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Biography

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From Our Own Correspondent.... New Developments in German Law Libraries

Abstract: Ivo Vogel brings us news of the latest areas of interest in German legal information, with a report from a recent conference entitled *Legal Information in Change*, held at the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin, including information literacy, the Virtual Law Library, copyright and catalogue enrichment.

Keywords: Law libraries; Germany; information literacy

Introduction

To explain new developments in German law libraries it is useful to report from a conference which was held on the 14th and 15th of November 2007 in the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin. The conference, under the title *Legal Information in Change* was organized by the ViFa Recht (Virtual Law Library) and the AjBD (Association for Legal Librarianship and Documentation). Law librarians from the different types of law libraries in Germany were invited and more than 120 guests attended the nine lectures.[1]

The aim of the conference was to present and to discuss the standing of law libraries in relation to the new developments and opportunities of the modern information society. The main topics were information literacy, Virtual Law Library, catalogue enrichment, foreign databases, e-Books and Web 2.0 in law libraries.

Information literacy

Information competencies are a key factor, not only in libraries overall, but also specifically in law libraries. The development of information competencies should take place during the whole academic year. Librarians should be a part of the learning community and should have a key role in facilitating information literacy. Through the creation of curriculum-integrated programmes, librarians should actively contribute to the students' and academics' learning processes in their search to enhance or develop the skills, knowledge and values needed to become valuable member of the scientific community.

In the first lecture of the conference, Dr. Johannes Mikuteit (University Library Kiel) and his colleague from the Law Library of the University of Kiel, Dr. Thomas Krause, presented the concept of the exchange of legal

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information literacy at the University Library of Kiel. The training program of the University Library Kiel is called "kiebiz" (components of the University Library Kiel to information literacy).[2] It covers three levels: Library guidance in general (Level A); catalogue and database training in general (Level B); subject specific guidance and database training (Level C). Dr. Krause reported on the training at the law faculty. The largest challenge was to persuade the Faculty to establish one double hour exercises for new law students. This double hour runs under the name "Erstsemesterfuehrung" (First semester guidance) and is now an integral component of the mandatory beginner exercises. The goal is to give first-year university students an introduction to the library and their use of it, including an introduction to a literature search, with search strategies, in the catalogue system and a search in legal bibliographies. The training concept is supplemented by the search training in databases, which gives, above all, an overview of the legal database offered in the law library.

Virtual Law Library[3]

Ivo Vogel and Angela Pohl reported in the following lecture on developments and perspectives of the Virtual Law Library. Two RSS feeds were demonstrated. The RSS feed "Aktuelles" (News) is functioning as an information service about the technical developments and current news concerning the Virtual Law Library. The RSS feed "Fachinformationsführer" (Subject gateway) communicates new indexed internet sources in the subject gateway. Also the improved metasearch was demonstrated. One of the improvements is the de-duplication-function. Up to 999 hits can be de-duplicated. Mr. Vogel and Mrs. Pohl explained the tasks of the web usability report. This usability test was administered in Göttingen by the company "eResult". The results are very helpful to improve the handling of the Virtual Law Library. "ViFa Rech" started a road show in January 2008. In 20 German libraries the "ViFa-Recht"-team will present the content and functionalities of the portal to make it well known in Germany.

Catalogue enrichment

The next topic of interest was catalogue enrichment in law libraries, with special consideration of table of contents services. Online catalogues can be enriched with tables of contents, covers, flap texts, sample chapters, reviews, comments and full texts. This service helps the users to get more information about a book with one more click. The advantage is an improved depth of information. The users can carry out the search more purposefully, thus they save time and the hit becomes more precise. For the library, the advantage is in a more attractive service offer, in the avoidance of unnecessary loans and more satisfied users.

The lectures of Wenke Roeper (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) and Dr. Sigrid Amedick (Max-Planck-Institut für Europäische Rechtsgeschichte, Frankfurt/Main) focused on the "catalogue enrichment and new search options in the online catalogues of law libraries in consideration of table of contents services". The first part of the lecture gave a general introduction to the topic of catalogue enrichment. It highlighted the reasons for the enrichment of bibliographic catalogue data by supplementing contents information and promoted the advantages and increases in value for users and libraries. Mrs. Röper also reported on catalogue enrichment activities of the German library networks. It is an important task for German libraries to set up table of content services.

