

**JOINT ERCIM ACTIONS**ERCIM News No.41 - April 2000 [[contents](#)]

ERCIM launches the DELOS Network of Excellence for Digital Libraries

by Carol Peters

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**23 participants attended the kick-off meeting of the new Network of Excellence for Digital Libraries, organised by ERCIM in Sophia Antipolis, 16-17 February 2000. The Network aims at continuing and extending the activities of the DELOS Working Group on Digital Libraries, and intends to promote European research in the digital library domain by providing a set of 'services' for the digital library community.**

The aim of the DELOS Network of Excellence for Digital Libraries (DLs) is to provide an open context in which an international research agenda for future research activities in the digital libraries domain can be developed and continuously updated. The Network will constitute a reference point for all DL projects funded by the 5th FP-IST, stimulating the exchange of experiences and know-how in this multidisciplinary domain, and will also establish close contacts with relevant application communities. It will make testbeds available, facilitate their interoperability, and provide mechanisms for the evaluation of models, techniques, and approaches, and the exchange of open-source software components. It will also contribute to the definition of relevant standards. Appropriate take-up models will be studied and tested to facilitate the exploitation of new DL technologies in the industrial/commercial environment. A dense network of links with the international DL research community will be created.

The activities of the Network will be organised under Forums and will be open to the European DL research world and the relevant application communities (electronic publishing, libraries, cultural heritage, archives, etc.).

**Digital Library Research Forum.** This activity will be aimed at stimulating the advancement of DL-related research and encouraging scientific collaboration between European teams working in this domain through the organisation of: (i) thematic workshops, (ii) the European Conferences on Digital Libraries (ECDL), (iii) an international research exchange programme.

**Digital Library Evaluation Forum.** DL evaluation implies defining new metrics for components and new combinations of components in order to measure performance aspects related to DL interoperability, metadata and resource discovery, multilingual access, etc. DELOS will promote the building and operation of publicly available reusable evaluation infrastructures: (i) a digital library test suite and (ii) a cross-language system evaluation infrastructure.

**Standardization Forum.** Working Groups will be set up to (i) examine specific clusters of relevant standards; (ii) effect the transfer of research results into implementation; (iii) disseminate the results through workshop proceedings, reports, Web-based observatories, etc.

**Training and Technology Transfer Forum.** This forum is aimed at providing training possibilities and demonstrating the effectiveness and benefits of DL technologies within European industrial environments. Summer schools will be organised on key issues in the DL domain.

**International Cooperation Forum.** Collaborations will be established with those countries for which a scientific cooperation agreement is defined under the 5FP. In particular with the US (through NSF), Russia (through the Russian Foundation for Basic Research), Mediterranean countries, and Japan.

The Network of Excellence has 28 member organisations: the academic community is represented by leading European research teams working on key topics in the digital library area from eight ERCIM institutions (CNR-IEI, CWI, ETHZ, FORTH, GMD, INRIA, SICS, MTA SZTAKI) and from nine other leading European academic organizations (Universities of Athens, Dortmund, and Mannheim, Norwegian University of Science and Technology, Technical University of Crete, Bavarian Research Centre for Knowledge-Based Systems, Milan Polytechnic, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Social Sciences Information Centre - Bonn. The application community is strongly represented by members from libraries, (National Library of Portugal, Italian National Institute for Union Catalog), electronic publishing (Springer and Elsevier), education (Arts and Humanities Data Service - UK), archives (Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage), and broadcasting (BBC – UK). There are also two IT industrial members: Eurospider Information Technology, Switzerland, and Intracom, Greece). As one of the guiding principles of the Network will be that of “openness”, delegates from other research groups or interested communities will be invited to participate in activities of the Network as appropriate.



**Participants in the kick-off meeting.**

An international advisory board has been set up to approve and evaluate the programme of activities planned by Network. Members of the Board are: Stephen M. Griffin, Chris Rusbridge, Makoto Nagao, Yuri Hohloy, Rudi Schmiede, representing US, UK, Japanese, Russian, and German national DL programmes, respectively. The Board will meet annually but will be kept in continual contact with the work of the Network through regular reports from the scientific coordinator: Costantino Thanos, IEI-CNR, Pisa.

**Links:**

**DELOS website:** <http://www.iei.pi.cnr.it/DELOS/>

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