The HPB Database is a valuable resource for studying the transmission and dissemination of texts in print. When was a text first published, in which country? When was it translated, did it see many reprints, to which countries did it spread? How many copies of its editions survive today? In which collections, and owned by whom? The HPB Database's detailed indexes allow the interrogation of the database in many ways.

File contributions

If you wish to contribute bibliographic records to the HPB, please contact the CERL Executive Manager at marian.lefferts@cerl.org. CERL will accept data in MARC/UTF-8. The Data Conversion Group (DCG) in Göttingen have developed and implemented a UNIMARC-MARC21 conversion, which aims at retaining as much of the data as possible, in particular elements concerning antiquarian material. Elements that lack a direct counterpart in MARC21 format have been aimed to be at least visible in the HPB (and ideally also retrievable). In preparation for loading, DCG analyses all data sets and harmonises data across the various fields and subfields so as to support uniform search and retrieval across the HPB database.

CERL Thesaurus

The CERL Thesaurus contains forms of names for imprint places, persons and corporate bodies, printers and their devices, as well as provenance information.

CERL Portal (CP)

The CERL Portal enables scholars to search across the contents of online manuscripts databases, in combination with selected large databases of printed materials, thereby overcoming the historical differentiation of printed books and manuscripts in libraries.

Material Evidence in Incunabula (MEI)

MEI is a database for recording and searching the material evidence of 15th century printed books: ownership, decoration, binding, manuscript annotations, stamps, prices, etc.

Can you help? – Identifying Provenance Evidence

A resource for public discussion and identification of provenance queries. It allows you to share your queries with an extensive network of specialists, and to contribute your own expertise.

Index Possessorum Incunabulorum (IPI)

CERL offers access to Paul Needham's list of 32,000 entries of personal and institutional names, monograms, and arms evidencing ownership of incunabula. CERL is working towards the full integration of Provenance data into the CERL Thesaurus.

Heritage of the Printed Book Database

Accessing the record of Europe's book heritage

Consortium of European Research Libraries

Consortium of European Research Libraries

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Heritage of the Printed Book

The Heritage of the Printed Book Database (HPB) offers scholars in all disciplines access to over 3 million items of the European printed heritage, from its earliest beginnings (c.1455) to around 1830.

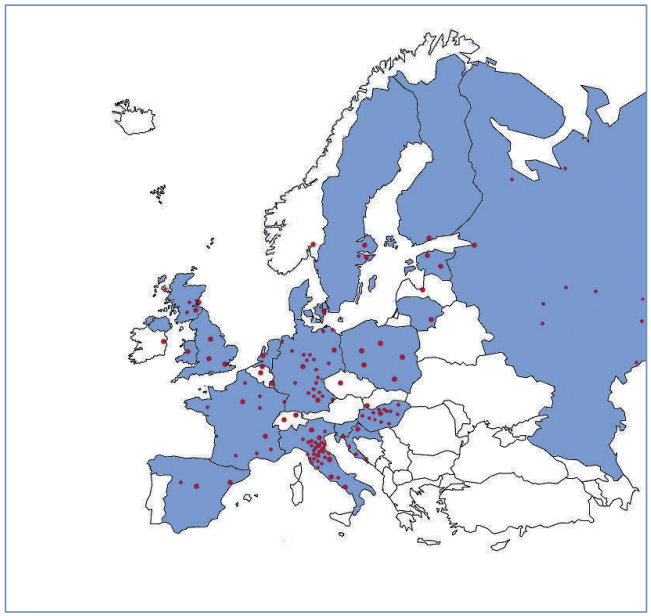
The HPB contains a steadily growing number of catalogue records contributed by libraries, mainly members of the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL). The majority of files consist of high-level bibliographical records created by book-in-hand cataloguing. Some others contain records created as a result of retroconversion projects, and these are gradually being replaced by sections of enhanced records. CERL is continually updating and adding new files to the database, widening its scope, coverage and value to scholars.

The HPB Database enables scholars to locate and identify items held in many of Europe's major libraries, at a level of detail which makes it possible to evaluate different copies of the same title. A wealth of copy-specific information such as provenance or binding information is made available. As digitisation of cultural heritage items proceeds all across Europe, the HPB Database is offering more and more direct access to content by linking to digital reproductions from contributing libraries.

With the full integration of the CERL Thesaurus (CT) to support search and retrieval users need not enter all variant forms of names as separate search terms. They may retrieve a complete list from the CERL Thesaurus, and adopt all variants as search terms. Searches for publication places, personal names (authors, editors, translators etc.) and names from imprints (printers, publishers, booksellers etc.) can thus be expanded.

CERL members

Not visible on the map are Yale University and 3 Russian members: Chelyabinsk State University Research Library, the State Public Scientific Technical Library of the Siberian Branch (Russian Academy of Sciences) in Novosibirsk and the National Library of the Udmurt Republic.



HPB is made available free of charge to readers and staff at CERL member libraries and other subscribing institutions.

A limited view of HPB records with simple retrieval options is also available from the globally accessible resource CERL Portal (http://cerl.epc.ub.uu.se/).

Contributing Libraries and Institutions

Croatia: National and University Library
Denmark: Det Kongelige Bibliotek
Estonia: Academic Library of Tallinn University
Finland: National Library
France: Bibliothèque nationale de France
Germany: Bayerische Staatsbiblothek, Gemainamer Bibliothek Verbund, Niedersächsische Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek
Hungary: National Széchényi Library, Szeged University Library
Italy: Istituto Centrale per il Catalogo Unico, Regione Toscana
Lithuania: National Library
Netherlands: Koninklijke Bibliotheek
Poland: National Library of Poland, results of the Bosch project, Warsaw University Library, Wroław University Library
Russia: National Library
Slovenia: National and University Library
Spain: Biblioteca Nacional de España, Universidad Complutense
Sweden: Kungliga Biblioteket
UK: British Library, Cathedral Libraries Catalogue, National Library of Scotland, National Library of Wales, Oxford University Libraries, University of London Libraries, Wellcome Library
USA: Yale University Libraries
Vatican: Biblioteca Apostolica Vaticana

More information
http://www.cerl.org/web/en/resources/hpb/main