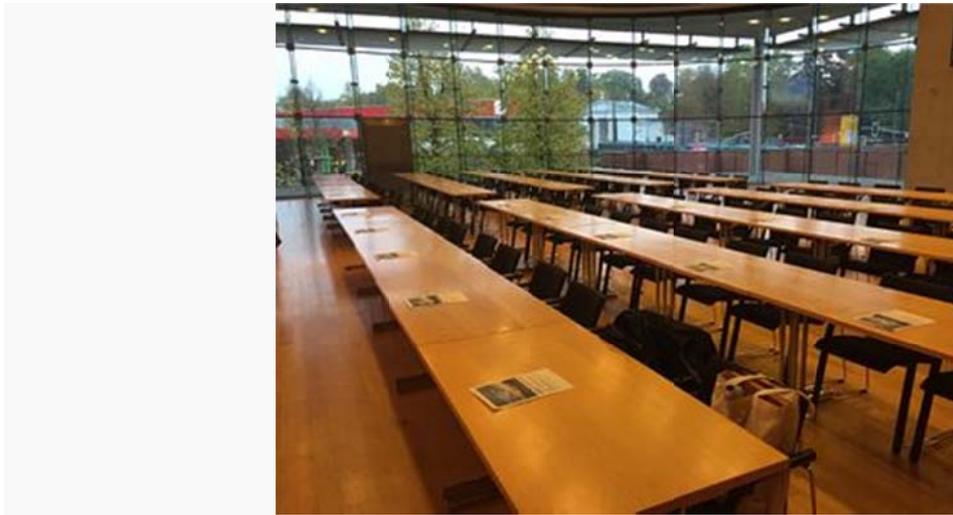


To be Published in the Spring 2018 European Studies Newsletter:

The 2017 Frankfurt International Symposium and Book Fair

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The calm before the swarm. *Photo by R. Hacken*

The international symposium on **“New Directions for Libraries, Scholars, and Partnerships”** took place last October in the German National Library, Frankfurt venue, during the bibliomaniacal week that surrounds the Frankfurt Book Fair. As you can imagine, it was preceded by careful preparation. The success of the symposium – success being the bottom-line consensus of all those I’ve talked with – came as a direct result of the manner in which Sarah How, Heidi Madden, Judy Alspach—and indeed a number of other colleagues—held weekly video conferences for months beforehand while also engaged in untold hours of preparation, worry, imagining and solving just those details we might have forgotten.



Welcome by Ute Schwens, Director of the German National Library. *Photo by R. Hacken*

As a tech support runner and sometime moderator, I enjoyed working with the staff of the German National Library, who not only made the beautiful symposium space available *pro bono* but also contributed the time, expertise and hands-on action support of their audio-visual virtuosi. They expertly recorded the set of entire plenary proceedings: those symposium sessions are now available on the [program page hosted by CRL](#). Any who were not there in person (as well as those who *werethere* and want to experience the sessions afresh) can either binge watch or take it slower, a presentation at a time.

The symposium provided a rich and varied smorgasbord of projects, partnerships, service descriptions, ideas, historical and future initiatives, tools, approaches, suggestions and inspiration for the changing scene in which we as information professionals and scholars are immersed. Attendees from a host of countries provided fresh insights and valuable networking opportunities. Did I mention that you can see [those sessions now](#), yourself? Even if you don't have time to watch the full symposium, feel free to peruse the [list of presentation and poster topics](#). Something will catch your fancy. Or feel free to read [a symposium report by Kristen Totleben](#) that appeared in an *American Libraries* Blog. Or check out the English-translation of [a symposium article by Heidi Madden, Sarah How and Sarah Wenzel](#) that appeared in German for *Buch und Bibliothek (BuB)*.

