

The European Library: the gateway to Europe's knowledge

By combining the resources of many of Europe's national libraries, TEL has laid the foundations for a single European Library as a unique cultural resource.



not only their own national library but also other national collections. This discovery and access tool is multilingual and supports the various character sets in use in CENL libraries.

Work under the TEL IST project focused on open standards, working methods and practices for the handling of digital and other collections, both now and in the future. By setting up a generic framework for major national and deposit collections, TEL improved access to library services across borders.

Beneficiaries of the TEL service include information professionals,

The national libraries are among Europe's most important cultural institutions. They hold outstanding historical and special collections, offering a richness and diversity not to be found anywhere else. They are dedicated to the long-term preservation of their country's intellectual output, both traditional and digital. And through their comprehensive collections, access to which is increasingly available online, they are in a unique position to show the cultural diversity within each European country. These unique characteristics would be enhanced even further if the national libraries were to unite and pool their resources.

In March 2005 this concept became a reality with the launch of the European Library. The groundwork to establish this pan-European library service was undertaken through TEL, a project under IST-FP5.

The European Library (TEL) is a pioneering collaboration between a number of European national libraries. Created under the auspices of CENL, the Conference of European National Librarians, it has launched a single access point to selected parts of their national holdings. Citizens in any country can utilise these resources, enabling them to search

Policy Case At A Glance

Project name:	TEL; TEL-ME-MOR
Reference number:	IST-2000-25347 (FP5)
Web:	www.europeanlibrary.org
Policy domain(s):	Culture & Multilingualism
Related policy measure:	eEurope Action Plan; Council Resolution 2002/C162/02: Preserving tomorrow's memory – preserving digital content for future generations
Expected impact:	Single access point to Europe's national libraries
Beneficiaries:	Cultural institutions; information professionals; academics; citizens;

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researchers, publishers, businesses, and lifelong learners – indeed anyone who may be interested in national collections but is unable to visit the library concerned personally.

Based at Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the Netherlands national library, the European Library is now a separate legal entity, with its own Management Board and supported by a full-time secretariat. At launch in March 2005, the Library provided online access to around 90 collections, with many more planned.

A follow-on project under IST-FP6, TEL-ME-MOR, is supporting the inclusion of the 10 new Member States into the European Library collaboration. Further work on meta-data and multilingual searching will also be undertaken.

Making the Link

The projects and results described here are just one of many policy-relevant activities funded by Information Society & Media DG (DG INFSO). The Information Society Policy Link initiative aims to leverage the benefits of these activities for European policies. We are here to make the link.

For Project Consortia, we can help you to:

- Organise Policy Workshops and events targeted at the European policy community.
- Make introductions to policy-makers in European institutions and national administrations.
- Make contact with relevant and complementary projects and initiatives funded under other European programmes.
- Identify means to further exploit policy aspects of your results, including through further research, deployment and regulation.

For Policy-makers in the EU institutions and Member States, we can help you to:

- Maintain awareness of Information Society activities relevant to your policy domain.
- Identify promising projects and results within Information Society & Media DG's portfolio.
- Explore ways in which Information Society developments can support the implementation and monitoring of European and national policies.
- Build a dialogue with Information Society & Media DG on future needs and research requirements.

If you wish to utilise these project results, or those of similar activities funded by Information Society & Media Directorate-General, please get in touch.

Further Information

Information Society Policy Link initiative

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