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When All Roads Lead to Frankfurt: 13 October 2017

Friday the 13th was not an unlucky day in Frankfurt am Main. At the Deutsche Nationalbibliothek (DNB), New Directions for Libraries, Scholars, and Partnership: An International Symposium drew 120 librarians and professionals from ten countries for a day of professional talks, poster presentations and networking. Attendees came from the US, Canada, and Mexico, as well as France, Germany and other European countries. The Symposium was sponsored by the Center for Research Libraries (CRL) and hosted by the DNB in Frankfurt.

New Directions consisted of four consecutive sets of talks and a mid-day poster session followed by reflections and a reception. In the morning, Engaging Scholars and Students was followed by Strategies for Collections and Partnerships. Afternoon sessions addressed 21st-Century Scholarship: Mining the Past and Forging the Future. Substantial time for posters allowed attendees to converse or to discuss specific projects and topics. The symposium's format and themes were developed collaboratively during eighteen months of planning-team meetings, led by co-chairs Sarah How and Heidi Madden, in consultation with international advisors. The team took the time to investigate, identify and reach out to experts in France and Germany, inviting two speakers each from France and Germany and selecting posters and other presentations through a competitive process.

Launching the day were Ute Schwens, Director of the DNB in Frankfurt, Emmanuelle Bermès, on behalf of the Bibliothèque nationale de France (BnF), and Bernard Reilly, President of the Center for Research Libraries (CRL).

CRL is an international consortium of university, college, and independent research libraries founded in 1949. Symposium leadership came from CRL's Collaborative Initiative for French Language Collections (CIFNAL) and German-North American Resources Partnership (GNARP), two of the area studies groups under the umbrella of CRL's Global Resources Program. CIFNAL and GNARP support strengthening French or German language research collections through collaborative projects, partnerships, initiatives and licensing. CIFNAL and GNARP offered travel stipends for librarians at CRL member libraries, enabling early-career librarians to travel to their first international professional conference and to the Frankfurt Book Fair. Many of the US librarians who attended the symposium also belong to the ALA division named Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) and its European Studies Section (ESS). Both ALA and CRL are headquartered in Chicago, but they are completely separate organizations. A [guide](#) to the tangle of American library organizations' acronyms, initialisms, abbreviations, and other library vocabulary can be found at the end of this article.

Both the variety of collaborations showcased during the symposium and the engaged conversations at breaks and during the poster session vividly demonstrated that international cooperation is exceptionally fertile ground for future growth. Having diverse stakeholders such as subject librarians, scholars, information science researchers, and administrators in one space sparked surprising insights into the very different organizational cultures of participating institutions and their cooperative networks. Claude Potts spoke about the history of the framework for cooperative approaches developed within CIFNAL and GNARP. Consensus emerged that understanding infrastructure from afar when it is in flux is hard enough but to truly understand organizational culture there is no substitute for meeting in person; ideas for connections emerge dynamically but thrive and grow when encouraged and supported by institutions.

North American librarians were fascinated by the scope of the research agendas in European libraries. Dr. Dorothea Sommer, from the Bavarian State Library (BSB), spoke about the recent paradigm shift in funding provided by the Deutsche Forschungsgesellschaft (DFG) for German research libraries, which sees a move away from funding comprehensive collections to developing discipline-centered information infrastructure and services. Implementing the new information services funded by the DFG at BSB required initial research on acquisitions and licensing models, standards for search and access systems, design of the German Historical Bibliography, and strategies for digitization and electronic publications. Evaluation activities and formal communications with various user groups guided the transition. The resulting products of the History Information Service, including the History of France at <https://www.historicum.net>, are highly relevant for international researchers.

Of particular interest to the many French-studies librarians in attendance was the talk on the new Romanistik FID developed by ULB Bonn and SUB Hamburg. Dr. Doris Grüter deepened our knowledge of what it means to transition from a focus on comprehensive collections to information services by describing the strategic effort to build the new Romance Studies FID. Highlights included this FID's systematic enhancement of catalog data for a specialized search portal, an initiative on research data management, a survey of Open Access publishing needs in Romance Studies, and a cooperative approach between the two institutions providing the service.

Participants were eager to learn from German librarians about their experience of the ongoing transition from the postwar German model of designated nodes of comprehensive subject collections, to a new model consisting of discipline-centric specialized services focused on research communities nationally. The mechanisms evolved by American research libraries to meet this challenge involve dozens of overlapping regional or national plans. Two examples in the poster session were Galadriel Chilton's "Ivy Plus Libraries: Partnering for Collaborative, Collective, Collections Managements" on an evolving collaboration among thirteen large academic libraries, most located along the East Coast of the US; and Gordon Anderson and Sarah G. Wenzel's "Exchanging Expertise, not Books" describing French Studies and Scandinavian Studies research services between the University of Chicago and the University of Minnesota. Clearly, although libraries supporting globalized humanities and social sciences

research and scholarship have passed well beyond uniquely print collections, we understand that print is still essential to these research areas. Coordinating the necessary hybrid, networked collections as well as providing innovative and composite services challenge resources at US libraries and stimulate creativity; posters presented many examples.

Four studies from the Bibli-Lab, a research collaboration between the BnF and ParisTech involving librarians, scholars, data scientists and social scientists, were described by Emmanuelle Bermès and Dr. Valérie Beaudouin. Between 2013 and 2017 the Bibli-Lab teams completed an environmental scan of libraries, a study of how online communities use digital World War I collections, studies of the use and usability of the Gallica digital library, and a project on data-mining Gallica use logs.

