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# General Collection

The General Collection's activities and results were primarily shaped by three factors: work on the new library management system, the impact of the building situation, and alignment with the new strategy that comes into force in 2020.



Thuner Tagblatt, 31.12.1999

## New library management system

The combination of the ALMA management system developed by ExLibris and the PRIMO VE user interface to administer and manage the holdings of the NL's General Collection builds on a solution that is used worldwide. A halt to production lasting several weeks during the previous year due to a migration as well as substantial software problems with the reminder process for managing the collection of periodicals and newspapers meant that almost all services were involved in consolidation work and clearing the backlog in integrating newly acquired publications. Some elements of the latter will continue into 2020. A number of software problems are still being resolved.

## Building situation

The removal of services from the "book tower" in 2019 for reasons of structural safety led to a partial reconfiguration of the public areas, the transfer of collections to the stacks, and increased density of workstations in the office area. All members of staff were affected in one way or another.

## Alignment of activities with the new strategy

As part of work to develop the new strategy, particular attention was devoted to activities relevant to its implementation. These included a redesign of *e-Helvetica Access*, the system for accessing digital documents. For the first time, a crowdsourcing exercise was carried out, whereby private individuals helped to improve the results of newspaper digitisation. The exhibition *Von oben. Spelternis Ballon und die Drohne* took the NL's collections as the basis for a virtual-reality balloon ride experience.

## Acquisitions

The NL's General Collection grew by 1.5% in 2019, and comprised 4 826 802 units at the end of the year. The slight decline compared with the 2018 figure of 1.6% was due to the halt in production lasting several weeks caused by the introduction of the new library system.

The collection as a whole consists of analogue and digitally born publications and comprises almost 3.1 million monographs (essays, novels, handbooks, biographies), around 1 million periodicals and half a million graphic documents (graphic prints, posters, photographs, etc.). There are also other types of materials such as music scores, maps, microforms, etc. The collection of digitally born documents grew at above-average speed, expanding by 15.2% to 149 726 archive packages at the end of 2019 (2018: 130 025), with a total volume of 37.8 TB. It remains relatively small, however, in comparison with an analogue collection that has been built up over nearly 125 years.

All acquisition activities were extensively affected by the introduction of the new library management system, which was swiftly and efficiently implemented in the *Monograph Acquisitions* unit. The *Serials* unit was kept busy right through to September dealing with the backlogs linked to the changeover to the new library system. Reminder letters for subscriptions and issues not received were sent out again for the first time in July. Some technical software problems with the dispatch of reminders for periodical and newspaper issues not received led to process delays. The system operator was therefore instructed to make improvements. The search for a satisfactory solution is still ongoing. Following the discontinuation of *The Keepers Registry*, the British platform that monitors the long-term archiving of journals, the NL terminated its membership of the forum and halted



Réveil anarchiste, 01.05.1960

deliveries of metadata. It is not participating in the fee-based transitional solution, as the work and costs involved outweigh the benefits.

To mark the national women's strike day on 14 June 2019, *Web Archive Switzerland* added 23 websites on the strike to the collection. There was also a collecting campaign related to the national elections in 2019, with additions being made to *Web Archive Switzerland*, the collection of association publications and the NL's poster collection.

## Catalogues

On 31 December 2019 *HelveticaCat*, the NL's library catalogue, comprised 1 840 782 bibliographic records, an increase of 2.5% year on year (2018: 2%), and a testament to the impressive efforts made to reduce the backlog in cataloguing. The *Bibliography on Swiss History BSH* grew by 3.6% and comprised 121 522 records at the end of 2019. The union catalogue of the *Swiss Poster Collection*, which has been built up in cooperation with partner institutions, contained 91 607 records, an increase of 1.8% compared with the previous year. The *HelveticaArchives* database grew by 8.4% and comprised 709 889 records at the end of the year. The online catalogue of the Swiss National Sound Archives grew by 0.3%, to 303 098 records.

Operation of the library management system also commenced in *Catalogues*. Alphabetic Cataloguing worked systematically through the substantial backlog resulting from the migration; work to clear it completely is still ongoing. Further developments were made to the search options in OPAC, and towards the correct display of facets on the homepages of the Swiss national bibliography *The Swiss Book* and the *Bibliography on Swiss History*. Training courses on the use of the *integrated authority file GND* across the library for the *Swiss Literary Archives* and the *Prints and Drawings Department* were organised with a view to advancing the standardised use of authority files (names of persons, entities, etc.). The external partner *Répertoire International des Sources Musicales RISM* also received training on using the GND. The NL continued its work on refining rules and standards within international cataloguing bodies, and oversaw the successful incorporation of Swiss requirements, for example on handling multilingualism.

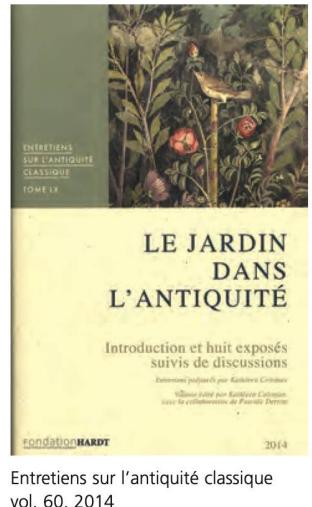
## Preservation and conservation

Almost 53 000 new acquisitions underwent conservation treatment, a reduction of 2.9% compared with 2018. Some 3207 protective covers were made, around 6.1% fewer than in the previous year. The backlogs resulting from the introduction of the new library management system had an impact on the holdings that required binding, both internally and externally, with fewer items being processed than in the previous year. Additionally, 361 publications required repairs, a rise of 27.6% compared with 2018.

