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User Services



The Swiss Press Online archives migrated to a more powerful platform

In 2018 the main change experienced by users was the relocation of the Swiss Literary Archives (SLA) reading room. The Swiss Press Online archives migrated to a new and more powerful platform. The canton of Zurich joined e-newspaperarchives.ch, as did a number of trade union publications.

Circulation

The number of users remained relatively stable, at 6484 in 2018 compared with 6262 in 2017. The number of documents borrowed continues to fall – a corollary of the growth in documents available online – from more than 70 000 in 2017 to a little over 65 000 in 2018. At 3160, the number of SLA documents consulted remained stable compared with 2017, after rising for several years. The SLA's most important holdings have been catalogued and consultation has now levelled out. Meanwhile the number of documents consulted in the Prints and Drawings Department (PDD) continues to rise, increasing to 1825 compared with 1659 in 2017. Optimisation of cataloguing within the PDD is making the collection more accessible.

Information retrieval

The number of information and research requests on site declined slightly, to 11 000 (2017: 12 700) compared with a peak of 14 400 in 2016. This may be partly due to the closure of the NL on Saturdays. By contrast, the number of remote requests (research enquiries) continued to rise in 2018, reaching a total of almost 3000.

The access restrictions linked to structural problems in the “book tower” had organisational consequences in 2018. The Swiss Literary Archives reading room, which is located on the fourth floor of this part of the building, was transferred to the main reading room, with six workstations reserved for SLA users.

The public information service launched a new range for secondary school pupils, including a list of 66 possible school-leaving exam essay topics. Contacts were established with the nearby Kirchenfeld grammar school and the French grammar school in Biel. Students who were interested visited the NL and conducted some research. In all, half a dozen people chose to work on one of the proposed topics. Among the titles suggested, which reflect the broad scope of the NL's collections, are “climate change and melting glaciers”, “the travels of Annemarie Schwarzenbach seen through her photographs”, “Knie, a Swiss circus dynasty”, and “stolen childhood: the issue of contract children in Switzerland (19th–21st centuries) – testimonies, suffering and the issue of moral reparations”. This measure will be continued in 2019 and 2020, with increased efforts to promote it.



Lenin's borrowing slips from the NL were made available on e-manuscripta

Outreach

Digitised content

The NL digitised just over 3500 photographs and images from its collections and uploaded them to Wikimedia Commons. More than 14 000 images from the NL are now available on this free-access platform.

The Swiss Press Online archives migrated to a more powerful platform. The free-access site is now called www.e-newspaperarchives.ch (e-npa.ch). The canton of Zurich joined the platform for the first time in 2018, with three historical periodicals. The press archives of 14 Swiss cantons are now available on e-npa.ch or on other specific cantonal platforms that can also be accessed via e-npa.ch.

A thematic collection of around ten trade-union journals and newspapers, including *La Lutte syndicale* and *Die Gewerkschaft*, was added to the platform.

At the end of 2018, e-npa.ch comprised 102 titles totalling 3.5 million digitised pages and recorded more than 150 000 visits, compared with 92 000 in 2017.

The Swiss library journal *Arbido* was added to e-periodica online to accompany the annual meeting of the Swiss libraries, while Lenin's borrowing slips from the NL were made available on e-manuscripta.

At the end of 2018 almost 31 000 volumes from the NL collection were online, corresponding to 0.77% of the more than 4 million books and periodicals held in the library's stacks. Almost 18.9 million pages had been digitised, compared with 16.3 million in 2017.

The NL's photographic studio acquired a drone, which will be used in particular to showcase the collections during themed exhibitions.

Website and social media

The NL's website (www.nb.admin.ch) was completely overhauled and restructured to focus attention more on the library's collections. The graphic design is unchanged, to comply with the requirements of the Confederation, but the content is now presented in a new and more appealing way.

