

LIBER Workshop “Microfilming and Digitisation for Preservation”

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FOREWORD

The Workshop on “Microfilming and Digitisation for Preservation” which is presented here through papers brought forward held at The Hague on 14-15 April 2003 in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek, the National Library of the Netherlands, was the outcome of a long process which started nearly three years ago. Cooperation is a good thing - the right thing, *hélas!* - in all circumstances of life. For libraries, the European Union has been an elected stage to perform all sorts of alliances. We all have memories of successful partnerships; we all have tried to learn from each others ‘projects’ which swept over Europe. This Workshop was the result of our previous cooperative experience, but also of our conviction about library needs. The LIBER Preservation Division together with the Koninklijke Bibliotheek and European Commission on Preservation and Access (ECPA) elaborated a programme based on different inputs and viewpoints which after long discussions via e-mail finally built up a structure. To identify the appropriate speaker, and to guarantee his/her presence was another organizational level not less arduous, though. Sharing the same commitment was decisive to the success of the Workshop.

Technology imposes itself sometimes in very peculiar ways. To raise questions about its appropriateness does not mean to be necessarily against. The scenario being laid to frame surrogate strategies was becoming so unbearable that we thought the time was mature to discuss existing arguments that were more or less contradictory with a large audience. It has never been librarians’ intentions to turn their back to technology developments, but their risk assessment did not seem to be taken very seriously. There was then an urgency to clear up the somewhat cloudy atmosphere between microfilm followers and digitisation fans.

This Workshop also proved that there is room to combine theory and practice when questions raised by speakers can be deepened later at the working tables. One just needs to identify convenient premises for meetings to take place. That was exactly what happened, and we feel very fortunate for having had the Koninklijke Bibliotheek hosting the Workshop.

Private companies are library partners. Whatever their views, companies have a say in the overall development of libraries. It is in their own interest to listen to potential

clients, but it is also up to potential clients to raise questions at the right moment. Both partners push in the same direction, so it is in no way wrong to meet and discuss matters of common concern. Private companies not only have had the opportunity to introduce their products and also to display them in the showroom.

It was very rewarding when participants were already talking about a follow-up possibly in two years' time. I am sure this hint will not be forgotten.

WEB SITES REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

The European Commission on Preservation and Access (ECPA).
<http://www.knaw.nl/ecpa/>

Koninklijke Bibliotheek. <http://www.kb.nl/>

LIBER Preservation Division. <http://www.kb.dk/guests/intl/liber/division/preserv/>

Microfilming and Digitisation for Preservation. <http://www.kb.nl/coop/liber/>