A LIBRARY WITH A VIEW
Investigation into the Digital Library of UGent
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Digital printing on Magno Satin 115 g.

Ghent University Library,
February 2012
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A LIBRARY WITH A VIEW Investigation into the Digital Library of UGent 3
Introduction

When you want to evaluate how good – or how bad – your professional performance is, you cannot do anything else than compare yourself to others who are active in the same field. This wisdom has been a guideline for the management of Ghent University Library for quite some time.

Since the necessity of a thorough reorganisation of the library world at UGent became an urgent matter (around the beginning of the 21st century), the library team has been inviting international experts from other European and Flemish libraries to investigate the performance of the library. The main goal has always been – as it is again for the present investigation – to come up with a trustworthy study or plan to support the strategic decisions on the library’s structure and services.

A long but straightforward road

The first result of this reorganizational thinking – and still the driving force today – was the Lars Bjørnshauge Report The Network (2003-2004).

In 2004 the Bjørnshauge plan was accepted by the board of directors of UGent and the ‘Central Library’ got its new name and updated identity: the Ghent University Library was to be an epicentre of scholarly communication and cultural heritage institution. Its main mission is to offer services and support to scientific research and education at the Ghent University. This overall mission can be defined in four clearly distinct but inextricably interrelated constituents:

- to be the repository library of the university;
- to run and develop the digital library;
- to co-ordinate the network of libraries all over the university; and
- to be an inspiring and hospitable working environment for students and researchers.

The high-quality services the library wants to provide to its users are both on a physical level (loan, ILL, reading room facilities etc) and in terms of digital services.

Over the years, different studies have been carried out and working plans have been conceived to translate the library reorganization plan into concrete actions.

- As soon as October 2004, the UGent Board of Directed was presented with ‘De weg naar het Netwerk’, an internal report in which specific plans were made for the merge and/or reorganization of the physical library space in each faculty. All faculties were invited to develop their vision for the future and submit a development plan for their faculty library.
- In 2009 conservator and restorer Lieve Watteeuw co-ordinated a condition survey on the heritage collection in the Book Tower. Her report ‘Stof tot nadenken’ comprised important advice on how the collection should be prepared for its nearing migration to other locations.
- Also in 2009 ‘IBL in tijden van just in time’ was published, a survey by Julien Van Borm, honorary head librarian of the UA (University of Antwerp) on the efficiency of the interlibrary traffic between the University Library and the libraries of the UGent network on the one hand and external libraries on the other.
- 2010 saw the publication of ‘Leven in de Boekentoren’, a pragmatic evaluation of the working processes at the University Library. Investigator and author of the report was Hub Laeven, head librarian of the University of Nijmegen and independent library consultant.
All three studies of 2009 and 2010 focused on the University Library in its functions of repository library and service provider for end users (students and researchers). It seemed appropriate that the next study would focus on the Digital Library, which plays a crucial role in the performance of both these functions. The investigation that lay at the basis of this report was carried out in April 2011 by two internationally renowned library experts: Herbert Van de Sompel and Kristiina Hormia-Poutanen. We will introduce them on p. 13, where we also lay out the working scheme of the present study.
On The Digital Library

In the Bjørnshauge plan, the digital library was identified as an organizational unit within the common library services and located in the central library of the university. The main tasks of the Digital Library Unit were defined as follows:

- to set up and maintain the technical infrastructure for the provision of digital library services;
- to provide the administrative infrastructure for the management of electronic resources;
- to provide training for library staff in using digital library services;
- to assist library staff in the network in providing end user training in the use of digital library services;
- to operate the UGent Electronic Publishing Services (the Academic Bibliography included).

The organizational chart at the time looked like this:

![Organizational Chart]

Even this ‘early’ organisation chart already shows the difficulty of making a clear cut division between the University Library’s function as a repository library and its role as a digital library. A beautiful example of this is presented by the heritage collection. The rich heritage collections of UGent’s University Library were hidden for many decades. It was only in recent years that they gradually became more visible. This was due to consecutive digitization projects, the final and most important one of which is no doubt the “Google Books Deal” (2007). In other words, it was not until the repository library started to make use of digital technology that it could finally completely fulfil its repository role again.

Another demonstration of the fading boundaries between the library’s two roles was that thematic projects of different kinds were carried out by ‘mixed’ and changing teams of UB Gent in the years that followed the Bjørnshauge plan, thus providing activities that served both roles (repository and digital) of the library at the same time.

This directly touches the core of what this present report is about: the dichotomy between the repository library and digital library has become artificial. The digital library is everywhere: today, without it, a library can no longer function. Even the physical handling of all kinds of paper publications in a repository library implicates knowledge of software and data management programmes.
Tasks and responsibilities of the Digital Library

It is one thing to state the obvious that the distinction between the repository and digital library functions have become obsolete and thus inapt, to clarify what tasks should be performed by what department. It is another to recognize that the Bjørnshauge definition of a digital library no longer covers the whole package of tasks the digital team has to master. Furthermore, it doesn’t bring the ongoing evolution and innovation in the technological field into account.

Today the organizational chart looks like this (see below). The ‘digital team’ is situated in the left column of the chart, but their tasks and responsibilities affect and interact with all other functions of the University Library.

