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General Collection

In 2020, the General Collection expanded both its holdings and its digital offerings, and enhanced the quality of its data.

Digital Long-term Archive

The digital long-term archive has reached the end of its lifecycle and needs to be replaced in order for the NL to continue fulfilling its remit to collect, preserve and provide access in the digital realm. The archive, which has been in operation for more than a decade, now requires 75 TB of storage space, corresponding to some 30 billion A4 pages of text. It contains both digitally born Helvetica (scientific journals, dissertations, e-books, websites etc.) and digitised publications (mainly newspapers and periodicals) from all over Switzerland. The archive is unique because it records Switzerland's digital written cultural heritage, preserves it for the long term, and makes it available for use. Available synergies will be exploited when the system is replaced. The digital music archive of the Swiss National Sound Archives, which have been part of the NL since 2016, containing a further approximately 100 TB of data, along with digital objects from the Federal Art Collection and the museums of the Federal Office of Culture, will be integrated into the new digital long-term archive. This will enable multiple existing IT infrastructures to be decommissioned, while the statutory mandates applying to these collections will continue to be fulfilled in the new central archive. Following extensive preparations in 2020, an initial public tender for the new digital archive is being launched in 2021. This will be followed by a tender for the mediation system. The NL plans to have the new long-term archive up and running by 2024.

Web Archive

The National Library has been collecting websites from Switzerland for more than a decade, and is continually expanding its representative collection of the information disseminated via this medium. In 2020, a web collage was developed as an entertaining way to access the more than 64 000 snapshots of websites, and is available to users in the public rooms of the NL. It starts with a collage of homepages resembling a pixel raster, from which users can zoom in as they wish for a closer look at websites that are visually appealing or contain interesting content. They can then navigate within the archived websites just as when using the internet in the normal way. A specially developed web application allows the web archive collection to be explored in an intuitive and fun way.

Acquisitions

The NL's General Collection grew by 1.2% in 2020, and comprised 4 882 722 units at the end of the year (2019: 4 826 802). The growth figure was lower than in the previous year (2019: 1.5%). The decline is due to the fact that a number of publishers were obliged to postpone or scale back their programmes in response to the pandemic. The collection as a whole consists of analogue and digitally born publications and comprises 3.13 million monographs (essays, novels, handbooks, biographies and others) and rather more than 1 million periodicals. There are also other types of materials such as music scores, maps, microforms, etc. The collection of digitally born documents once again grew at an above-average rate, expanding by 22% to 182 335 archive packages at the end of 2020 (2019: 149 726). Contributing factors included a delivery from the ETH Library Zurich, which retrospectively submitted all the electronic dissertations published since 2008, and the fact that the restrictions imposed in response to the pandemic did not have any impact on this type of publication.



Web archive: monitor in the public area



Using a microfade tester to determine how long an object can be exhibited for.

The collections continued to evolve. The cooperation with *SUISA*, the Cooperative Society of Music Authors and Publishers in Switzerland which had submitted its members' music typescripts to the NL since 1958, was officially brought to an end. The closure of the *Swiss Musicians' Association (STV)* in 2018 meant that its members were no longer depositing these works with *SUISA* and consequently with the NL. The *Swiss Shooting Museum Berne* donated a large number of writings from cantonal shooting associations for the *collection of association publications*. The digital *e-Helvetica collection* now includes Swiss blogs that have a certain reach. Numerous websites on COVID-19 that were researched and recorded by the NL and its cooperation partners were added to *Web Archive Switzerland*. The collection will continue to be expanded for as long as the pandemic lasts.

Improvements have been made to *monograph* searches: a small program developed in-house allows external sources to be consulted quickly and conveniently by automated matching of keywords. Extensive follow-up work was required in the periodicals section following the introduction of the new library management system. A technical problem meant that it was impossible to send out subscription reminders for several months. Considerable efforts were required to fill the resulting gaps. Cooperation with the German agency *Lehmanns Media* to manage some foreign Helvetica subscriptions was stepped up after *Karger Libri*, the last periodicals agency of its kind in Switzerland, withdrew from the business. The *Swiss Serials Portal (SZP)* was switched off, as its use and research quality were no longer adequate to requirements and new research tools were able to better meet users' expectations. A collaborative project was also launched with *Wikimedia Switzerland* to build a digital collection on Swiss topics.

Catalogues

On 31 December 2020 *Helveticat*, the NL's library catalogue, comprised 1 888 151 bibliographic records, an increase of 3% year on year (2019: 2.5%). The *Bibliography on Swiss History BSH* grew by 3.6% and comprised 125 926 records at the end of 2020. The union catalogue of the *Swiss Poster Collection*, which has been built up in cooperation with partner institutions, contained 92 741 records, an increase of 1.2% compared with the previous year. The *HelveticaArchives* database grew by just under 7% and comprised 726 262 records at the end of the year. The online catalogue of the Swiss National Sound Archives grew by just under 1.9%, to 308 783 records.

