13. REPORT ON EDC VISIT TO LIMERICK, IRELAND

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From 15 to 19 June 2004 an Exchange Programme took place in Ireland among EDC Turin, EDC Ferrara and EDC Limerick. The main subject of discussion was the possibility to create a fully and reliable electronic European Documentation Centre and to ameliorate the quality of the information service offered to users and students.

On the first day (the day of arrival) with the Host, Pattie Punch, we started the discussion focusing on our own experiences in the EDC and talking about the results of the Exchange Programme that Pattie attended in Greece the previous month. Moreover, Sophia reported on the seminar she attended in Brussels (10-11 June 2004) on European information and databases. At dinner, in a lovely restaurant on a channel on the River Shannon, we continued our discussion on the matter, but we also had time to talk about life in Ireland, about social problems, about the impact of the Enlargement on the Irish public policies and about the results of the European Parliament Elections' Day.

On the second day, Pattie proposed - first of all - to visit EDC Cork that is located in a hall (ground floor) in the Central University Library. The Librarian, Valerie Fletcher and her colleague showed us the shelves where the official publications and periodicals (both European and national) are held divided by subject.

Afterwards, they presented the web-site of the EDC. The catalogue of the EDC is incorporated in the central catalogue of the Library (search by title or author), but the EDC has realised a thematic catalogue for European publications and periodicals, thus students and users can go personally to the EDC and ask to the staff how to have access to the catalogue and to ask for documents and publications. The same happens in EDC Turin, which is located in a private institution – the University Institute of European Studies – that is separate from the University. This could be felt as a problem as European information and publications are a little bit hidden and should need more efforts in order to be spread towards everyone.

On the third day, the discussion went on at EDC Limerick with Pattie Punch. EDC Limerick is located in the Central University Library, ground floor. The official publications are held on open shelves and grouped by subject. An interesting tool adopted by EDC Limerick is to put on the shelves a label with the indication of the link to web-sites where to find the official documents and publications on-line. Afterwards, we had a look at the web-site of EDC Limerick. Pattie has created an E-Journals listing that can be seen on the EDC web-site.

The main idea proposed by Pattie is to create a fully electronic EDC to ensure free access to European documentation and information for all and everywhere.

The idea could be reasonable only if you can rely on electronics and on reliable official databases and web-sites. For example, recently we have noticed a slowing down in the use of « EUROPA » and « EUR-LEX », probably due to the enlargement of the EU and to translation of official documents in more languages.

Another problem concerns « archiving »: if in the future we are induced to use more and more electronic tools, then we will need more systematic web-sites and databases to store all kind of documents (European, international and national) in order to facilitate the search for on-line documents, also in pdf. format.

As possible solutions, we had a look at different websites (mainly Americans) relating to electronic library catalogues, helpful for cataloguing and archiving official documents and publications (they are listed below at the end of the report).

Another interesting suggestion was the creation of a database to group all the results of queries and doubts exchanged by EDCs' librarians, instead of using a mailing list to query each other.

Afterwards, Sophia Salmaso - EDC Ferrara and Barbara Bonino – EDC Turin presented their web-sites.

Sophia showed how to have access to the official publications and periodicals through the EDC catalogue on-line, which is incorporated in the National Library System; moreover she presented the pages concerning the internal publications and researches, the periodicals on-line etc. She also gave details about the initiative of the Italian network of EDCs realised with the sponsorship of the Italian Representation of the European Commission, in the framework of the new European policy on information and communication. The initiative consisted in the organisation of 25 seminars on the Future of the European Union (www.sioi.org/rete_italiana_CDE.htm).

Finally, Barbara presented the EDC – Turin. The free access to the catalogue of the EDC is through the web-site of the host institution – the University Institute of European Studies (www.iuse.it). The plan of classification for cataloguing the European official documents and publications is the one adopted by the Library of the European Commission (ECLAS), through the Thesaurus Eclas. There is also a link to the catalogue of the periodicals held by the EDC and a link to a list of on-line periodicals with access to the full-text. Recently, the main activity of EDC Turin is the organisation of training courses on access to European documentation through the official web-sites and databases, offered not only to students but to every kind of users: private citizens, public officials, managers, institutions, associations.

On the fourth day, we grouped together all the suggestions and proposals in order to write the final report.

It was an interesting experience and a useful exchange of views.

USEFUL LINKS

Metadata - Dublin Core initiative: <http://dublincore.org/>

Ukoln metadata editor: <http://www.ukoln.ac.uk/metadata/dcdot/> (this web page includes training exercises)

RDF: Resource Description Framework: <http://www.xml.com/pub/a/98/06/rdf.html>

PDF improver for reengineering existing pdf format documents (commercial product) (Europa could contract to do a many pdfs): <http://www.apago.com/pdf_enhancer>

Adobe acrobat for pdfs: <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/main.html> (it is quite hard to find information about acrobat. The manual is the help file on the system.

Royalty free pdf generators: <http://www.vb123.com/toolshed/links/pdfwriters.htm> (also the Apple Macintosh system OSX has a pdf generator built in)

International Library Practice.

Questionpoint

Library query management system run by OCLC: cooperative virtual reference service <http://www.questionpoint.org/>

Library catalogue systems.

WorldCat (american, subscription required) <http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/> includes catalogued weblinks, especially to international institutions.They have piloted a project to put libraries and web information on equal footing.

Open Worldcat pilot. It is most interesting, first find a book on the web and you are prompted to 'find a library near you' and it then searches the library catalogues. <http://www.oclc.org/worldcat/pilot/>

British library catalogue includes web links: <http://blpc.bl.uk/>and is included in Copac <http://www.copac.ac.uk/copac/> the combined academic libraries catalogue of UK libraries and Trinity College Dublin.

Cybercemetery and archiving: <http://govinfo.library.unt.edu/default.html> (American)

Archive of European Integration: <http://aei.pitt.edu/>

Sample site for Australian metadata template used to catalogue and archive official publications <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/meta/templates.htm>

GODORT: American Library Association Government Documents Roundtable

<http://sunsite.berkeley.edu/GODORT/>

IFLA: International Federation of Library Associations on government publications http://www.ifla.org/VII/s17/sgiop.htm

Egoverment

http://europa.eu.int/information_society/eeurope/egovconf/text_en.ht