

DELIVERABLE

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D2.4. A sustainable library-domain aggregation infrastructure for Europe

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1. Introduction

This report documents the business planning and evidence-gathering processes, and the evidence base, that led to the formulation of the draft Strategy and Business Plan for The European Library (TEL), 2013-15, and summarises the main points of the Business Plan. The report originated in Task 2.5 of the Europeana Libraries project's Work Package 2: Sustainability, in which the partnership committed to the production of:

A report with recommendations and costings for how a sustainable domain-wide aggregation infrastructure for Europe's libraries could be developed.

Note that the draft Strategy and Business Plan for The European Library (TEL), 2013-2015 has previously been submitted, in full, as Europeana Libraries Deliverable 2.3.

2. Landscape Modelling

Business planning began with two concurrent data collection exercises, landscape modelling and stakeholder interviews (the latter are described below, section 3).

The starting point for the landscape modelling was two previous survey reports: the EuropeanaTravel survey of research libraries on aggregation, and the Athena survey of aggregators. The findings from these reports were amplified using data supplied by Europeana about its partner aggregators, and through personal contact with members of the CERL consortium in Europe. The researcher sought to capture a snapshot of Europe's aggregators: whether they were library-only or cross-domain; the number of providers, and whether research libraries and/or national libraries were among the participants; whether they were feeding Europeana; their size; and their funding model.

The data were necessarily assembled at speed and should be treated as indicative, rather than exhaustive, but some 140 aggregators across 31 countries were identified as dealing at least in part with library data. Europe-wide services (20), largely running on project funds, and national aggregators (38), mostly government-funded and cross-domain, were prominent. Despite this very wide range of services, both Library participation and join-up between aggregators and Europeana seemed patchy at best, suggesting that the case for a dedicated, library-domain aggregation service had some merit, while it was also clear that the distinguishing features of a domain-wide library aggregator in the context of European, national and cross-domain services would require careful delineation.

3. Stakeholder Interviews

A series of stakeholder interviews was carried out. Europeana Libraries has a range of stakeholders, identified for interview purposes as libraries (national and research) and content providers, aggregators (thematic, cross-domain, library domain), funders (national ministry and EC), library networks (CERL, LIBER, CENL), TEL and Europeana. In total, 23 structured interviews were conducted with participants drawn from each stakeholder group. The aim was to garner a representative sample of views, identify areas of apparent consensus, and inform further thinking.

The interviews explored four main areas of enquiry: the potential popularity of a domain-level aggregator for libraries, bringing together national and research library content; the services and added value that such an aggregator might provide; how it should be managed and governed; and how it ought to be financed. The interviewers asked a consistent set of general questions of all interviewees, with follow-up questions tailored to particular stakeholder groups. The interview questions are given below at Appendix A.

The concept of library-domain aggregation was well received by the majority of interviewees, many of whom saw merit in the extension of the union national library catalogue of Europe already developed by TEL. Potential services and benefits identified at this early stage included the following:

- A researcher portal
- Links to other services, via the aggregator's portal.
- Pushing the aggregated collections into other European portals and research services (such as the CENDARI project).
- Using the union catalogue to support bibliographic referencing services for academics.
- The possibility of comparing records or objects side by side.
- The increased exposure of a provider's content.
- The increased publicity for the content provider's institution.
- Inter-library loan services
- Digitisation-on-demand services.
- Creation of tools and services to embed content in users' workflows
- Metadata enrichment. It was pointed out by the Estonian national library that this function is usually of more benefit to research libraries than national libraries.
- Multi-lingual metadata access
- Facilitating OCR projects on texts, leading to indexing for full-text searchability.
- Curating academic exhibitions.
- A European-wide partnership, giving access to knowledge and expertise, just as much as content.

Participants were happy for TEL to run the service, subject to suitably consultative governance arrangements. There was less consensus on the financial basis for the sustainability of the service, but 'user pays' models and public-private partnerships were both strongly rejected. Project funding was supported and encouraged, but it was acknowledged that this could not be the mainstay of service longevity. A subscription model received widespread support, with endorsement of the idea of 'top-up' fees in return for services, or variable fees relating to the quantity of data handled, the unifying principle being that fees should be affordable by research libraries.

