



Accessing the record of Europe's book heritage

Mission Statement

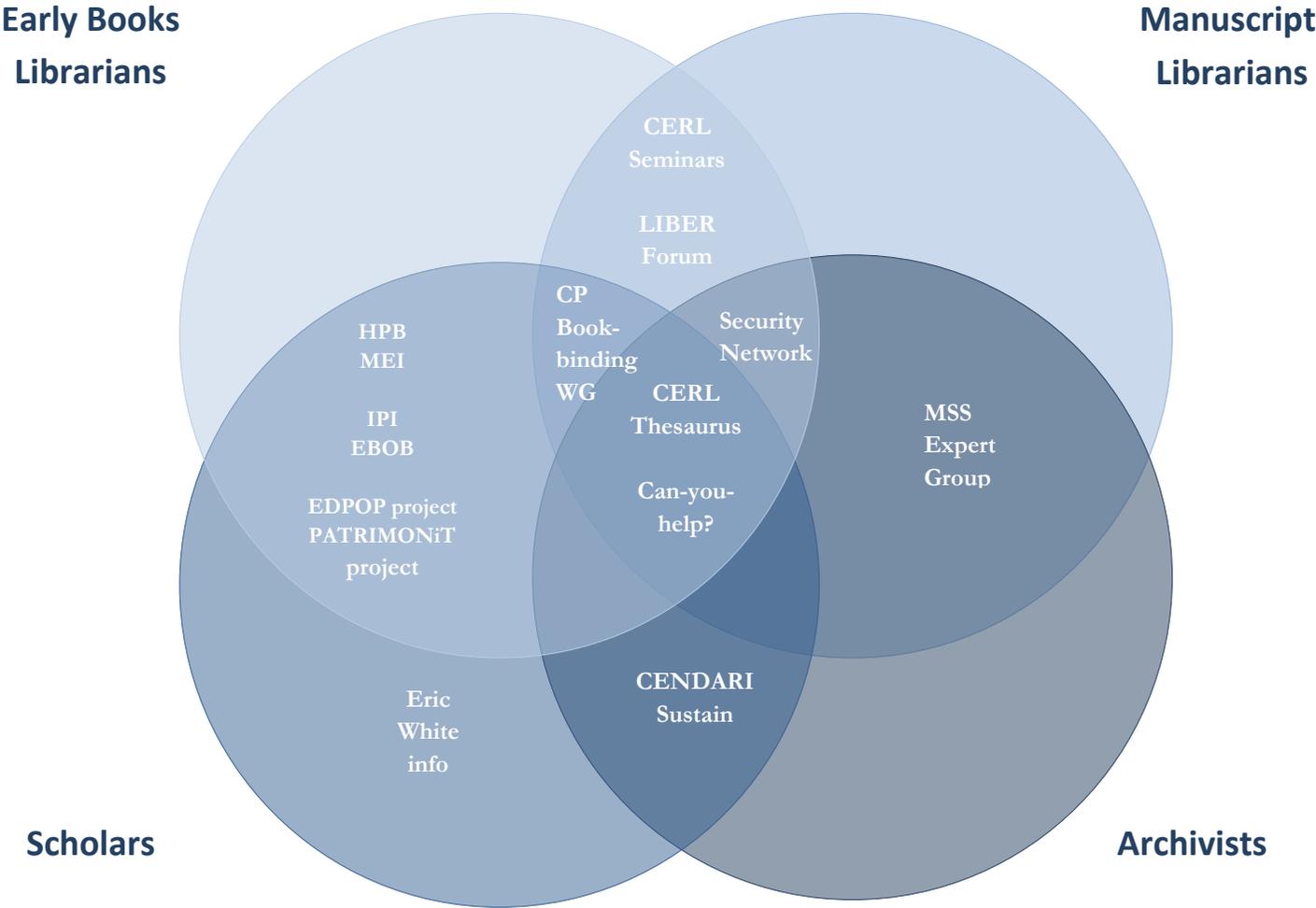
The prime goal of the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) is to enhance, facilitate and improve the use of printed and manuscript cultural heritage material. CERL raises the awareness of cultural heritage collections and their content among scholars and interested parties in a wide community. CERL is service and partnership oriented by offering its members and the library, archival, and scholarly world at large digital resources and tools using modern technology, by arranging seminars, workshops, publications, and by providing cooperation within its membership and with other library organisations.