Annually, from January 2008, the German National Library is starting to produce 75,000 tables of contents of new German publications. It plans to use the publishing house data in co-operation with the new service of the German National Library. Germany wide co-operation avoids replication. At the end of October 2007 the Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin began a project with the aim of completely scanning the table of contents of the holdings of the special collection in law from the years 1996–2006 inclusive (except law journals and collections of statutes). The tables of contents of a further 50,000 titles will be retrospectively scanned within six months.

The second part (Dr. Sigrid Amedick, Max-Planck-Institut für Europäische Rechtsgeschichte, Frankfurt/Main) focused on the relevant activities existing at present in legal libraries, how already existing data can be merged into their own OPAC, and which steps are necessary to set up a collection related service.

International databases

Foreign and international law databases are becoming more and more important in German legal research. Databases from the UK or the USA are of particular interest to the lawyers. For this reason the second day of the conference began with a short introduction to the concept and to the use of the "Westlaw International" databases with Tom Delsaer and Denis Guedez of Thomson/ELLIS Publications, as an example of a common legal database for legal research in Germany.

Copyright

The development of copyright law in Europe and Germany is very rapid and complex. Copyright matters are a topic of almost all conferences and meetings in German law librarianship. In the second lecture of the day Armin Talke from Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin explained the legal development of German copyright law. He focused particularly on the actual changes concerning the special characteristics of the "new media". His main focus was on the right of open access to resources via the internet, document delivery

(e.g. Subito[4]), copying for private use, and the expected third amendment to the new German Copyright Act.

E-books

To follow, Peter Weber (Max-Planck-Institut für Geistiges Eigentum, Wettbewerbs- und Steuerrecht, München) gave an outstanding overview of the e-book market in Germany, the criteria for choice, the use and implementation of e-books in law libraries. He explained in detail the pro and cons of the different types of marketing and price models, contracts, possible applications and their accessibility in the law library.

Mr. Weber summarised that the ideal e-book unites the functionalities of a printed book with those of the electronic book. The advantage of a printed book is the simple handling and the good legibility, the possibility of making notes, inserting markings and bookmarks and the ability to see how far one has progressed. The main functions of the electronic book are the flexibility of the representation (e.g. uncomplicated changing of characters or size); the search functions (e.g. CROSS search); the unrestricted access and the possibility of links to integrated dictionaries and multimedia elements using open linking software (e.g. SFX or reference linking). There may also be cost advantages by virtue of dispensable investments (selling, storage, unsold copies, etc.).

In conclusion, an e-book must be integrated into electronic catalogues and search engines of libraries to offer a valuable service beside the other materials.

The end of the conference focused on search strategies and the implementation of Web 2.0 in law libraries.

BibTutor

Who is unfamiliar with the problem of different search methods across the great number of available catalogues and databases?

In the first lecture of the final part Mr. Andreas Buhl (German Research Centre for Artificial Intelligence) introduced and described in a live-demonstration the context of a research project named BibTutor. BibTutor is an assistance system for the search in catalogues and databases. The goal is to offer the user independent learning of search strategies. The system fulfils the task of an electronic tutor, which takes over the function of a human search tutor. The system is always close to the individual and the actual search problem and offers all sources of information relevant for the concrete search by the user and to enable him to use it effectively. BibTutor uses modern text mining technologies which, quite independently, trace semantic similarities between ad-hoc search keywords and the keywords/search terms provided in the information sources/databases. The BibTutor had to integrate the search systems offered by the university libraries.[5]

Web 2.0

Library 2.0 and user-generated content are two terms which feature more and more in the landscape of libraries. In his presentation Patrik Danowski (Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin) briefly defined both terms and gave examples of how it was put to work in law libraries. His theories are that Web 2.0 technology, like weblogs, RSS Feeds and wikis can be useful in law libraries too. In this way lawyers can publish information very fast and the technology of social tagging can support the work of law librarians. With Web 2.0 technologies it is much easier to find specialists. Law libraries have to rethink the services of the digital libraries. Law libraries can move in the same direction as the readers and provide support for them. This means that law libraries have to consider which web2.0 services are being used by the users and think about how the library can use these services to communicate better with them. The vision is a Library 2.0 creating a platform for exchange of scientific information between librarians and users.

Footnotes

[1] For further information see http://www.vifa-recht.de/fachtagung2007/index.php

[2] http://www.uni-kiel.de/ub/service/schulungen/

[3] Ivo Vogel and Jochen Haug, The Virtual Law Library–a Portal in Progress for Legal Information in Germany?, 7 *Legal Information Management* 200 (2007).

[4] http://www.subito-doc.de/index.php?

[5] Examples can be viewed at http://www.dfki.unikl.de/bibtutor