4. Scenario Planning

A one-day, cross-Work Package scenario planning meeting was convened to build on the desk research described in sections 2 and 3 above and to support more detailed work on business planning. The key question was expressed as: in what form and by what means should the Europeana Libraries aggregation be sustained from 2013?

Some initial assumptions were agreed, as follows:

- Simply to sustain the current project partnership is insufficient. The aggregation must be capable of serving all European research libraries.
- The only core functional requirement of the aggregation service is to feed data about digital objects to Europeana. This role includes liaison with Europeana on behalf of content partners, the transformation of data to EDM or Europeana's preferred format in future, and the preparation of indexed full text.
- The funding model and the technology must be scalable to all European libraries of all types in future.
- The funding model should be designed on a cost recovery basis.
- The aggregation service will seek to acquire and store data in the richest possible format. This will enable library domain specialists to support the widest range of operations and services for the benefit of researchers and other consumers.

In the context of those assumptions, the key dimensions of sustainability scenarios were defined as follows:

- Funding: how will the library domain aggregator be funded?
- Services: what services should the library domain aggregator provide?
- Service delivery: who should be responsible for delivering the library-domain aggregator and its services?
- Content acquisition: concerning the scope and logistics of the acquisition of data by the library domain aggregator.

Each of the four dimensions was considered in more detail, and within each a number of scenario options were evaluated and assigned a broad-brush rating as strong, fair or weak. A report was drawn up, and after external review, the final outcome of the scenario planning exercise was the following recommendations:

1. TEL should own and oversee the service, whether or not it is subcontracted in part or in total.
2. The service should be funded by a membership model. Value-added services could be charged for; such services might be made available to non-members.
3. Stakeholders (national and research libraries) should feel that they own and steer the development of the service.
4. A range of value-added services should be built into the aggregation service over time.
5. Services that should be provided as the highest priority are a public interface, for an audience of academic researchers; the ability to present data as belonging to different collections (for instance, to support a 'CERL Portal'); and to make data openly available for re-use in other environments.
6. The service should acquire bibliographic data about physical holdings as well as digital object metadata.
7. The scope of the aggregator should be any library-held data, provided that such data can be exposed in an appropriate format. It should define a 'core collection', which is the data that it aspires to collect comprehensively and to agreed standards, while making non-core content (perhaps, for instance, A/V data and archives data) available as it comes.
8. The library domain aggregator should collect data directly from libraries wherever possible, rather than from third-party services.
9. The content provider should be responsible for preparing data, but will be supported by the centre, which will offer a range of appropriate tools and a support service, encompassing, for example, advice on acceptable metadata formats, digital formats, rights management and data export.

10. The funding model and the acquisition and delivery technology must be scalable to all European libraries of all types in future.

At a number of subsequent meetings and workshops, the opportunity was taken to validate and refine the scenarios, identify and prioritise the products and services important to the European library community and its users, and consolidate the value propositions associated with the library-domain aggregator. The main outcomes in terms of service definition and value propositions are described below (sections 5 and 7 respectively).

5. Products and Services

Participants in a workshop at the LIBER 40th Annual General Conference, June 2011, were invited to rate a list of ten potential services according to usefulness. 44 questionnaires were returned and all ten services were considered useful in some way. The order of preference was:

	vital	important	neutral
1. Providing access to universities' own digital repositories	16	23	4
2. Enabling searching of bibliographic records of texts in hard-copy and metadata for related digitised texts at the same time	15	21	5
3. Offering OCR services for providers' digital content to support full text searching in the portal (universities more 'neutral' and national libraries more 'vital')	15	18	7
4. Pushing the data out to other academic / research services e.g. Primo Central / Summon	14	19	10
5. Enriching metadata (e.g. using the opportunities offered by Linked Data) and returning it to contributing libraries	9	30	4
6. e-prints on demand	6	30	8
7. Providing access to sub-sets of material within the overall collection – e.g. early printed materials; medical books	4	26	12
8. Preparing and processing libraries' metadata on request for delivery to other organisations, e.g. publishers or thematic aggregation services	5	19	15
9. Providing tools and space for researchers to curate virtual exhibitions (university libraries more 'important' and national libraries more 'neutral')	4	19	15
10. Providing results that include links to premium content that users may be charged for	1	15	23

In an open discussion at the Workshop, the following services were also suggested as candidates for inclusion:

- Providing authors' contact information

- An alerting mechanism such as an RSS feed to keep users informed about new items in their field of interest.
- Links into premium content (if applicable) to go through the authentication system of the researcher's home institution to allow seamless access (if available)
- That the research portal be not limited to a search index for content; in addition it could create a community where researchers come for content, expertise, news on specific subjects (such as a calendar of congresses (per discipline), developments, latest publications per discipline, high rates articles etc).