CERL's Goals and Strategies 2016-2019

- To preserve, improve and grow CERL's electronic resources
- To provide advocacy for and facilitate networking among cultural heritage communities
- To influence stakeholders and funding bodies
- To consolidate, engage and enlarge the membership



CERL Activities and our target audiences



Preserve, improve, and grow CERL's digital resources



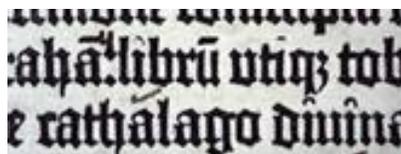
1. Shorten the time that contributing institutions have to wait to see their data added to the HPB
2. Support the DH community through providing convenient access to HPB data
3. Work with The European Library to integrate relevant records from their National Library community
4. Work with VZG towards a more visual presentation of HPB data



1. Migrate to the new CERL database hosting environment
2. Shorten the time that contributing institutions have to wait to see their data added to the CT
3. Enrich the data with information from non-library sources (e.g. biographies, portraits, coats of arms etc)
4. Improve search options and result set display of the CT (e.g. searching by geographical regions, affiliations, time periods etc.)



1. Review the technological platform of the CP
2. Identify possibilities for the CP, in terms of focus, development and presentation to user base (e.g. conduct an environmental scan)
3. Future proof the management of the service



1. Host the Material Evidence in Incunabula database; incl. enhancements coming from the 15cBOOKTRADE project
2. Ensure that all achievements of this project are embedded in CERL when the project ends
3. Pull all incunabula activities of CERL together in the Incunabula Working Group
4. Incunabula Working Group to coordinate further integration of digital resources for incunabula (e.g. GW)



1. Develop integrated access to images that record provenance, both newly created and those in existing image repositories.
2. Collaborate closely with the Book Bindings Working Groups as they share many aims
3. Explore development of a provenance recording service for post-incunabula materials based on HPB bibliographical records (e.g. modelled on MEI).

Hosting datasets created by third parties

CERL has an infrastructure and the supporting interface to facilitate hosting of third-party datasets, and offers this service to the early books and manuscripts community. CERL will need to charge a hosting fee for each dataset to cover costs, and it goes without saying that the importance of this activity lies in the potential connections between datasets that CERL will wish to exploit. CERL will publish a refined policy to outline what we will host on which terms, and will increase the existing portfolio of hosted datasets.

Influence stakeholders and funding bodies



CERL will intensify its engagement with funding bodies, both as an applicant and as a representative of the rare books and manuscript community, well-placed to advise on the needs of the sector and the most effective application of funds.

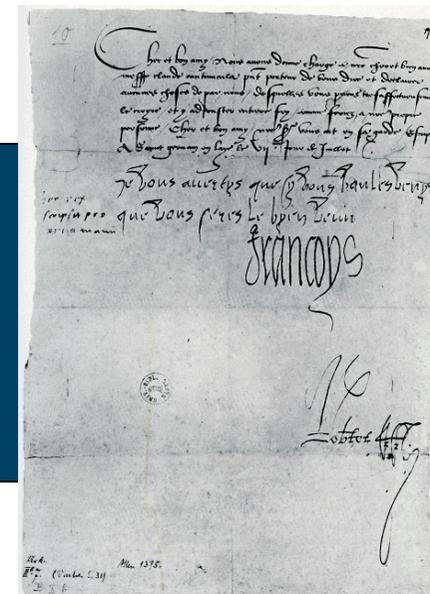
With the Digital Humanities community CERL will continuously explore the usefulness of its services and enhance the value of these services accordingly. The aim is to secure funding to further develop CERL, delivering on a programme of work that will see an enhanced infrastructure for researchers which fully integrates CERL's electronic resources, and offers a sustainable environment for their research data.

CERL wishes to expand its CERL Grants programme. For this purpose CERL will seek external funding, so that as an organisation CERL may act as the coordinator and administrator for issuing grants.

CERL will introduce Exploration Teams, to undertake time-limited investigations to determine whether and if so, how, CERL could be active in certain areas. Examples are Oriental Collections, Music, Maps, Archives, etc. Each time the remit for the Exploration Team will be to explore what is done elsewhere, what the lacunae are, and how CERL could/should contribute.

