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TODAY AND TOMORROW OF DIGITAL LIBRARIES IN POLAND

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The process of digitisation in Poland, started in the beginning of the 21st century, has speed up greatly in last few years. Now most of the leading archives, libraries and museums run digitisation. Though it is important to mention that most libraries provide online accessibility of digitised cultural material, while archives and museums digitise mainly for preservation and their own needs, and present the digital material in form of virtual exhibitions.

In a few recent years there has been a noticeable increase of digitisation initiatives in Poland, and as a result of it a rise of quantity of digitised cultural material. Now the digitisation activity is run not only by main state and academic archives and libraries, but also by those smaller public ones.

Main goals of digitization in Poland:

- To build a critical mass of digital content relating to Polish cultural heritage
- To preserve rare and fragile collections and those at risk of obsolescence
- To facilitate access to digitised materials without having to visit the library or archive
- To engage with new audiences by making the collections available in Internet
- To support research activities, education and long-life learning

The Committee for Digitisation and the national strategy

Poland is currently implementing the Commission Recommendation of 24 August 2006 on the digitisation and online accessibility of cultural material and digital preservation and the related Council Conclusions. In June 2006 Minister of Culture and National Heritage established the Committee for Digitisation. This assembly, compound of high quality specialists representing different memory institutions, is responsible for coordinating and governing the process of digitisation in Poland.

The tasks of the Committee is to gather information about current and planned digitisation initiatives of all kinds of cultural material in different institutions, and to create overviews of such digitisation in order to prevent duplication of efforts and being able to indicate the predictable increase of digitised material in future. Secondly, it develops quantitative and qualitative targets for digitisation. Another very important activity is to encourage the memory institutions the adoption of common technical guidelines and open standards in order to enable building of e-services that give integrated access to cultural and scientific heritage for all users.

Important activity of the Committee for Digitisation is to encourage the memory institutions the adoption of common technical guidelines and open standards in order to enable building of e-services that give integrated access to cultural and scientific heritage for all users. In 2007 two working groups were convened by the Committee: working group on technical standards and working group on metadata standards. They spent the majority of its time working towards the goal of preparing two important documents: guideline for technical standards and for metadata. In November 2007 the Committee completed works on recommendation on technical standards for the digital objects and on metadata for the digital objects and now works on the national plan for digitisation

and long-time preservation of digital objects from libraries, archives and museums. The lack of common standards makes it difficult to search material at the same time in different institutions and to coordinate communication efforts. The Committee plans to set up in 2008 the national coordination mechanisms for digitisation activities and to develop common criteria for selection of the material to be digitised.

The important fields of Committee for Digitisation activity are as well ideas and proposals for improving legal conditions for digitisation, accessibility and preservation.

Important role in the work of the Committee plays the National Library, which has rich digitisation experience and is a host of the National Digital Library Polona.

At present, only a very small part of the collections from Polish cultural institutions has been digitized. According to research led by the Committee for Digitisation in May 2007 in Polish memory institutions were:

- In libraries: ca 220.000 digital objects (ca 170.000 accessible via Internet)
- In archives: ca 500.000 digital objects (mainly for preservation needs, 1 % accessible via Internet)
- In museums: ca 500.000 digital objects (mainly for own needs, 1–2 % accessible via Internet in form of virtual exhibitions)

The Polish government prepared “The strategy for the information society development in Poland in years 2007–2013” that contains few aspects of digitisation and long-time preservation of digital documents. In the beginning of 2008 it was created the National Digital Archive which gathers, files and preserves audiovisual materials such as photographs, films and sound recordings and creates digital files of the State Archives collections, making them accessible to the public.

In 2008 we plan also to create the National Repository of Digital Documents which will contain different types of library documents. The aim of the National Repository of Electronic Documents will be protection of digitized materials, the born digital documents published in Poland, covered by the Polish legal deposit act, different types of online documents and Polish web cultural heritage. An important step in the integration of digitisation activity in Poland will be including Polish Internet Library to the Polona National Digital Library in 2008. To the end of 2008 it will contain over 20.000 digital objects, mostly books.