Participants were asked who would benefit most from the services listed - research libraries, users or aggregators. The general feeling of the meeting was that all the services were of demonstrable value to users, as well as to libraries. For example, in providing access to universities' own digital repositories, 55% thought users would benefit, 33% that research libraries would benefit; for enabling searching of both bibliographic records and digital object metadata, 53% thought it would benefit users, 37% the research library. These are typical of the votes cast for each service.

Findings from the workshop were shared with the Portal design team and carried forward in the business modelling process.

6. Customer Segments

Work was also carried out within the project to define the customer segments. The following definitions were agreed:

- *Researchers* (end-users). They are attracted to the site by its useful features. Attracting researchers is the primary value for other stakeholders, including libraries, library networks and funders and sponsors. The perception of librarians, based on the research undertaken for the brand strategy report in Work Package 6 is that their users want:
 - Fast and easy access to trusted library content via a single portal, plus links to results from other services
 - An interactive and collaborative space to support interdisciplinary research and discussion
 - The ability to download data for data mining
 - Tools and services designed to support researchers in their work, such as advanced searching, citation export, content alerts etc
- *Libraries*. They find value in having their content aggregated in EL and beyond, as well as in services which are cost effective. Member libraries benefit from having their collections and services showcased via a high-profile and prestigious portal. It will allow libraries to market their collections more efficiently and obtain better usage amongst researchers. We note that libraries will have other options available for aggregation, which makes the value proposition crucial.
- *Policymakers*. They can be the agencies or superior bodies that fund the member libraries and may need to be convinced of the business case, or direct funding agencies such as the EU itself or national bodies who may be approached for project funding for innovation.
- *Sponsors*. These can be commercial or non-commercial organisations that find strategic value in being associated with a high profile service that reaches researchers on a wide scale.

7. Value

Two half-day sessions during the November 2011 plenary in Belgrade focused on determining value propositions, defined as “a description of the customer problem, the solution that addresses the problem, and the value of this solution from the customer's perspective.”

During the sessions, attendees were split into groups to combine ideas and report back with a few key value statements. At the end of each session, participants voted on the ideas that they felt were most important and deserved top priority.

It was suggested that value propositions should focus on 8 key areas:

1. Newness
2. Performance
3. Customisation
4. Getting the job done
5. Design and
6. Reducing costs or risk
7. Accessibility and convenience
8. Brand or status

The following statements were given top priority in each of the 8 areas by the workshop participants

1. Newness
 - Give access to wider range of high quality content from a wider range of institutions than ever before, from a single point of access
 - Document supply: ensure that users can order copies of publications online, in addition to being able to locate them through the database
2. Performance
 - Enable knowledge transfer and shared expertise between libraries and colleagues, which will in turn mean less ‘reinventing the wheel’
 - Increase technical performance (less downtime)
 - Give equality of access (on or off-site, at anytime)
 - Provide citability; a way to reliably and consistently source objects (see also: Section 7)
 - Provide the opportunity and space for collaboration among researchers, working on the same materials (see also: Section 4)
3. Customisation
 - Provide the ability to search and find information in the user's normal workflow (e.g. through APIs, embeddable search boxes, etc)
 - Foster a sense of community among professionals
4. Getting the job done
 - Bring researchers closer to the actual object, through inter-library loans and various ‘on demand’ services such as digitisation or ordering of eBooks (see also: Section 1).
 - Simplify the aggregation process
 - Allow for collaboration