I feel the event provided me and others with wide horizons of insight while allowing us to serve and grow professionally. The Center for Research Libraries has, through the efforts culminating on a lucky Friday the 13th of October, polished its already sparkling brand, particularly in the arena of global resources. CIFNAL and GNARP were stalwart co-conspirators. Other valuable partners and advisors included the Raphaëlle Bats, *Chargée de mission relations internationales*,;ENSSIB in Lyons; Ute Schwens, Director, and her helpful colleagues at the German National Library in Frankfurt; the French National Library in Paris; Professor Tom Becker, *Berufsverband Information Bibliothek* (BIB); Fabrice Gabriel, Director, *Institut français* in Berlin; Dr. Doris Grüter, Romance Studies Information Service of the University and State Library in Bonn; and Dr. Heiner Schnellling, Director, University Library of the Goethe University in Frankfurt am Main. Corporate sponsors who made the symposium possible include Amalivre, Bibliothek & Information International, Brill, Cairn, Casalini

libri, De Gruyter, EBSCO, Erasmus, Harrassowitz, and Project Muse. My apologies to any I have forgotten. It is not out of ingratitude, but merely the side effect of retreating brain cells.

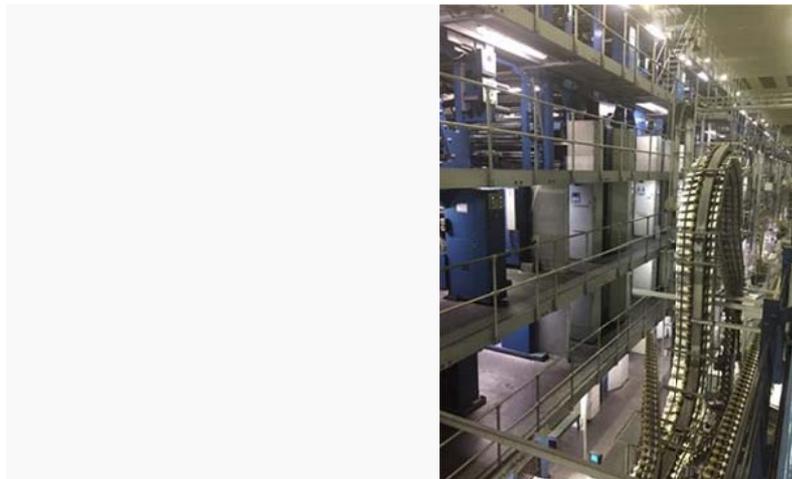


An exhibit at the Frankfurt Book Fair on French publishing history. *Photo by R. Hacken*

That is not the end of the story. No, not by a long shot. There's more.

The Frankfurt Book Fair had an especially appealing draw this year with its emphasis on France as the guest country. I took gleeful advantage of the offerings. Thousands did so.

The symposium committee, i.e., *moi* but mainly others, also organized and carried out a workweek-long series of Happenings to complement and supplement the book fair and symposium for those who had traveled so far: Monday saw visits to the German vendor, Harrassowitz, and to the Frankfurt Public Library. That evening participants were invited by Harrassowitz to a dinner in the cellar of the Wiesbaden City Hall. Or *Ratskeller*, if you will. Who in America dreams of dining in the basement of the city hall? Germans do gladly.



The printing compound-complex of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. *Photo by R. Hacken*

Tuesday I was one of those gathering colleagues together for a tour of the German National Library. In the afternoon came the unforgettable visit to the offices of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and its printing plant in a separate locale. My personal take-away was a slightly depressing insight into how “investigative reporting” in this age of fake news is not always possible. But the big, shiny, impressive, clickety-clack printing plant impressively and mindlessly distracted me from that concern.

Wednesday was the first day of the Fair, and we gathered in the library of the Frankfurt University, an enjoyable strolling distance from the fairgrounds, to give and take and swap advice and orientation. Then came the Fair, which was much more than just fair. It was massive as always. The orientation idea seemed a very joyful thing: how nice it was to “Hi-Ho, Go to the Fair” as a communal team and then branch out to our various individual interests.

Thursday we were on our own and packed as much mileage and gusto into the huge Book Fair halls as possible. I had the additional experience, together with Thea Lundquist of the University of Colorado, of meeting with a German colleague who was able to assist us with crucial details for an article on German library history we were just finishing up at the time.

Friday the symposium happened. But, as is by now clear, it didn't just *happen*.

Thanks to all involved!

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Frankfurt by night: the "Römer" and Goethe's birth house. *Photo by R. Hacken*