Examples of Polish digital libraries

In Poland there is over 30 digital libraries and digital projects, led by library consortia or individual libraries. Presenting few of them will give a picture of digitisation in Poland in the half of 2008. Although libraries have different collections, digitisation philosophy and software platforms, we can find some common features of digital libraries in Poland:

- The prime purpose of digitisation is to facilitate access. The libraries wish to expose its collections more widely and make them easier to use.
- The highest priority for digitisation is material relating to Poland and/or regions of Poland
- Most of the projects are concentrated on the problems of digitising existing text and images. We do not launched digitisation of music and sound on the broader scale.

- The libraries aim to minimise duplication of their digitisation activity and to increase the quantity and diversity of digital content

Polish Internet Library was the first big digital library created in Poland. It was opened by the Prime Minister in 2002 and was funded by the Ministry of Scientific Research and Information Technologies. The library includes over 30.000 full texts of major Polish literary works as well as some Polish translations of foreign authors. Several items are also available in original languages. In addition to electronic texts, the site includes musical scores, maps, paintings, and photographs. Electronic texts are available in html and pdf formats and some can also be accessed as scanned documents. The site is available only in Polish. The plans of the Ministry plans included, beyond addition of new items, improvement of accessibility, full application of international standards, and research leading to improvement of search mechanisms. However, the project was led without consultations with specialists from libraries, so digitized materials are not compliant with international standards and good practices. According to “The strategy for the information society development in Poland in years 2007–2013” Polish Internet Library in 2008 will be overtook by the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage and transferred to the National Library.

Wielkopolska Digital Library was launched in 2003. It is the biggest digital library in Poland, it includes over 58.000 of digital items: newspapers, monuments of Polish literature, printed music, handbooks and materials concerning Wielkopolska region. Wielkopolska Digital Library consists of following collections: Cultural heritage, Journals and newspapers, Poznań archival materials, Konin archival materials, Henryk Jordan’s heritage, Polish army, and others. It is the joint initiative of the Poznań academic community. Participants of this project are scientific and public libraries of Poznań, the Kórnik Library of the Polish Academy of Sciences and other regional institutions.

Wielkopolska Digital Library uses dLibra (Digital Library Framework) software, created and developed by the Poznań Supercomputer and Network Center to be a highly configurable software basis for digital libraries. dLibra is a system for multimedia content management that gives full support for digital publications process, including setting up, accessing, maintaining digital library and providing users with library content. It is used as a software platform in 18 Polish digital libraries.

Kujawsko-Pomorska Digital Library includes over 18.000 digital copies of different forms of publications: books, journals, graphics, articles, leaflets, posters, playbills, photographs, invitations, maps, exhibition catalogues and trade fairs of the region. Participants of the project are Nicolaus Copernicus Library in Toruń, Collegium Medicum Library in Bydgoszcz and Kazimierz Wielki University Library in Bydgoszcz. The first phase of the project implementation in years 2005–2006 was financed by EU Structural Funds The main aim of the project is to create a regional digital library to support the development of an intellectual and innovative potential of the society, to make a quick access to information and knowledge content possible, and to protect valuable documents of the region and national literature works.

In 2007 Kujawsko-Pomorska Digital Library has opened access to a first batch of current publications using the terms of the Creative Commons licenses. The Library Coordinator began to reach out to the authors on the subject of this simple and user-friendly method of publishing and received the permission of authors and publishers to provide access to the documents, mainly post-print and pre-print articles. Conversations with authors are continuing, also with respect to books, and perhaps, with publishers consent, this

form of publishing will find wider acceptance. It is worth mentioning that pre-prints can be made available always on the terms defined by the author himself, regardless of whether they were submitted for printing or not.