Of late, collaboration on digital projects has clearly been the easiest route to take to international collaboration, despite challenges, and has been the most fruitful. Posters included several examples of such initiatives, among them, digitization of French Revolution pamphlets (a project initially launched by CIFNAL). Seeking new partners for international collaborative projects was one of the aims of many librarians attending the Symposium. US librarians are interested in gaining better understanding of inter-European collaboration, and follow with interest meetings such as the Table ronde franco-allemande “Publication numérique: enjeux, usages et nouveaux métiers,” held in Göttingen on 23 November 2017, and projects such as DARIAH, on the digital scholarship front. Our European colleagues spoke of being inspired by the construction of the Charlie Archive at Harvard Library, a multimedia archival record of events related to the Charlie Hebdo shooting in 2015.

In combining the symposium with the French-themed book fair and other professional experiences, a full week of related events provided US Germanist and Romance-languages subject specialists a substantial immersion experience. Attendees enjoyed visiting the Frankfurt University Library, the Frankfurt Public Central Library, the DNB, the FAZ and its printing plant, Harrassowitz, and an expert tour of the Book Fair.

Moving Forward

By drawing early-career professionals from North America to Europe for their first major book fair and international conference, in addition to relevant enriching experiences, the Symposium succeeded in a major objective: mentoring the next generation whose work supports their institutions and communities of scholars. Exposure to the cultures and practices of European libraries and librarians inspires US librarians’ teaching, outreach, and scholarship. An even better indicator of success will be if this event leads to other formal opportunities for North American librarians and European librarians to meet and work together for the benefit of students and scholars in an international and interdisciplinary world.

An international agreement between ALA and Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID), running from 2016-18, is supporting exchanges between US and German libraries. Several US librarians participated in Bibliothekartag Leipzig 2016, and German librarians participated in the

ALA Annual conference in Chicago in 2017. Bibliothek & Information International (BII), contributed to travel support for US librarians, and more international opportunities are planned for 2018. Interested parties should subscribe to "wess-l@lists.ala.org," and monitor the mailings for information about new initiatives

On the institutional front, CRL's new Mellon-supported "Global Collections Initiative" seeks to increase collaboration among North American and European institutions to expand electronic access to resources relevant to area studies and international studies. CRL's approach through the Global Collections Initiative is to work within the networks of institutions towards comparing and bringing together research interests, creating approaches to collaborative digitization, and developing strategies to sustain access to critical primary source material. Additionally, CRL works with publishers and suppliers to acquire, license and develop new electronic resources for research and teaching.

Clearly many of the conversations begun in person will continue online and some of the new ideas generated on this lucky Friday may become projects. CIFNAL and GNARP welcome ideas for collaborations and both CIFNAL and GNARP would like to invite our European colleagues and institutions to become members.

Finally, the planning team would like to warmly thank all who contributed and participated, attended, sponsored and hosted during the Symposium week..

Footnote

Generous support was provided by Harrassowitz GmbH (with Dr. Knut Dorn as reception speaker), EBSCO (with Frank Bertsch as lunch speaker), Amalivre, Cairn.info, Casalini Libri, Brill, Erasmus, OCLC, deGruyter, and Project Muse. Bibliothek & Information Deutschland (BID), and Berufsverband Information Bibliothek e.V. (BIB) (with Dr. Tom Becker, and Nele Fritz, Library Science student at Fachhochschule Köln, and former intern at Duke University Libraries) provided organizational support, and Bibliothek & Information International (BII), represented by Dr. Ewald Brahm, contributed support for US librarians. CIFNAL and GNARP offered stipends to support CRL member librarians' travel, and librarians' home institutions provided funding as well. The planning team took inspiration from past symposia in Frankfurt organized by Jeffrey Garrett and Bernd Dugall, and are grateful for the continued support by the library of Uni Frankfurt, and its director, Heiner Schnell. Please consult the symposium website to explore the many ways in which our international advisors and partners supported the effort.

Links

Center for Research Libraries <http://www.crl.edu/>

- Collaborative Initiative for French Language Collections (CIFNAL) <http://www.crl.edu/programs/cifnal>

- German-North American Resources Partnership (GNARP)
<http://www.crl.edu/programs/gnarp>
- Global Resources Forum <https://www.crl.edu/forum/events>
- New Directions for Libraries, Scholars, and Partnerships: an International Symposium
<https://www.crl.edu/events/frankfurt2017symposium>

Library-Related Acronyms and Initialisms

<http://www.ala.org/tools/library-related-acronyms-and-initialisms>

WessWeb of the European Studies Section (ESS) In the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) https://wessweb.info/index.php/Main_Page

Quotes from Participants

Quotes to use around the text, if needed

“I have spent considerable time building up expertise in digital scholarship in order to incorporate it into my instruction, outreach, and liaison activities. The examples from the BnF have broadened my ideas about forms of outreach and feedback that may be solicited from our users.”

Barbara Alvarez, Librarian for Romance Languages and Literatures, Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies, and Comparative Literature, University of Michigan)

“Of the symposium itself it 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.”

Dr. Richard Hacken, European Studies and Linguistics Librarian, Brigham Young University

“The Frankfurt Book Fair was also a learning experience. I’ve attended several Latin American book fairs in Mexico, Colombia, Argentina, and Cuba, most roughly modeled on Frankfurt. Nothing, however, compares to the scale of Frankfurt, not even Guadalajara, not even close.”

Lisa Gardinier, Librarian for Latin American Studies, Linguistics, Portuguese Literature, and Spanish Literature, University of Iowa

“The event brought attention to many engaging programs and partnerships that support advanced academic research in Germany, France, and the United States. The Forum made

clear that these efforts are made possible only through the passion and energy of librarians and scholars, working together with their institutions and cooperative networks to push the boundaries of traditional research information services.”

James Simon, Vice President of Collections and Services, Center for Research Libraries.

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How is current chair of CIFNAL (2014-17 and 2017-20) and past chair of ACRL’s Western

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