

# TEL-ME-MOR or From What Do We Build a European Digital Library

*Adolf Knoll*

National Library of the Czech Republic  
Klementinum 190, 110 00 Praha 1, Czech Republic  
email: [adolf.knoll@nkp.cz](mailto:adolf.knoll@nkp.cz)

## Abstract

The EU TEL-ME-MOR PROJECT integrates the ten New Member States' national libraries into The European Library (TEL – <http://telmemor.net>). Their resources – electronic catalogues and digital libraries - are being incorporated into the portal via OAI-PMH or Z39:50 protocols. A special work package surveys and reports on their research and development activities as well as the underlying technologies and digital data useful for TEL. Recently, the Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) requested for an extension of the survey to include all the European national libraries. The poster presents the most interesting results and findings.

**Keywords:** digitization; portals; TEL; digital library

## Introduction

TEL-ME-MOR is a project funded by the European Commission under the 6<sup>th</sup> Framework Programme (IST). It started in February 2005 with the overall goal of stimulating and facilitating the participation of the national libraries from the New EU Member States in projects funded within the Information Society Technologies (IST) area. The project also collects and evaluates information concerning the research and development activities of these libraries and their technological infrastructure. In September 2005, this task was expanded to include all the European national libraries that are members of CENL. To meet such requirements research is taking place to find out the real situation in which these institutions work. The practical goal of the project is to incorporate the digital resources of the New Member States' national libraries in The European Library (TEL).

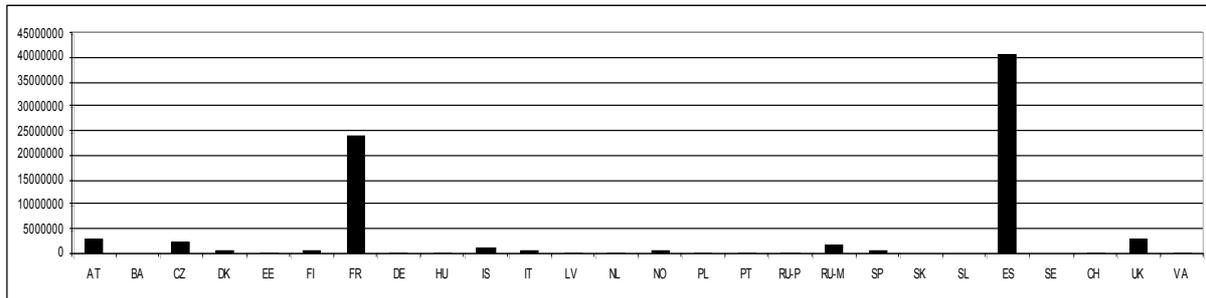
## The Survey Results

The results of the survey are challenge the usual perception that Europe can be divided into groups such as old EU members, new EU members, and others. For example, of the 39 national libraries only nine have external Internet connectivity at least 1 Gbps. Only five of these are the old EU member states on one side and two are non-EU members (Serbia and Russia-Moscow). Among the ten national libraries with the weakest connectivity, i.e. less than 9 mbps, three are the old EU member states. When we look at the number of special systems/applications operated in the national libraries besides the catalogues, then from seven different systems at least six are used in 14 libraries from which only 5 are the old EU members, 3 are the EEA states, and 3 are the non-EU members.

We were also interested in availability of some special technologies used in digital libraries, such as usage of wavelet images, images servers processing data on-the-fly, application of complex SGML/XML document formats, SGML/TEI/XML structured texts, or mass storage facilities. At least four of these technologies are applied in only four national libraries in Europe: Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, and Serbia, while at least two of such technologies are in only 12 libraries from which only five are the old EU member states and two the EEA countries, while three are non-EU members (Russia-Moscow, Serbia, and Macedonia). All this clearly demonstrates that modern communication technologies are the phenomenon that can make us comparable rather independently of how rich our countries are or how long (if at all) they have been members of the EU.

Another interesting point is the situation in the area of digitization. From the figure below it is rather evident that the vast majority of digitally reformatted objects are found in the National Libraries of Spain and France which have more than 77% of the 82.88 million such objects (mostly page images) digitally available. Unfortunately, due to copyright, access to a greater part of them is possible only on site. There are only six other libraries that have roughly one million or more objects. Altogether, the European national libraries possess ca. 83% of the quantity of digital objects produced through digitization by the Korean National Library in Seoul since the year

2000. In spite of the two leaders (mostly thanks to digitization of periodicals), the results show that Europe still lacks sufficient digitized content from national libraries and that the European policy should address this situation seriously.



**Figure 1: Number of objects produced through digitization in the European national libraries [only those having more than 25,000 objects]**

If we examine various kinds of digitized documents, then the only exception to the Spanish and French leadership is the area of old manuscripts that is dominated by the Czech Republic followed by Iceland, Serbia, Vatican, and Italy-Florence.

Other interesting results can be seen in the whole research and development segment in the national libraries. Many of them are not yet fully acknowledged as important RD players at the national level. As to research and development funding, the leaders are the national libraries of the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Poland, and Sweden. It cannot be said that the new EU member states have less RD commitment than the old members. These examples help explain why in most cases there are no substantial problems in incorporating the New Members States' national library resources into the TEL portal. This is true also for some non-EU members, as for example Serbia.

The results demonstrate important facts and trends in Europe. In addition to their commitment to digital access, the national libraries also have a significant interest in the preservation of analogue materials and related research and development plans in this field. It is also evident that thanks to modern communication technologies many supposed gaps between the more and less developed European countries simply do not always exist in technologically demanding areas.