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Highlights 2006

The high standards for collections and user services were maintained in spite of an internal reorganization. Innovative projects such as the project e-Helveticat or the implementation of a database for visual collections continued to progress. A strategy focusing on three main areas was drafted for the years 2007 – 2011: Target the needs of the primary users, establish a centre of excellence for paper conservation, expand the electronic Helveticat collection.

Management under a performance mandate and global budget

Barely noticeable from the outside: the transition at the SNL to management under a performance mandate and global budget (FLAG); but more perceptible to the employees. The SNL and therefore individual employees are no longer measured against what they do, but rather against what they achieve. The SNL manages two product groups, as they are called in the FLAG terminology: *collections* (including the products *acquisitions*, *catalogues*, *conservation and preservation*) and *user services* (including the products *loans*, *information retrieval* and *information services*). The Federal Council defined effect and performance targets under the performance mandate for 2006 – 2008¹ by product group. They are defined in detail on an annual basis as part of a performance agreement with the Federal Office of Culture.

Organization

The internal organization of the library reflects the product groups as much as possible. The SNL is now organized into two sections: *Collections* and *User services*, which replaced the former sections *Collections* and *Public services*. The section *Special collections* was split; the Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel (CDN) integrated into the User services section; the Swiss Literary Archives (SLA) and the Prints and Drawings Department (PDD) remained as independent units alongside the sections. The transition to FLAG was a success, users and partners did not even notice the change. In other words: employees got accustomed to the new processes, new organization and changed thinking – and performed their usual best. What did they accomplish over the past year?

Collections

At the end of 2006, the SNL housed 3.85 million documents, with a large portion catalogued in the Helveticat² online catalogue. The national biography *The Swiss Book* was also integrated in Helveticat as of January 1, 2006. The print edition was cancelled at the end of the 2006 edition, but remains available online as a PDF file. The titles of around a quarter of serial publications can be searched in Helveticat. The SNL is becoming internationally recognized for long-term archiving of electronic publications thanks to the e-Helveticat³ project. We procured the module for the integration of e-publications into the storage system, which will be operational in 2007. The *Web archive Switzerland* is being established together with the cantonal libraries.

Conservation⁴ attracted international acclaim with the professional symposium under the title *Save Paper! Today's Experiences – Tomorrow's Perspectives* that included 74 professionals in February to discuss about paper deacidification at the SNL.

The growth of the collection at the Swiss Literary Archives (SLA)⁵ was unusually strong. We were able to add some of the most important contemporary Swiss authors to the collection with the archives of Peter Bichsel, Anne-Lise Grobéty, Erica Pedretti, Kurt Marti and Mani Matter (as a gift from the families), Klaus Merz, Felix Philipp Ingold and Urs Widmer. A future icon of the collection will certainly include the literary estate of Meret Oppenheim, of which the SLA was made the custodian. Some large additions from the past few years were catalogueed, including the archive of Adolf Muschg.

1 www.flag.admin.ch/d/aktuell_d/flag_aemter_d/la_slb_06_d.pdf (in German)

2 www.nb.admin.ch/helveticat

3 www.nb.admin.ch/e-helveticat

4 www.nb.admin.ch/preservation

5 www.nb.admin.ch/sla

Karl Gerstner's design archive is an important addition to the Prints and Drawings Department (PDD). The Federal Archives for Historical Monuments (previously assigned directly to the Federal Office of Culture) became part of the PDD on January 1, 2007.

We were able to establish a contractual foundation for the previously informal cooperation among various libraries and museums to establish a comprehensive catalogue of Swiss poster collections. Various archival systems were evaluated throughout 2006 to improve access to the SLA and PDD visual collections. As a result, scopeArchive will be introduced during 2007.

User services

We improved user services both on-site and online. The information hall is now open on Saturdays until 4:00 pm. Thanks to improved technical infrastructure users can now access the internet from their own PCs. The number of partner libraries participating in the "virtual information desk about Switzerland" increased to 20.

The SNL also gained recognition outside its tight circle of users with its exhibitions and events. The literary estate of Patricia Highsmith was presented to the public for the first time during the summer semester. The exhibition was the centrepiece of the SLA initiated series on mystery novels, which included, among others, a summer academy with PhD candidates from Switzerland and abroad at the CDN. The CDN in turn displayed theatre drawings of Dürrenmatt by Hanny Fries in the autumn. The Swiss National Science Foundation funded project *Text genesis and the writing process* at the SLA in the autumn hosted an international literary studies symposium on *Starting to write*. The results of the symposium will be published. A PDD cabinet exhibition was dedicated to the New York resident Swiss artist Rudolf De Crignis and his edition *Surface*. Rudolf De Crignis unexpectedly passed away on December 23, 2006.

Strategy 2007 – 2011

Senior management at the SNL is once again complete with the appointment of Pierre Clavel as controller (January 1, 2006), Liliane Regamey as the head of the User Services section (April 1, 2006), Matthias Nepfer as the director's adjunct (May 1, 2006) and Dr. Irmgard Wirtz Eybl as head of the Swiss Literary Archives (July 1, 2006). The new management team's first task was to rethink existing strategy and further develop it for the coming years⁶. The Swiss National Library sees itself as the most important written source for understanding Switzerland and the Swiss people. Its fundamental statutory mission – collect, make accessible, preserve and provide Helvetica since 1848 – remains unchanged. Three points of emphasis will be added over the coming five years within this framework: services will be oriented to the needs of the primary user groups (specialists in Swiss history, Swiss literatures, Swiss art as well as information science); the leading national position in paper conservation is expanded to become a centre of excellence; the collection of electronic Helvetica continues to be expanded.

Digitisation

Digitisation, currently on everyone's minds, is also included in the strategy – however, merely as a means to an end. For the SNL, digitisation of analogue documents is not an alternative to physical preservation, but represents a very good means to improve access to the documents. The decision on what to digitise must primarily be oriented to the needs of the target groups. As a matter of fact, many digital images are already available, for example, the entire SNL poster collection from the 1870es through to 2003 can be searched and the images displayed online⁷. Other projects are – together with national and international partners – in the preparatory phases.

⁶ Strategy 2007 – 2011: www.nb.admin.ch/slb/org/00779/index.html?lang=en
⁷ www.nb.admin.ch/posters

National and international cooperation

At the international level, the SNL is involved in establishing The European Digital Library, with *The European Library*⁸ serving as the basis (the SNL is one of the founding members), as well as the francophone network of the digital national libraries. We previously mentioned cooperation with the cantonal libraries on establishing a *Web archive Switzerland*. – Less spectacular, but just as important for the ongoing development of library work, are the international professional exchanges on conservation, literature and art studies as well as standardization. Some SNL employees assume leading positions in international bodies: Genevieve Clavel-Merrin, the SNL delegate for national and international cooperation, is *Secretary of the National Libraries Section* of the *International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions* (IFLA)⁹; Patrice Landry, Head of Subject indexing, chairs the *Classification and Indexing Section* of the IFLA; Heidi Jann, Head of Serials, is a member of the *ISSN Governing Board*¹⁰. – Outside official bodies, Jean-Philippe Accart, head of research services, was selected by readers of the magazine *Archimag* as one of the most influential personalities in the French-speaking library world for 2006.

Marie-Christine Doffey

Director

⁸ www.theeuropeanlibrary.org

⁹ www.ifla.org

¹⁰ www.issn.org