CERL's Unique Selling Points

- Well-defined remit: our cultural heritage in early printed books and manuscript materials
- Thriving network of specialists in institutions with rich Special Collections
- Efficient exchange of knowledge and best practices
- Joint development of services for librarians and scholars
- Convenient access to trusted data, presented in a meaningful context



Consolidate, engage and enlarge the membership

CERL has reached high quality standards through the expertise of the institutions, their individual staff, and scholars affiliated to them. We wish to increase the interaction with our members to further capitalise on the expertise available in the CERL Network, and think the working groups are a good vehicle for this interaction. Existing Working Groups (see below) will be further integrated in CERL, through regular meetings with the Executive Manager, the creation of annual work plans and the delivery thereof. The Working Groups will regularly present their work at public sessions, normally coordinated to take place at the time of the CERL meetings in March or October. In the coming years, the strategic aims for the Working Groups are:



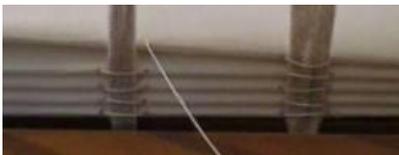
Security Networking Group

- Work towards a funding application of a research project on the applicability of nanotechnology and DNA technologies in collection security for library collections.
- Organise two conferences in the period covered by this plan; possible theme includes insider theft
- Explore whether there is a market for tailored workshops on collection security for CERL members
- Explore whether there is a need for a post-theft support system (and how this can be financed)



Manuscripts Expert Group

- Further strengthen collaboration between manuscript experts in libraries, archives and research.
- Work with scholars to establish relevant and future oriented data offers, beyond pure access to data bases or portals.
- Work with scholars to enhance the presentation of materials in the CERL Portal e.g. by contextualising objects, harnessing the potentials offered by the Semantic Web.



Bookbinding Working Group

- Focus on greater advocacy for publishing (images and descriptions of) book bindings on the internet
- Prepare instructions on how to publish these image (incl. varying level of detail in the descriptions, and suggested standards for digitising bindings)
- Create an inventory of available rubbings collections , and describe how these have been structured
- Work with collections to implement the LIGATUS glossary for describing bindings



Promotion Working Group

- Prepare advice how the topics of the CERL seminars and workshops align with the CERL Strategy and are kept alive after the event.
- Explore whether CERL seminar themes might be aligned with IFLA/RBMS events or DH conference/workshops.
- Review the publishing format of the bi-annual Newsletter

Seminars and Workshops

The CERL programme of workshops and seminars will be organised in countries where there is the potential for a CERL membership, and the themes are aligned with the CERL Strategy. Suggested themes include

- How materials with roots outside Europe influenced European intellectual growth and thinking.
- Cataloguing: workflow, formats, cataloguing rules like RDA, cataloguing platforms, special requirements for early printed materials and manuscripts (e.g. recording provenance).
- What is the future of the library catalogue? In various institutions it may serve as library management tool, the file for stock keeping, a research tool, our gateway to LOD, or all of the above simultaneously. Does it cope?
- Libraries and archives – explore integrated access, early printed books held in archives, best practices in the one that would benefit the other.
- IIF and CERL. The obvious connection regards provenance images, but other CERL services could perhaps also be made to benefit.
- Funding for and long-term sustainability of developments in the cultural heritage sector.



Membership benefits

Members of CERL receive access to the following databases:

- CERL's Heritage of the Printed Book Database, with institution-wide access (by password or IP recognition) for searching, off-campus access for the institution's registered users, download records for derived cataloguing, and Z39.50 and SRU access for other specialised uses
- the CERL Thesaurus, freely available through its own interface, but also as LOD under the terms of [Etalab's Open Licence](#), which can be considered equivalent to ODC-BY and CC-BY 2.0.
- the CERL Portal for manuscripts and early printed materials, freely available through its own interface, with integrated CT assisted searching.
- the Material Evidence in Incunabula database (MEI), freely available both for recording provenance information and searching the database.
- the Can-You-Help? facility, harnessing an active community glad to assist in the identification of unknown provenance marks
- a growing number of databases hosted by CERL, such as the ISTC, the Early Book Owners in Britain, the *Index Possessorum Incunabulorum* and the Scottish Book Trade Index.

Members of the Consortium are invited to contribute bibliographical or authority records to the CERL resources, thereby increasing the visibility of their collections in its appropriate, specialised context. Members have the opportunity to participate in the development of CERL's electronic and published resources, through a range of Working Groups. They have access to CERL's community of rare-books specialists through free seminars and workshops. CERL Single Members may apply to have up to 15 cluster libraries associated with their membership, for free. Cluster libraries have access to the HPB Database.



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