

The reUSE Project

Collecting, preserving and making available the digital copies of printed publications is a major task.

The reUSE project is therefore focussing on institutions in the public sector which are acting as publishing bodies.

These institutions will be encouraged to deliver digital copies of their publications together with the printed copies to their national or deposit library.

The collected digital objects will be preserved for the long term in trusted digital repositories. Depending on agreements with publishers the digital copies will be made available to the public.

Four demonstrators in Austria, Germany and Estonia will be set up in order to illustrate the feasibility and the pitfalls of this approach.

Moreover these demonstrators will be evaluated and monitored by a group of critical observers. The findings will be published in an evaluation report.

Last but not least: Within the frame of the project a study will be carried out in order to find out the attitude and readiness of European libraries towards digital preservation.

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A European Community project
of the e-Content programme

eContent

reUSE
<http://reuse.uibk.ac.at/>

Books are Digital

Each year hundreds of thousands of books are published and distributed throughout Europe. All these printed copies are the result of a computer based production process using digital copies.

Nowadays digital copies represent the real value of the publishing process: PDFs, QuarkXPress® and other publishing files can be copied without loss, they may be integrated into databases and digital library systems, they may be full-text searched and delivered via networks, and they may be printed out again.



In short: Digital copies are – in contrast to the printed copy – a natural part of the digital environment and the future of the book will rely on them.

Therefore the simple formula is: book = printed + digital copy.

Vanishing Digital Copies

Though the digital copy of a book is the prerequisite that books are part of the digital value chain - there are only very few measures taken to safeguard the digital object.

Publishing is often a short-termed business which ends with the distribution of the printed copies. Especially for smaller and medium-sized publishers the investment into a professional IT infrastructure for long-term storage exceeds their financial possibilities.

Also libraries are traditionally focussing on the printed medium and they are in many cases not aware of the fact that the future of the book lies in the digital environment. Therefore only some pioneers have made efforts to build up systems for long-term preservation of digital objects.



The negative consequences are obvious: Computer systems, programs and formats are changing so fast that within a couple of years the digital copies will be outdated and no longer useable.

...we care about your digital objects!

The reUSE project is based on the assumption that in the same way as libraries have looked after printed publications for hundreds of years they should now take responsibility for the digital copies of books as well. Trusted digital repositories will be the preferred way to fulfil this task.



This approach offers a number of benefits.

Publishers will have access to their digital copies – now and in the future. They can rely on the competence of trustworthy memory institutions.

Users will get much better access to information since the digital copy will be integrated into the digital life cycle. Based on the agreements with the publishers it can be searched, retrieved, copied and reprinted 24 hours 7 days a week – independently of the location of the user.

Digital heritage will be safeguarded and will be available for future generations as well.