Promoting libraries as “publishers”: EHPS - European History Primary Sources

CULTURAL HERITAGE on line
Empowering users: an active role for user communities
15-16 December 2009, Florence, Italy
The needs of a user community of historians
Small scale e-projects for a specialized public
Digital History: new tools and new methods
Goals of EHPS
Description of EHPS
Historians need to find primary sources and secondary literature in the analogical world but also in the digital world.

For postgraduate and post-doctoral programs, the need is more precise: historians want to discover original and unexploited primary sources ("serendipity") and/or to access specific sources in archives and also in online repositories.

But important digitization projects are often made of a selection of archival documents, of "treasures" or rare documents which are illustrating the "glorious past" of our nations. These are online exhibitions of artifacts, materials for teaching history but not primary sources for supporting an original research. (Ex.: The World Digital Library wants to offer "significant primary materials from countries and cultures around the world". Significant to which communities of users and in which context ?)
Edward L. Ayers realized a pharaonic digital history project: «The Valley of the Shadow, two communities in the American Civil War». Ayers is now suggesting to modify our agenda: «we’ve tended to build big things in the hopes of capturing as many uses as possible. But maybe now we need to build lighter, smaller things. We might build simpler ways to use our vast collections.»

In fact, digital contents are often accessible in OA digital libraries: small scale web primary sources and digital libraries projects, very useful to scholars, are disseminated in a fragmented web worldwide.

They have to be discovered and accessed by their qualified public in a socially networked web.
Digital History: new tools and new methods

- Digital history (and history performed through digital means), need new tools for **discovering, accessing and organizing critically** digital contents in the process of making history.
- Digital libraries are often externally connected with other web resources (ex. the ODNB) and also primary sources are aggregated in only one website through a semantic harvesting of contents (ex.: *London Lives*)
- The web in itself is a primary source but how could historians search and retrieve selected original materials and meta-sources online?
- Nowadays, like at the beginning of the web when “indexing” all the e-resources was possible, there’s a need for scholarly portals, qualified disciplinary reference tools to support digital humanities and history.
- We need finding aids, indexes and portals to select contents but using new ways to communicate and interact with the user’s communities.
EHPS wants to monitor the web, indexing scholarly meta-sources, born digital invented archives or meta-sources belonging to new digital contexts separated from their “analogical” existence and finding new forms of authenticity.

EHPS would like to collect and connect with its user community, an atomized reality of digital primary sources for the History of Europe, either as a whole or for individual countries.

EHPS is entering the second stage of a historian’s digital craft: 1. production of e-sources; 2. information about e-sources; 3. selection of e-sources; 4. use of e-sources in the process of writing history. Its main goal is about informing of the existence of digitized primary sources and offering a way to access them inside the browser.

EHPS responds to the question of how we could link better communities of historians around the process of searching for primary sources using web 2.0. services.

Capacity to indirectly “publish” contents (accessibility) not belonging directly to a library like the EUI library.

Few staff, low financial costs and simple technological solutions.
Welcome to European History Primary Sources (EHPS), an index of scholarly websites that offer online access to primary sources on the history of Europe. The websites listed on EHPS are not only meta-sources but also include invented archives and born digital sources.

Each website that is listed in EHPS has a short description and is categorised according to country, language, period, subject and type of source. The portal can be searched in a variety of ways. The listed websites can be accessed for free, though sometimes a registration is required.

EHPS is a work in progress and new content is regularly added. In order to stay updated on new entries or specific categories in which you are interested it is possible to subscribe to RSS feeds or to follow EHPS on Twitter.

Registered users have the following extra options:
- create a personal list of bookmarks
- comment and add their own experiences with the various websites that are listed in the portal
- suggest new websites to be included via our webform

News

EHPS at "Cultural Heritage Online", Florence, 16 December 2005
Follow EHPS on Twitter
ANCSS statement on earthquake Abruzzo
Call for HELP - Das digitale Historische Archiv Köln
... more

Latest entries

- Europa Publications Office Digital Library
- Gli Anni della Cupola
- L’Unita, archivio digitale, 1924-
- Biblioteke Cyfrowe Biblioteki Gdanskiej Pan
- Digital Archives - Trebon
- Digital Photographs - National Library of Ireland
- Le Temps, archives historiques

S.Noiret: European History
Primary Sources

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This website is part of a project of the Russian State Library and The Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra church, one of the most important centers of Russian orthodoxy. The aim of the project is to gather a "universal collection of written and graphic manuscripts in Latin, ancient Church Slavonic and Greek languages as well as modern Slavonic, West European and Eastern languages." The collection includes rare documents and manuscripts from the 12th to the 20th century (liturgical books, annual chronicles, documents related to economic and social history, etc.).

The website currently offers access to 2,954 digitized manuscripts, unique books and treatises from the holdings of the church library and can be browsed by the following sub-collections:

- Main Library
- Additional Library
- Unique Library
- Collection of manuscripts of the Moscow Theological Academy
- Awards, orders, bills of sale, documents, etc.

Visit the website: Рукописи- Collection of manuscripts of The Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra, Russia

Login or register to post comments
Searching Primary Sources in EHPS

Four different ways to search EHPS:

1) **Browsing** one of the five EHPS categories

2) **Most selective**: search EHPS combination of tags

3) **Free Text Search** in all entries and also in advanced mode with precise queries

4) Using **Google Custom Search** inside the listed web-sites.
Being Informed from EHPS

- RSS Feeds connected to *Google Reader*
- Following EHPS directly from *Twitter*
- Becoming Fan of EHPS in *Facebook*
- Knowing about ongoing statistics for EHPS through *Alexa*

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Registered users - after creating an account - may annotate a single website entry: EHPS needs critical judgments from its users for the benefit of other users.

Quoting entries within many social networks.

They may create a personal bookmark area.

They may suggest via a web-form new websites to be included in the portal.

1 to 5 stars for each website

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Primary Sources
Intute is quoting EHPS

Delicious pages are bookmarking EHPS