The cataloguing backlog in the General Collection resulting from the change of library management system in 2019 was prevented from growing further, but the interruptions to on-site cataloguing due to the pandemic meant that there was no opportunity to reduce it. At the end of 2020, just under 10 000 works were still waiting to be catalogued. However, staff working from home made extensive progress in enhancing data quality, with the primary access points (authority records) in particular being improved and brought into line with the requirements of the international *Integrated Authority File (GND)*. Preparations for displaying electronic publications in the national bibliography *The Swiss Book* were completed, so that this function will be available from issue 2021/01 onwards. Work on automated integration of the old Coris subject catalogue into *Helveticat* continued, in association with the University of Applied Sciences and Arts Western Switzerland. The results have been positive, and this work will be further pursued in 2021.



Original binding with visible stitching



Basler Jahrbuch für historische Musikpraxis vol. 38, 2004



Wir Brückenbauer, 30.7.1942

Preservation and Conservation

In all, 50 161 new acquisitions underwent conservation treatment, a reduction of 5.4% compared with 2019. Some 1986 protective covers were made, 38% fewer than in the previous year. This decrease is due to the lower number of publications arriving for further preparation and processing on the way to binding as a result of the pandemic. By contrast, the number of documents restored and repaired grew more than fivefold, to 2076. Because there were fewer new acquisitions requiring processing, investments could be made in preserving the existing holdings. Changes were made to the processes for integrating very large printed publishing house productions, allowing them to reach the stacks more quickly.

In 2020, 700 documents were also prepared for some 20 external exhibitions. A microfading tester that employs a new technology to analyse light damage to collection objects during exhibitions was acquired. In future, this technology will be used to establish how long an object can be exhibited for.

Circulation

In 2020 there were 3268 active users of the NL's General Collection, 31% fewer than in the previous year (2019: 4716). The number of documents borrowed fell by 13%, to 58 471 (2019: 67 012). Some 2078 microfilms were consulted, 38% fewer than in the previous year (2019: 3334). This decline was due to the reading room and circulation desk closures necessitated by the pandemic, which meant that fewer members of the public visited the NL.

Information Retrieval

The number of information and research requests stood at around 12 000, an increase of 10% (2019: 11 000). Additionally, 2805 in-depth researches were conducted for users, a rise of 1% (2019: 2785). Overall, requests for information rose as a consequence of the pandemic. To mark the NL's 125th anniversary, the *Flashback 125* series ran throughout the year on the website, looking back at events since the NL's foundation. The broad spectrum of topics covered reflected the diversity of the NL's collections. Articles published included *The first Swiss National Day, Bandy – a winter sport in 1895*, and *The riots at the Käfigturm as a mirror of workers' conflicts*.

Outreach

In total, 1 726 492 newspaper pages were digitised (2019: 641 349). The substantial increase is due to projects completed during the year. The results are now available at e-newspapers.ch. The canton of Nidwalden is now represented by the digitised *Nidwaldner Volksblatt* (1866–1991). Also added were the newspaper *Der Bund* (in collaboration with the Bern University Library), *Wir Brückenbauer* and *Construire* (Migros newspapers) and *La Gruyère* (in collaboration with the Cantonal and University Library, Fribourg). There were a total of 341 928 visits (2019: 214 538), a rise of 59%. 2020 saw the launch of the *Upgrade Metadata e-npa.ch* project, which aims to improve access to the older pages published on the platform. Some 122 973 pages of periodicals were digitised (2019: 223 001) and are now available on the e-periodica.ch platform run by the ETH Library, Zurich. They include titles on the topics of *ageing, music and women's history*. In all, users of the platform downloaded 1 315 889 PDFs containing NL content (2019: 1 379 828), a fall of over 4%. Digitised documents from the literary estate of *Romain Rolland*, which is held in the SLA, were integrated into the e-manuscripta.ch platform operated by Swiss libraries and archives. A further 385 freely available photographs were uploaded to *Wikimedia Commons*.



Der Bund, 2.1.1868

Wikipedia pages containing images from the NL were consulted more than 9.4 million times in total.

The NL's website nb.admin.ch recorded 157 408 visits. In all, the NL's German-language Facebook page has almost 10 500 followers and the French-language page a little over 9000. The NL's German *Twitter* feed has just under 2600 followers and the French-language version just over 1700. With over 1100 subscribers, the multilingual Instagram channel is now reaching twice as many people as a year earlier.

HelveticaCat, the catalogue of the General Collection, was accessed 413 601 times (2019: 353 762), while the figure for the *Swiss Poster Collections Union Catalogue* was 27 937 (2019: 22 955). The *Bibliography on Swiss History* was consulted 25 830 times (2019: 22 637). *HelveticaArchives*, which mainly describes the holdings of the Swiss Literary Archives and the Prints and Drawings Department, was consulted 217 913 times (2019: 199 429). The figure for the *e-Helvetica Access* portal to the digital collections was 25 258.

2020 saw preparations for the change of registration procedure to consult the library system scheduled for 2021. The procedure is now handled via the Federal Administration's Identity and Access Management system. Over the long term, this will ensure that users can use the same login to access all Federal Administration services for which they have been granted authorisation. These also include the NL's library catalogue. In parallel with this, preparations were also made for the future use of the edu-ID offered by Switch.

In addition, more than 40 000 reprints were produced (2019: 30 000).

In Bern, 5657 people attended cultural events at the NL. The marked decline compared with the 2019 figure of 7632 is due to the coronavirus pandemic, which led to the closure of exhibitions and the cancellation of numerous events.



Construire, 8.12.1944



Nidwaldner Volksblatt, 1.12.1866