

User services

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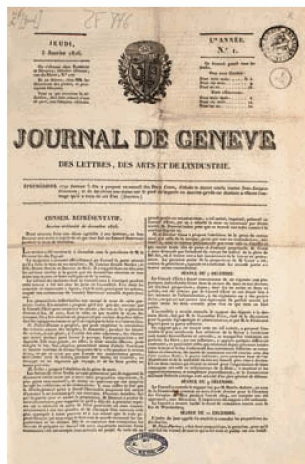
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User Services



The *Journal de Genève* online:
the first and the last issues of the
newspaper



Digicoord provides Swiss libraries and archives with an information platform for digitisation projects for the first time. – The historic Swiss-French *Journal de Genève* is the first such newspaper available online. – The exhibition *In the Beginning is the Word. Encyclopaedias in Switzerland* shows the way in which encyclopaedias are created and how they function.

Project 'ServicePlus'

After future users' needs were clarified in the project 'User 07', the follow-up project 'ServicePlus' seeks to respond to them as far as possible.⁷ The first result is the platform www.digicoord.ch that went into operation in May. It enables the coordination of digitisation projects of libraries and archives in Switzerland thereby helping to prevent duplication of efforts. Secondly, its documentation section and forum for exchange of experience support the successful implementation of digitisation projects. Finally, it enables all those interested to have access to the digitised holdings of Swiss libraries and archives through one site. *Digicoord* was developed by the NL together with RERO⁸.

Circulation

In 2008 78'436 documents were loaned out, about the same number as in the previous year (77'636). While the use of microfilms and especially the Swiss Literary Archives increased, the circulation of printed documents decreased slightly. The number of active users increased from 3'409 in 2007 to 4'010 in 2008. Various large research projects accessed the holdings of the NL as sources: for example, the project of the University of St. Gallen *Swiss Constitutions 1796–1850*. Objects from the NL were part of exhibitions in a number of institutions including the University of Bern Library and the Swiss National Museum in Prangins.

Circulation conditions for *Helvetica rara*, the especially precious holdings of the general collection, were improved. Whereas for some time these could not be circulated because of security reasons, they can now be consulted in the reading room of the SLA under optimal conditions in terms of conservation.

The possibility that users can be informed about the status of their order by SMS was evaluated. This new service will be implemented in 2009. For financial reasons the free-of-charge postal delivery of documents had to be cut back. From 2000 to 2008 all users living in Switzerland could take advantage of this, but in the future this service will only be offered outside of the Bern region.

Information Retrieval

The total number of reference queries increased slightly to 18'926 (2007: 18'698). While general queries slightly decreased (1'025 as opposed to 1'088 in the previous year), the SLA registered a striking increase (from 2'541 to 3'024). Thanks to an advertising campaign at the University of Bern seat occupancy increased from 44% (2007) to 46%. The architectural situation also influenced occupancy: due to the repair of damages to the building that occurred during the construction of the underground stacks, users were subjected to some loss of comfort.

With the installation of a WLAN network in the public rooms it is now possible to have wireless Internet access from one's own laptop. The demand for free-of-charge use of the Internet increased so strongly during the year that a time limit of thirty minutes was introduced, after which Internet access is subject to a fee. A scanner enabling electronic copies of documents to be created is now available for the public to use. A concept was established for organising the open access area according to the subject fields of History, Literature, Art and Architecture, as well as Information and Documentation Science.

⁷ See Annual report 2007, p. 14

⁸ Réseau des bibliothèques de Suisse occidentale / Library Network of Western Switzerland

Access

2'093 photographs (2007: 1'109) and 42'923 copies (2007: 42'419) were made for external clients. Architectural firms showed a great interest in the reprographic services, especially for documents from the Federal Archives of Historical Monuments (FAHM). In addition, documents for some major clients were provided, e.g., the *Straufhof Zürich* (Annemarie Schwarzenbach Exhibition) or the Department of Religious Sciences of the University of Zurich (scans from newspapers). In all cases the reprography service successfully met the delivery terms contracted with clients.

For the European Football Championship *Euro08* the NL made a small historical contribution with its *Le triomphe de nos couleurs*. The publication contained selected press articles concerning the participation of the Swiss National Football Team in the Olympic Games in 1924 in Paris, from which they returned as the best European team.

The exhibition *Tell in Focus*, which opened in November 2007, ended on 30 March 2008 with an overall attendance of 2'375 visitors. In Winter 2008/2009 the exhibition *In the Beginning is the Word. Encyclopaedias in Switzerland* opened; it has been developed in collaboration with the *Historical Dictionary of Switzerland* (HDS). Using the HDS as its basis, this exhibition explores the process of creation of an encyclopaedia and the way it functions. Swiss encyclopaedias from the holdings of the NL were also on display. Thanks to the multimedia treatment, including video interviews and an interactive installation, the topic becomes a multi-sensorial experience.

In the year under review a total of 9'433 persons attended a guided tour, training, event or exhibition in the NL or one of the NL's external events (2007: 8'482); the *Centre Dürrenmatt Neuchâtel's* visitors numbered 9'172 (2007: 9'010). Visits to the Website increased one-third, from 290'821 to 388'997.⁹

The NL made a big step forward in digitisation. In addition to the above-mentioned platform *Digicoord*, the digitisation of newspapers was in the foreground. In French-speaking Switzerland thanks to a general agreement with *Presse Suisse* the digitisation of newspapers could be officialised. The NL takes part in newspaper digitisation projects in which the publisher and a cantonal or local library are also partners. The first such endeavour being handled according to this principle was the *Journal de Genève*. Since December 2008 it has been available online free-of-charge.¹⁰ The publisher *Le Temps* was responsible for project management and a further project partner was the Bibliothèque de Genève. In addition to financial support, the NL made its expert knowledge and experience available. Agreements for the digitisation of the *Gazette de Lausanne* as well as the Neuchâtel newspapers *L'Express* and *L'Impartial* have been signed during the year under review.



The NB is a partner in the project *ViaticAlpes. Les images des Alpes dans les récits de voyage de la Renaissance au XIX^e siècle* ('The image of the Alps in travel writing from the Renaissance to the 19th century'; www.unil.ch/viaticAlpes).



⁹ unique hosts
¹⁰ www.letempsarchives.ch