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The CERL Portal: Manuscripts and the European Printed Heritage

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The CERL Portal

Manuscripts and the European Printed Heritage
(Under Construction!)

<http://cerl.epc.uu.se/sportal>

- or type *cerl portal* in a Google search box

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Vision

A cross-collection search utility
for materials in manuscript collections

- It unites and allows to share digital resources regarding manuscripts (descriptive records and digital facsimiles)
- It is hospitable to data of both members and non-members of CERL
- It is accessible to everybody without charge or membership obligation

Mission

- To provide a cross-collection search utility in online-accessible manuscript collections, *alias* an overarching “index” to available manuscript records.
- To promote the included databases through direct linking from the Portal’s display to the original and full display in the database of origin.
- To give access to the ESTC and to HPB (CERL’s *Hand Press Book Database*: 2,700,000 pre-1830 records from ca. 50 institutions, but with reduced display).
- To implement “Assisted Search” on variants of personal names and place names via the *CERL Thesaurus*.

Benefits

- Extends the awareness of and access to small or specialised manuscript databases.
- Stimulates discussions on practices and standards of cataloguing of manuscripts.
- Extends the expertise of CERL and of manuscript collections on technological issues related to cross-collection access to and promotion of manuscript collections.
- Promotes membership of CERL by pointing to CERL services: *HPB*, *Thesaurus*, Provenance initiatives, etc.

Some General Features

- Target date for official opening: January 2008.
- Constructed and hosted for CERL by *The Electronic Publishing Center* (EPC) at Uppsala University Library, Sweden.
- Developed as *Open Source* software.
- Based on contractual relations with contributing institutions set out in a *Memorandum of Agreement* stating the terms for access to a given databases and conditions for withdrawal of data.

Some Advanced Features

Integrated access to the *CERL Thesaurus* (Assisted Search):

- Variants forms of personal names and place names can be automatically retrieved from the *CERL Thesaurus* developed and hosted by Göttingen University Library.

Multilinguality:

- Currently Danish, German, English, French, Croatian, Italian, Dutch, and Swedish.
- Multilingual search and display interface.
- Multilingual pop-up tips and explanations.
- Multilingual information the contents of each database.

Formats and Protocols

- Hospitable to almost any record format: MARC, MAB, XML (MASTER, Digital Scriptorium).
- Supports the OAI-PMH protocol (Open Access Initiative; harvested data, “Local index”).
- Supports the Z39.50 protocol (distributed data; virtual database; “Remote index”).
- Supports the SRU protocol (“Remote index”).

Contents: Current Status

Manuscripts and archives:

- By OAI protocol: 6 manuscript databases.
- By Z39.50 protocol: 3 manuscript databases.
- By SRU protocol: None to date.

Early printed books:

- By Z39.50 protocol: *The Hand Press Book Database* (HPB with limited display), and *English Short Title Catalogue* (ESTC).

Contents: Current Databases

Manuscripts (ca. 71.000)

- Australia: National Library: Manuscripts and Archives (9,000)
- Denmark: Royal Library: Manuscripts (16,000)
- Manuscriptorium (Consortium): Manuscripts (1,200)
- Portugal: National Library: Manuscripts (4,000)
- Sweden: Ediffah consortium: Archival deposits (7,500)
- Sweden: Lund: Laurentius Database: Medieval manuscripts (67)
- Sweden: Uppsala: Waller Collection: Autographs (27,000)
- UK: National Library of Scotland: Manuscripts (5,000)
- US: New York: Columbia UL: Medieval manuscripts (2,000)

Early printed books (ca. 3,200,000)

- CERL (Consortium): The Hand Press Book Database (2,700,000)
- Manuscriptorium (Consortium): Early printed books (103,000)
- UK: English Short Title Catalogue (ESTC) (460,000)

Contents: Development in 2007

- Germany: The *Kalliope* union database of letters and personal archival deposits, Berlin.
- Germany: *Manuscripta Medievalia*, Berlin.
- Italy: The *MANUS* database of ICCU, Rome.
- The Netherlands: Union Catalog of Medieval Manuscripts, The Hague.
- US: Beinecke Library, Yale University.

Other Development 2007-08

- Better mapping of data between database of origin and the Portal's search and display
- More direct linking to database of origin
- Specialists' review of data in the *CERL Thesaurus* regarding medieval names
- Display of biographical data of the *CERL Thesaurus*
- Initiatives regarding standardisation of data concerning:
 - Types of manuscripts and archives
 - Production date of manuscript
 - Provenance of manuscript
- Fundraising

For More Information

- The Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) is represented by Dr *David J. Shaw*, Secretary. Email: d.j.shaw@cerl.org
- CERL's Manuscript Advisory Board is chaired by *Ivan Boserup*, The Royal Library, Copenhagen
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- The CERL Portal's Project Manager 2006/2007 is *Liesbeth Oskamp*, CERL Secretariat, The Hague
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