5. Design and usability
 - Create the simplest design possible. Don't make researchers think too much about how they have to use the service. Make it intuitive.
6. Reducing costs and risk
 - Allow for some services to be outsourced to The European Library
 - Reduce costs by providing centralised services
7. Accessibility and convenience
 - Make library data available in many research channels (see also: Section 2)
 - Provide a single point of access to all content, from all libraries. This was often referred to during the sessions as 'searching without borders' (see also: Section 1)
 - Give the possibility to reuse data (see also: citability under Section 3)
 - Connect to international lending to deliver quicker to clients
 - Ensure that The European Library becomes a 'grid' that connects to other services and is a 'one-stop-shop' for researchers
 - Research tools that allow linguistic experts to work together in annotation projects
8. Brand or status
 - Promote collections together with other project partners
 - Receive wider exposure by having content linked to Europeana
 - Work together on joint advocacy and lobbying

The findings from the workshop were fed into a final set of high-level value propositions for Europeana Libraries, which were agreed as follows:

- The new European Library provides for researchers in their own workflow or workspace a single cross-border point of access to a massive integrated source of research materials, a powerful means of discovery, re-use of data and shared expertise and a range of services which they cannot find elsewhere
- The new European Library provides for libraries widened access to their resources, additional cost-effective services, benefits to their user communities and joint promotion of their resources.
- The new European Library is a large network of libraries, which allows them to share knowledge, best practice and opportunities for out-sourcing or economy of scale. All benefit from working together to further research and instigate exciting innovations.
- The new European Library provides funders of libraries with a cost-effective aggregation service at European level.
- The new European Library provides libraries and thereby their funders with research and development opportunities
- The new European Library provides funders with opportunities for sponsorship in support of their brands

8. Financial Modelling

The European Library, as a service of CENL, benefits from a simple and stable funding model, namely, a partnership scheme whereby the members pay for the service and the organisation that runs it. The favoured funding model which emerged from the planning process, endorsed in

subsequent consultations, was the retention of a model whereby a fee is paid for basic services, with development and innovation financed by project funding. With a strong and convincing value proposition for national libraries to continue to support this service and for research libraries to join, and a compelling set of products and services to satisfy the needs of national and research libraries and their researchers, such a model would be likely to succeed.

This thinking underpinned the business model that was developed as a step towards a detailed business plan. For the business model, a series of simulations was carried out, illustrating various partnership income scenarios designed to support the recovery of operating costs estimated, for these purposes, as €720,000 pa. Expansion simulations were prepared to model the impact of an increase in participation from 47 national library members to 100, 200 and 400 members respectively. Considerations included the average cost per partner; the number of fee bands; the fee bands in which expansion was most likely to occur; the need to reduce the top band for national libraries; and the feasibility and size of a maximum fee (with a working estimate of €5,000 pa) for research libraries. The applicability of the national library fee model to research libraries, and the case for incorporating student numbers, researcher numbers, volume of research outputs and other common university metrics in a revised model, were examined. A sponsorship element was incorporated following discussion at the mid-term project review; the possibility of structural funds in support of service sustainability was also later admitted into the final plan.

The business model was validated and refined through a round of interviews with representatives of research and national libraries. 21 interviews were conducted in total. In the main, the findings were broadly positive, suggesting that it would not be unrealistic to model on the basis of take-up by over 100 research libraries in year 1. However, the interviews signalled a need to retain a broad spread of fee bands, particularly to accommodate partners from Eastern Europe.

The final income scenarios may be found in detail in D2.3: Business Plan.

The interviews also provided some helpful pointers that were fed into the wider business planning exercise, namely:

- The importance of marketing the service to researchers, because end-user opinion is very influential in library purchasing decisions.
- The acceptability of consortial subscription arrangements.
- Ongoing confusion over the relationship between The European Library and Europeana.
- A need to emphasise the value of the TEL offer as a complement to services provided by existing national aggregation services.

9. Business Plan

The draft post-project Business Plan was previously delivered as Deliverable 2.3: Strategy and Business Plan for The European Library, 2013-2015. The text of the Plan and supporting income scenarios may be found in D2.3. Detailed attention is given therein to strategy, products and services, operations, marketing, finance, governance, performance measurement, budget and risk.

The Plan is founded on the principle of national and research libraries working together, a new endeavour that is enshrined in revised governance arrangements for the service – outlined in full in

D2.1: Revised Governance Arrangements for The European Library – which take effect from January 2013 and which bring representation from LIBER and CERL, as the major European research library networks, on to the TEL Management Committee. As Europeana’s aggregator for libraries, The European Library remains a vital part of the Europeana ecosystem, but the Plan also looks forward to deeper strategic partnerships with research infrastructures such as DARIAH and CLARIN.