Polona Digital National Library was launched in October 2006 and now it contains over 10.000 digital documents and increases systematically. Its main aim is to present the most important for Polish culture and national heritage editions of literature and scientific materials, historical documents, manuscripts, early printed books, journals, graphics, photographs, maps and all types of documents of the national value.

The process of collection digitization commenced at the National Library has been reinforced with the computer automation tool for the digitization – the Digitized Collection System. DCS's task is the assistance during a document's entire digitization process, from the selection to a digital master copy storage and filing. It also aids in digital collection presentation or creating reproductions upon request. It was decided that the Digitized Collection System, used for digital item presentation, should be combined with the dLibra platform.

Polona DNL made a very important decision concerning digital documents. They are to resemble the original to the highest degree possible and navigation through the document should be intuitive and imitate browsing a book in its traditional form. That is why Polona mostly presents documents scanned from originals and not their microfilm copies, which do not reflect the color and quality of the paper, print and binding, not to mention the texts' illustrations or the beautiful illuminations found in medieval codices. While browsing a book the reader can do so page by page, flipping pages from right to left, with zooming in and zooming out tools. It is possible to go to the book's contents or index of illustrations (and immediately find the given illustration within the document) as well as to examine a miniature over-view of individual pages. Polona DNL not only maintains the pagination found in the originals, be it in Roman or Arabic numerals, which is very rare in digital libraries, but it also attempts to reconstruct the collation of folded sheets of early printed books lacking pagination and provides tools needed to restore a very complicated manuscript foliation.

Polona DNL is divided into thematic collections that present the works of the greatest Polish writers: Adam Mickiewicz, Juliusz Słowacki, Mikołaj Rej, Cyprian Kamil Norwid, and Jan Kochanowski. There are also editions of Polish literature, treasures from the National Library, underground publications from World War II, and literature for children and adolescents. Each collection is not only a set of electronic publications on a given topic, but the description of a given collection and its most interesting items is an integral part.

Digital Library of the Wrocław University enables preservation and popularization of reach library resources recognized as the cultural heritage. This initiative gives the ability to ensure access to digital copies of the most valuable historical and regional materials from resources of Wrocław University Library. The Digital Library of Wrocław University works with the dLibra software. The participants of the project are: Wrocław University Library, Wrocław University Archives, Wrocław University Museum and Faculty of Law, Administration and Economics. The library includes over 13.000 digital objects, divided into few collections: digitized old card catalogs, cultural heritage, e-books, educational materials, regional materials and specialist collections (Botanica gardens, archival and museum collections).

It seems worthwhile to stress that Wrocław University Library is a partner of Enrich project led by the National Library of Czech Republic.

Academic Digital Library of the University of Science and Technology (Kraków) presents scientific journals published by the University, conferences materials, doctoral dissertations, students textbooks, and also older items from before 1945. It is a good example of a library obtaining copyright clearance for book and journals' articles.

Academic Internet Library created in the Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań gives access not only to text documents, but also to audio and video files containing academic lectures. The site is available only in Polish

Many digitisation activities are undertaken in collaboration with other institutions that have mutual goals and similar digitisation objectives. Few libraries also undertake digitisation to support specific collaborative projects, such as Electronic Collection of Polish Journals, led by the Warsaw University Library and the National Library.

It is very important to have a joint strategy for giving people access to their national cultural heritage, which is to be found in libraries. There is a need for access to the digitised materials simultaneously and for having it presented as a union catalogue. In 2007 in Poland the **Digital Libraries Federation** was established, developed by Poznań Supercomputing and Networking Center. This is a network portal which gives the users a possibility to search entire resources of Polish digital libraries, which use dLibra and other platforms with OAI-PMH protocol. It includes (May 2008) over 140.000 published and planned digital publications from 18 Polish digital libraries. The biggest libraries in DLF are:

- Wielkopolska Digital Library
- Kujawsko-Pomorska Digital Library
- Polona National Digital Library
- Małopolska Digital Library
- Śląska Digital Library
- University of Wrocław Digital Library
- Zielonogórska Digital Library

Problems of copyright

All projects concerning digitisation of Polish cultural heritage must respect the intellectual property rights of the resources they work with, including the rights of the owners of the source materials that are digitised, the rights of the owners of the digital resources and also the rights or permissions granted to a service provider to make the digital resources available. Access to digitised cultural heritage content is encouraged and promoted in Poland as long as it conforms to Polish copyright law, respective EU and international regulations on copyright.