The NL set up a multilingual Instagram account in September 2018. It had around 200 subscribers at the end of the year and had published some 50 posts.

The average monthly number of Facebook users reached stands at around 8000 for the German page and 7000 for the French (4000 and 2000 respectively in 2017). This success is particularly due to interest in posts linked to the exhibition *LSD. Ein Sorgenkind wird 75*. In total, the NL's Facebook pages have more than 10 000 subscribers to the German version and more than 9000 for the French.

The NL's Twitter account had more than 2200 followers (2017: 1882) in German and more than 1500 in French (2017: 1374).

The NL's publication activities focused more on highlighting the richness of its collections. Many images from the site www.kleinmeister.ch – *Souvenirs suisses* were posted directly on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram. A number of videos were made on a variety of subjects, and can be viewed on the NL's YouTube channel.

Catalogues

The Helveticat, Swiss Poster Catalogue and Bibliography on Swiss History databases recorded over 570 000 visits in 2018 compared with around 423 000 in 2017, a rise of more than 30%. Queries to HelveticArchives, the catalogue of the collections of the Prints and Drawings Department, Swiss Literary Archives and CDN, declined slightly, falling 5% to almost 182 000. The e-Helveticat catalogue recorded more than 850 000 visits in 2018, compared with more than 240 000 the previous year.

Reproductions

The number of photographs reproduced by the NL rose in 2018. The trend from year to year depends on the projects that are in progress. More than 8000 photographs were digitised in 2018 (2017: less than 4000). The number of photocopies made fell by almost 30% compared with 2017, to approximately 26 000. Orders for e-books on demand rose to 96 (2017: 76).

Cultural offerings

More than 10 600 people attended cultural events at the NL in Bern, compared with more than 9600 in 2017. This increase is largely due to the success of the exhibition *LSD. Ein Sorgenkind wird 75*. The Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel received almost 9000 visitors, compared with just over 8000 in 2017.



The NL opened its Instagram account in October 2018



Some ten trade union newspapers were made available online



J-E Desvernois, Lausanne, around 1820 (www.kleinmeister.ch)

2018 was very much a year of consolidation compared with 2017. Almost all the acquisitions made in 2017 have been catalogued, classified and made available to the public.

Collection

The archives of Christian Baumgartner (1855–1942), the watercolourist and major figure in the Swiss landscape tradition, that were acquired in 2017 have now been processed. His work places him clearly within the tradition of Schweizer Kleinmeister, and is a significant addition to the NL's collection. The entirety of the Gugelmann Collection has also been processed. In parallel with this, the site *kleinmeister.ch – Souvenirs suisses* is developing its offering. New virtual showcases on the themes of transport, water and harvests have been created. The gallery comprised almost 230 images at the end of 2018.

The archives of the Federal Inventory of Historical Traffic Routes in Switzerland (IVS), which were also acquired in 2017, were fully classified, catalogued and placed online. The IVS is a federal inventory within the meaning of Article 5 of the Federal Act on the Protection of Nature and Cultural Heritage. It was updated between 1984 and 2003 and mainly covers routes of national importance that still have a visible historical substance (around 3750 km). The particular value of these archives lies in their photographic documentation of changes in the landscape. They are the largest collection of images of roads, paths, works of art and route maps in Switzerland. With the invaluable help of an external specialist in historical transport routes who is a former member of IVS staff, the extensive collection comprising some 30 linear metres of documents was processed and classified within the space of a year.

Digitisation of the Zinggeler Collection of 15 000 photographs taken in the cantons of Graubünden and Ticino between 1900 and 1940 was also completed, with the results being placed online. These fascinating images of daily life in times gone by can be viewed via the catalogue www.helveticarchives.ch.

User services

The number of on-site users fell to 455 in 2018 (2017: 516), but information and research requests recorded a further rise, to 952 (2017: 823).



Scene of everyday life in Breil-Brigels (GR) around 1905, by Rudolf Zinggeler