Income to support the service comes from library memberships, project bids, and, to a limited extent, sponsorship. A range of services to libraries is described, on the themes of widening access to collections, data aggregation, enrichment and distribution, and networking and knowledge-sharing. For users, The European Library will launch Europeana Research, a new end-user platform for academic communities within the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences.

In terms of innovation, two projects outlined in the Plan that involve TEL are already in hand: Europeana Cloud, which will move Europeana’s infrastructure to the cloud, enabling easier sharing of metadata and content, and which will oversee the creation of Europeana Research; and Europeana Creative, which will support the re-use of content from Europeana to launch innovative new products into the marketplace. The European Library will position national and research libraries to work alongside Europeana to play a pivotal role in Horizon 2020, the Connecting Europe Facility, and other elements of the European Research agenda.

It is felt that the draft Business Plan, compiled through the process documented here, and validated with community input at every stage of its development under Europeana Libraries, provides a solid basis for the sustainability of The European Library in the three years from January 2013: not only extending and strengthening TEL, but also representing a positive step towards a truly pan-European Research Infrastructure.

10. Next Steps

The draft Strategy and Business Plan will be presented to the first 2013 meeting of the TEL Management Committee, whose governance arrangements have been changed, as previously outlined in D2.1, to include representatives of LIBER (The Association of European Research Libraries) and CERL (The Consortium of European Research Libraries) alongside colleagues from CENL (The Conference of European National Librarians).

Appendix A

Stakeholder interview questions, March-May 2011

	General questions (all groups)	Specific questions to certain groups only	
		Group	
		(sub-group)	
(1) Library Domain aggregation	Q101: Do you perceive a need for an international library domain aggregator? Why (not)?	Funders (all)	
	Q102: What are your expectations from such an aggregator?	(Ministry)	Q103: Would you say your ministry supports cross-domain over library-domain aggregation, and what are the reasons for this?
		(EC)	Q104: Do you think it a realistic vision that Europeana might one day receive data only from four single-domain aggregators? Is that a welcome vision?
		Europeana	Q105: In terms of dataflow between cross-domain aggregators, TEL and Europeana, what is your ideal situation? What do you think will happen in reality?
			Q106: Can you tell us about any content ingestion policy that you might have? How do you intend to deal with theses, images and full text?
		TEL	Q105: In terms of dataflow between cross-domain aggregators, TEL and Europeana, what is your ideal situation? What do you think will happen in reality?
		Associations (all)	(NOT CCPA) Q107: Would you expect your organisation and members to be interested in participating in an international library domain aggregation service?

		(CCPA)	Q108: Can you envisage the international library domain aggregator gaining significant buy-in in Europe?
		Aggregators (all)	
		(National library domain)	Q109: What are the reasons for libraries to contribute their data to your service, as opposed to a cross-domain aggregator?
		(Cross-domain)	Q110: What are reasons for libraries to contribute their data to your service, as opposed to a national library domain aggregator, if available?
			Q105: In terms of dataflow between cross-domain aggregators, TEL and Europeana, what is your ideal situation? What do you think will happen in reality?
		(Thematic)	
		(Project)	
		Content providers (libraries) (all)	(NOT CCPA) Q107: Would you expect your organisation and members to be interested in participating in an international library domain aggregation service?
		(National library)	
		(Research library)	
		(non-aggregating library)	
		(Project)	
(2) Added Value	Q201: What benefits do you perceive (for your institution) of an international single-domain (e.g. library) aggregation service?	Funders (all)	

	Q202: Do you think these same benefits would also be available from a cross-domain aggregation structure, or are they exclusive to the single-domain model?	(Ministry)	
		(EC)	
		Europeana	Q203: In what ways could a library domain aggregator be of value to your operation?
		TEL	Q204: What added value would you like to offer your new (research library) data providers?
		Associations (all)	Q205: Are there services currently performed in-house in your member libraries which they could outsource to a library-domain aggregation service?
		(CENL)	
		(LIBER)	
		(CERL)	Q206: Are there services currently performed in your organisation which could be outsourced to a library-domain aggregation service?
		(OCLC)	
		(CCPA)	
		Aggregators (all)	Q207: How do you think you would benefit from providing your aggregated data to an international service such as TEL?
			Q208: Are there special technical or functional considerations for international aggregation, over the national level?
		(National library domain)	Q209: How do you provide 'added value' to your ingested content?
		(Cross-domain)	
		(Thematic)	
		(Project)	