There are some obstacles of a legal nature that underlie the lack of general access to digital cultural heritage. Main obstacle in digital libraries is related to copyright. According to the law regulations (Copyright Act, 1996) Polish memory institutions are allowed to give public access to the digital objects 70 years after the death of author (co-author, translator, illustrator, etc.). In archives important obstacle is protection of individual privacy (Personal Data Act, 1997).

However, to maximize the value of digitisation projects, material with copyright as well as material out of copyright must be included. In few Polish digital libraries (e.g. Polona National Digital Library, Kujawsko-Pomorska Digital Library) digitised materials with copyright are accessible only via intranet, with protection the intellectual property of publishers and copyright owners from uncontrolled transmission and copying.

Polish memory institutions realize that digitisation and making available of digital works must not undermine the right of the creators or the commercial sustainability of the publishing industry. From a legal and an economic point of view orphan works and out-of-print works cannot be neglected. Polish cultural institutions need a copyright legislation which is more friendly to the legitimate interest of the public and which is really supporting the public domain as a main source of creativity. Reasonable solution could be for national copyright legislation to establish a basis for licensing mechanisms, e.g. the law might require that before this kind of digital material is published, reasonable efforts must be made to identify copyright owners.

In projects of academic and high schools libraries, obtaining copyright clearance for book and journals' articles is a bigger problem than technical issues of image capture. New copyright to harmonize legislation between EC member states pose some problems for identifying copyright owners and digitisation of local studies material. This must be taken into account in all Polish digital libraries when assessing collections for digitisation.

Libraries, archives and museums should cooperate with initiatives like the Open Content Alliance and donate digitised public domain materials to them.

Ideas and proposals for improving legal conditions for digitisation, accessibility and preservation it is the important field of Committee for Digitisation activity. The working group on copyright of the Committee for Digitisation works now on the problems concerning copyright relation to the digital materials and will define a strategy for dealing with copyright issues.

Born-digital documents and web harvesting

The rapid growth of the amount of web-content and born-digital documents has created the need for its long time preservation. That is why the National Library of Poland in 2008 is going to initiate the test project of National Repository of Electronic Documents (Narodowe Repozytorium Dokumentów Elektronicznych) to establish a production line for harvesting and archiving digital documents covered by the Polish legal deposit act. Since 1996, the law has mandated deposit of electronic documents. National Library of Poland is the legal deposit institution for Polish publications, however, its tools and infrastructures are not oriented towards Internet documents yet, so legal deposit is mainly restricted to digital publications on physical media, such as CD-ROMs.

Pilot project will consist of few steps:

- preparing a strategy for the preservation of Polish web space (.pl domain)
- selection of appropriate storage systems
- development of a suitable legal framework
- choosing webcrawling software to automatically copy and collect the Internet content (open source products)
- choosing optimum methods for ensuring future access and preservation

- investigating metadata formats for the description of electronic documents
- initial gathering a snapshot of the digital content (at least two thematic harvests on a given subject)

Results of the pilot project will help to choose the web archiving model. Now the National Library plans to archive defined portions of web space (static and dynamically created web pages) and other kinds of resources (physical format electronic products transferred to server hard disks, static online publications, e-journals, e-books, etc.).

