October of this year, and LIBER will adopt a new Roadmap for its Strategy 2018-2022. It is therefore appropriate to review the position of the Forum. We would propose to maintain the actual roles as they are in 2017/18 and to review the position in 2018 with the LIBER Executive Board and the new CERL Chair. Claudia Fabian and Marian Lefferts have offered to continue to work with the Forum during this transition period, which is possible as Forum Chairs do not need to be members of the LIBER Executive Board. We would also propose that a formal Forum representative is named for Steering Committee Working Groups dealing with cultural heritage (e.g. Digital Humanities). We would welcome a formal presentation of CERL at a future LIBER Executive Board meeting in 2018, which a Board member, who is also a member of CERL, could arrange.

• **ADDITIONAL FUTURE ACTIVITIES**

The Forum will identify issues of common concern in its working session in Patras (please join us on Tuesday 4 July from 15-17hr) and throughout the Annual Conference, and liaise with LIBER's Steering Committees and Working Groups in this area.

Conference: 'Special Collections in the Context of Cultural Heritage Protection and Cultural Development Fostering' (Belgrade, 2-4 October 2017). The Conference is being organised with the aim of improving and promoting special collections and their specific characteristics, which have an important place in the development and inheritance of culture. Marian Lefferts will represent both the Forum and CERL at this event.

• **ANY OTHER BUSINESS**

All LIBER Libraries are warmly invited to attend the CERL Annual Seminar on 'Early Printed and Manuscript Collections in Galleries, Archives and Museums' at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam (26 October 2017). For more information, please consult the CERL website.

- **INVITATION TO JOIN AND HOW TO SEND FEEDBACK**

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.

Claudia Fabian

Marian Lefferts

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