		Content providers (libraries) (all)	Q210: Are there services currently performed in-house in your library which could be outsourced to a library-domain aggregation service?
			Q211: What value would you like a library domain aggregator to add to your content?
			Q212: Would you expect an aggregator to enrich your metadata? If so, what enrichments would you expect, and would you expect it to be returned to you?
			Q213: Are there specific benefits that you think you would receive by providing your data for aggregation to an international service such as TEL?
			Q214: What would be your criteria for selecting an aggregation service to participate in?
		(National library)	
		(Research library)	
		(non-aggregating library)	
		(Project)	
(3) Finance	Q301: Which elements of an aggregation service is it reasonable to charge for?	Funders (all)	
	Q302: Would a subscription model be an appropriate funding structure?	(Ministry)	
	Q303: Is it realistic to think that in a subscription model, richer partners would subsidise poorer partners in the interest of	(EC)	Q309: From your experience, can you give examples of any aggregation projects that have become a sustainable service?

	maintaining quality of content?		
	Q304: If a subscription model were developed for the Europeana Libraries aggregator how should the level of fees be determined? For example, per metadata record, licence fee, based on country's wealth	Europeana	
	Q305: Under what circumstances do you think the EC would fund a library-domain aggregator?	TEL	Q310: Do you think your current subscription model is scalable (and if so how) to include research libraries?
	Q306: Can you envisage a data access fee model being a viable method of funding for a European library-domain aggregator?	Associations (all)	Q311: Would your organisation and members financially contribute to a European library-domain aggregator?
	Q307: Do you think a private-public partnership could function as a business model for this aggregation service? If yes, how?	(CENL)	
	Q308: What in your opinion is the desired funding model for the international library-domain aggregator?	(LIBER)	Q312: Do you foresee financing of a Europeana Libraries aggregator service via your subscriptions?
		(CERL)	Q312: Do you foresee financing of a Europeana Libraries aggregator service via your subscriptions?
		(OCLC)	
		(CCPA)	
		Aggregators (all)	Q313: How do you aim to safeguard your sustainability? Would an enlarged TEL affect your planning in this respect?

		(National library domain)	
		(Cross-domain)	
		(Thematic)	
		(Project)	
		Content providers (all)	
		(National library)	Q314: Do you think there are savings to be made in your own budgets by collaborating in a European library aggregation service?
		(Research library)	Q314: Do you think there are savings to be made in your own budgets by collaborating in a European library aggregation service?
		(non-aggregating library)	Q314: Do you think there are savings to be made in your own budgets by collaborating in a European library aggregation service?
		(Project)	
(4) Management	Q401: Who do you think should run a library-domain aggregation service? If not TEL, then who?	Funders (all)	
	Q402: How do you think the various responsibilities for governing and managing such a service should be allocated?	(Ministry)	
		(EC)	Q403: What is your view on the future relationship between TEL and Europeana?
		Europeana	Q403: What is your view on the future relationship between TEL and Europeana?
			Q404: What is your view on the future relationship between TEL and CERL, LIBER and CENL?

		TEL	Q403: What is your view on the future relationship between TEL and Europeana?
			Q404: What is your view on the future relationship between TEL and CERL, LIBER and CENL?
		Associations (all)	Q404: What is your view on the future relationship between TEL and CERL, LIBER and CENL?
			Q405: Would your organisational structure be a model for the management of a service like TEL/an international aggregator?
		Aggregators (all)	Q406: Can you briefly describe the governance mechanisms of your service?
			Q407: What would you expect regarding representation and governance of TEL/international library aggregator?
		(National library domain)	
		(Cross-domain)	
		(Thematic)	
		(Project)	
		Content providers (libraries) (all)	Q407: What would you expect regarding representation and governance of TEL/international library aggregator?
		(National library)	
		(Research library)	
		(non-aggregating library)	
		(Project)	
	Q408: On balance of everything we've discussed, do you think that a library-domain aggregator is an achievable and worthwhile aspiration?		