The approach to processing mass deliveries from publishers was changed: they are labelled, allocated a reference code, moved to their definitive location in the stacks and not catalogued until later, using a partially automated process.

A large number of items were sent for conservation treatment outside the library. They mostly comprised glass negatives which were prepared for digitisation, and items from two newly acquired estates in the Swiss Literary Archives that required treatment for mould. The COPHOT project, which was intended to improve the conservation of the collected photographs in the form of cool and cold storage, was abandoned after completion of the project phase. The specific requirements for the cool and cold storage will need to be dealt with as part of long-term building planning.

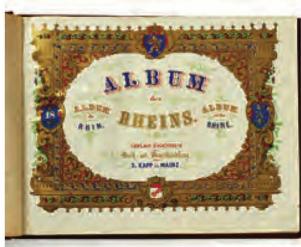
Regular analyses indicate that occupancy of the stacks has reached 50% of the capacity limit. According to the most recent forecasts and assuming that at some point the entire stacks area is given over to the NL, the capacity limit is expected to be reached in 2040.



Entretiens sur l'antiquité classique  
vol. 60, 2014



The user interface of the e-Helvetica Access catalogue  
(photo: Kai Jauslin, NEXTEENSION GmbH)



Title page of the *Album des Rheins*, ca. 1860

*e-Helvetica*, the NL's long-term archiving system, was migrated to the infrastructure of the *Swiss National Sound Archives* in Lugano, in a first step towards merging it with the digital audio archive. Preparatory work on the project to replace the current digital long-term archive and merge the digital audio archive with *e-Helvetica* subsequently commenced.

## Circulation

In 2019 the NL had 4716 active users. The new library management system counts these in a different way from its predecessor, with every user who has accessed the Primo VE search interface at least once being included. Consequently, the figure is not comparable with the previous year. The number of documents borrowed rose for the first time in many years, by a pleasing 18%, to 67 012 (2018: 56 615).

## Information retrieval

The figures remained stable year on year, with more than 11 000 information and research requests and just under 3000 bibliographical searches.

The building situation required a reorganisation and streamlining of the reference works in the large reading room, in order to make space for the Literary Archives reading room in the NL's main reading room. A number of structural measures were also required, such as setting up a supervisor's desk, providing access to the Literary Archives reading room via the main corridor, and closing the glass doors between the General Collection reading room and the new Literary Archives reading room.

## Outreach

### Digitised content

*e-newspaperarchives.ch*, the platform for digitised newspapers, recorded just under 215 000 visits, a rise of 41% compared with the previous year. The *International Image Operability Framework iiif*, which is important for image display, was implemented as standard on *e-newspaperarchives* in April 2019. A crowdsourcing operation was successfully carried out in November, during which some 130 interested volunteers corrected 72 408 lines from digitised newspaper articles to mark the 60th anniversary of the rejection of votes for women. Newspapers from the cantons of Jura and Bern have now been added to the platform. Other titles include the *Engadiner Post* and historical newspapers on the subject of anarchism. Successful partnerships were also launched with *Tamedia* and the *NZZ* to digitise the *Tribune de Genève*, *La Suisse* and the *Neue Zürcher Zeitung*.

Digitised materials from the literary estate of Carl Spitteler were uploaded to *e-manuscripta.ch*, the platform for digitised manuscript sources from Swiss libraries and archives. In addition, 5000 posters and more than 1500 graphic works were digitised. In all, 8.2% of the NL's collections have been digitised and made available online.

### Website and social media

Following its redesign in 2018, the NL's website ([www.nb.admin.ch](http://www.nb.admin.ch)) continues to be updated regularly. In social media, the NL is active on *Facebook*, *Twitter* and *Instagram*. It also maintains a *YouTube* channel on which it posts videos on relevant topics and its exhibitions. In all, the NL's German-language Facebook page has almost 11 000 followers and the French-language page more than 9000. The NL's German *Twitter* feed has just under 2500 followers and the French-language version almost 1700. Since it was launched in 2018, the multilingual *Instagram* feed has accumulated just over 600 subscribers, and this figure continues to grow.



Illustration in the *Album des Rheins*, ca. 1860

## Catalogues

The *HelveticaCat*, *Swiss Poster Collection* and *Bibliography on Swiss History* catalogues were accessed 400 000 times in 2019. Owing to the changeover to the new library management system, the figures are not comparable with those for the previous year. Queries to *HelveticaArchives*, the archive management system that catalogues the holdings of the Swiss Literary Archives, the NL's Prints and Drawings Department and the Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel, totalled just under 200 000, an increase of 10% compared with the previous year. The *e-Helvetica Access* catalogue was accessed 310 000 times.

September saw the publication of the 2013 extract from the *Bibliography on Swiss History* in PDF format, comprising over 6500 bibliographic records on topics relating to Switzerland's history.

*e-Helvetica Access*, the user interface for consulting the digitally born collections, was completely overhauled. It now consists of a standardised search interface for integrated searches across all the library's digital collections. It allows searches in library metadata and the entire full text for *Web Archive Switzerland* and all other publications. One especially worthwhile addition is screenshots of the homepages of the archived websites, which are shown in the results list along with the results themselves in context.

## Reproductions

Around 11 000 photographs were digitised in 2019 (2018: 8000). The number of photocopies rose to 30 000, exceeding the previous year's figure of 26 000.

## Cultural offerings

A total of 7632 people attended cultural events at the NL in Bern, significantly less than 2018, which was an exceptional year thanks to the exhibition *LSD. A Problem Child*. The exhibition *Von oben. Spelterinis Ballon und die Drohne* took the NL's collections as the starting point for a virtual-reality balloon flight.



Exhibition visitors were able to take a virtual-reality balloon ride using special glasses



Photographing with drones