The aim of the National Repository of Electronic Documents will be protection of Polish born-digital documents and Polish web cultural heritage. To run the project in a routine way, two conditions must be met: sufficient long-term funding and legal background, including the legal deposit legislation. The next step after the creation of the Repository will be providing access for library users, although it is a difficult matter due to the many, and sometimes conflicting, regulations in the legal deposit act, the copyright act and the personal data act. Important area of the Repository's activity will be also making agreements with publishers for chosen digital resources, which will authorize the National Library to make accessible online the archived digital content.

Contributing to the European Library and Europeana

Poland, represented by the National Library and the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, participates in the leading European organizations concerning digitization and is constantly exchanges information with other Member States in order to create synergies.

The National Library of Poland is the partner of the European Library since January 2007, EDLnet program since September 2007, and TELplus project since October 2007.

The collections of the Polona National Digital Library are accessible via TEL portal and fully harvestable through OAI. The important element in planned contribution to Europeana is the fact that the software used in the most Polish digital libraries is based on OAI-PMH protocol and gives the possibility of searching for current and planned digital objects in all libraries at the same time. All metadata from each digitized single book, journal or other item is fully accessible and searchable.

The first step of Poland to contribution to the Europeana project is the partnership of the National Library of Poland with the European Library and possibility of presenting its digital collections through the TEL portal.

Main obstacles in digitisation activity in Poland

Considerable efforts and resources are being invested in digitisation projects, but these activities are still fragmented and dispersed. The consequence may be a chaotic mass of digital content with few guiding principles and not a little duplication. Financial and organisational obstacles may jeopardise their success and economic sustainability. These obstacles include:

Fragmented funding mechanisms

The costs of the digitising process are very high. The National Library, some regional and university libraries have already redirected part of financial resources to digitisation purposes, but in general Polish memory institutions do not have sufficient money to finance big programs like mass digitization of Polish cultural heritage. Part of the libraries and archives are well equipped with scanners for different types of material, including those

that are necessary for valuable materials, although in many cases technology poses a financial problem for the institutions.

Technical and organisational challenges

The use of inappropriate technology and/or inadequate standards may result in the creation of digital material with short-term usability. Without a strategic plan and long-term funding, it will be difficult to ensure the future accessibility of the digital collections. The digitisation activity and the workflow should be organised more effectively and efficiently. Experience of different European digital project shows that the digital material would not survive in new technological surroundings without huge cost of preservation. There is a strong need to organize trusted digital repositories.

Copyright

The big obstacle is the amount of time and finances needed to secure permission to reproduce copyrighted materials. It is difficult to make a decision to limit Polish digital libraries just to public domain material. Users and librarians do not want to have digital libraries in which all information is from before 1900 and in which materials from the 20th century are almost absent. For young people what you cannot find on the Internet does not exist. And they would be given the impressions that 20th century was a black hole.

Plans for the future

The Committee for Digitisation and the Ministry of Culture has very rich plans for coming years. They are going in the nearest future to establish the detailed national strategy for digitisation and long term preservation of digital materials from libraries, archives and museums, to work on integration and further developing of digital libraries and repositories, to promote idea of digitisation in the society. Because now there are no examples of successful partnerships with private sector companies to provide online access to digitised cultural heritage, the Ministry of Culture would like also to initiate and promote public-private partnerships in digitisation activity. Important issue seems to be identifying barriers in national legislation concerning digitisation of cultural material and access to born-digital documents. It is also very important to have a joint strategy for giving people access to Polish national cultural heritage, which is to be found in archives, libraries and museums. There is a need for access to the material of the three types of institutions simultaneously and for having it presented as a union catalogue, because users seeking information do not care where they find it – whether it is in a book or newspaper in the library, in a description of an artefact in the museum, or in the archive, as long as they do find it.

But on the other hand, I would like to stress that digitisation is a tool in the information revolution and not a purpose all in itself. Digitisation is not only about technology, but more importantly it is about successfully achieving information goals and our users needs. In digitisation activity we are limited only by the nature of our collections, our ambitions and money.