



**Preservation and access for the originals, microfilms, digitized volumes and web news: how the Berlin State Library manages the balancing act between old and new media**

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**Abstract:**

*In the modern electronic world of Internet and Google newspaper libraries have to cope with various challenges in particular with the growing demand of users for digital services and products around contemporary as well as historical newspapers. This paper gives an overview how the Newspaper Department of the Berlin State Library, which holds the largest and most comprehensive collection of historical and current newspapers from all over the world in Germany, manages the balancing act between conventional and new media effectively and cost efficiently for both: the library and their users.*

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Introduction

Founded in 1661 by *Friedrich Wilhelm von Brandenburg* (“Der große Kurfürst”) as *Königliche Bibliothek* the *Berlin State Library* will celebrate its 350 anniversary in 2011. Thanks to the open-minded successive Prussian Kings and their passion in collecting foreign literature and press publications, the newspaper collection of the library is today the largest and most comprehensive of its kind in Germany. It includes more than 180.000 printed volumes, nearly 70.000 microfilm reels and about 400 continued subscriptions of current newspapers, 60 of them in German.

This *animal zoo* of different materials and different formats – such as printed volumes (binded and unbound), microfilms and microfiche, digitized issues with or without OCR, online web versions, e-papers and texts from databases in HTML, RTF, ASCII, JPEG or PDF format – need a particular strategy for access, presentation and download for on-site and off-site users as well as for long-term preservation and conservation.

## Services

Needless to say, that the library offers in addition many newspapers in various electronic formats: digitized historical newspapers, as well as current e-papers, online-versions (some with original layout), CD-ROMs and online archives and databases e.g. from Cengage Gale, ProQuest and Readex without any additional costs for registered users.

Moreover, the library has begun to develop a co-operative newspaper information system for libraries, archives and museums in Germany called ZEFYS. ZEFYS is planned to become the “*Virtual Newspaper Library for Germany*” with central access to union catalogues and shared resources for newspapers (including digital content and free Internet resources). Among others, the following digital content will be included:



- Amtspresse Preussen: *Provinzial-Correspondenz* (1863-1884), *Neueste Mittheilungen* (1882-1894) and *Teltower Kreisblatt* (1856-1882)
- Newspapers from the former GDR (1945-1990): *Neues Deutschland*, *Berliner Zeitung*, *Neue Zeit*
- *Vossische Zeitung Online* (1918-1934) public-private-partnership with *de Gruyter* publisher
- Digitization on demand (Digitization from microfilm without OCR on user's request)

Moreover, ZEFYS will provide a communication platform for preservation and conservation issues and will foster the further development of metadata standards for digitized newspapers issues like METS/ALTO and the so-called DFG-Viewer for presentation and download.

Preservation and conservation: stabilization of brittle, fragile, rotten or fragmented paper

Paper-splitting either manually or using mechanized paper-splitting technology



Example: *Spenerische Zeitung* 1872/1873, costs: 10,- EUR / page

Stabilization of badly damaged paper through lamination with synthetic film for conservation purpose and as necessary preparation for efficient mass digitization with automatic sheet feeder scanners



Example: *Berliner Tageblatt* 1921, costs: less than 1,- EUR / page

## Conclusion

- During the last 10 years a dramatic technological change from print to electronic media has turned the traditional business models of the news press industry upside down. New strategies and advertise models have to be developed and put into action by publishers if they don't want to go bust.
- However, newspaper libraries are not uninvolved observers, but customers and therefore involved participants in this changing world of press market.
- But newspaper libraries have to pursue other objectives than publishers: not selling the run and earning money, but rather to offer attractive information products for their clients, mainly scientists and researchers and not producing throwaways for the day, but rather to ensure long-term preservation and enduring accessibility to all kind of materials in particular for backfiles.

- In conclusion: Newspaper libraries are affected in many ways by the technological shift, new strategies and business models of the press publishing industry. A new kind of partnership between newspaper libraries as customers and the press publishing industry as producers is needed. And if libraries and their users won't be the losers in the end, it is now high time to take the initiative!

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