The digital library is responsible, with the help of computing power or not, for the implementation of all main tasks any scientific library would have to perform according to well known library standards:

- describing and making all collections and items available in the library network;
- providing democratic access to scholarly information to all UGent stakeholders;
- provide UGent stakeholders with useful and accurate information resources;
- saving time for UGent stakeholders by simplifying the search of and access to these resources;
- keeping the library up-to-date with the latest trends and methodologies.
The chart shows different domains of responsibility. Each domain represents different tasks and these will be described below. The public for whom we perform these tasks are the stakeholders of the University Library: UGent students, UGent researchers, UGent network librarians, University Library Staff, UGent’s central administration, project partners, external users and suppliers.

**ICT Hardware**

Until 2011 the University Library’s servers and parts of the storage were physically situated and maintained in the University Library (Boekentoren) and managed by the Digital Library. At the end of 2011 the hardware infrastructure has been moved to the new UGent Data Centre. The main management of the servers will still be performed by Library staff members. Hardware tasks comprise the installation of servers, desktop PCs and printers; the maintenance and support of mobile services; a systems and desktop helpdesk that functions both physically and electronically...

**ICT Software**

The Digital Library keeps an eye on all technological evolutions, follows up on new developments and discusses them. If some new application or tool is found useful, the Digital Library implements it or develops it. If necessary, the digital team develops own software solutions as extensions of the existing library systems.

**Library systems**

The digital team supports all library workflows – cataloguing, loan, ILL and acquisition – by giving advice and by maintaining the following library software systems:

- **Aleph**: integrated library system, with a web interface for the electronic catalogue;
- **MeerCat**: a search interface through the catalogues of the library (Aleph & CatFich, the digitized card catalogue) and open access catalogues like Hathi;
- **Biblio**: academic bibliography and institutional repository;
- **ELIN/Libhub**: discovery tool for e-articles UGent has subscribed to;
- **Verde**: Electronic resource management
- **SFX**, the open url link resort; and
- **GREP**, the UGent repository of digital assets based on Fedora Commons. Digital assets can be scanned images, movies, audio files, text files, databases & datasets;

**Electronic sources**

The Digital Library manages access to content, gives advice on available content and provides tools to evaluate, use & manage content. These digital collections involve external, licensed sources – for which the main task of the Digital Library is access management – and internal sources such as digitized heritage collections, digitally born scientific publications of UGent researchers, etc. The Digital Library also gives advice on the form of content (e.g. e-books).
Academic bibliography and institutional archive

The digital library is involved in the registration, dissemination and archiving of UGent scientific publications. The goal is to provide a 100% correct list of these publications and to facilitate open access publication by UGent researchers.

Digitization

The Digital Library is not involved in the process of scanning or describing digital objects, which is the task of the scanning office and the cataloguing department. However, the digital library gives advice on metadata formats to use, on file naming, batch operations and technical requirements.

One aspect of this advice concerns the choice of digitizing in-house or subcontracting a digitization project. The digital library passes on information to members of the library network on what external digitization provider is best suited for what kind of objects.

Once the scans have been made and metadata have been provided, digital objects are brought into the digital library to be managed, preserved and disseminated.

In this respect we need to mention our cooperation with Google Books, which includes the management of 300,000 digitized books so far.

Digital preservation

A specific task for the Digital Library and one that will increasingly gain importance in the future concerns the preservation of digital content: full-text articles, websites, e-books, etc.

In order to enable this what we call ‘digital preservation’, GREP has been set up as a medium-term preservation system. The digital library will not only take care of its own collection, it has also started to archive and preserve other libraries’ digital collections.

Another important evolution in this respect is that UGent Archive has become part of the University Library. The Digital Library will be involved in managing the archive description tool and UGent Archive will work together with the Digital Library in the field of digital preservation.

All in all, it is the Digital Library’s responsibility to develop a long-term preservation strategy, for its own collections as well as for those of other libraries within the network and outside.

Websites

The digital library takes care of the installation, configuration and maintenance of different websites. One of these is lib.ugent.be, the Library’s website that comprises information pages, a search box (MeerCat), news pages, etc.

The digital team updates and maintains the homepage.

In addition, a separate website is created for each project the University Library engages in, e.g. www.boekentoren.be, www.architectuurfocus.be, www.stadsfocus.be, www.film-plateau.be, and many others. The digital team is responsible for creating these sites, sometimes even for updating the content.

The integration of these websites with other communication channels, such as Facebook and Twitter, is another task of the digital team.

Last but not least the Digital Library looks after the creation of image data bases, by providing the framework and necessary software. It is the collection keeper’s responsibility to provide images and other content.
Innovation and development

All the domains mentioned above should involve an innovative attitude to keep the current systems in line with best practices and to respond fast to current and near future needs of our stakeholders. In current practice, this means keeping up with present technology, frequent engagement with external partners, but also experiments with new technologies such as social networks, mobile devices, linked data and cloud computing.

While innovation keeps the library on the front line of new technology, development turns these technologies into practice. This means searching for services platforms, implementing local workflows, augmenting the systems when the required functionality is missing and handing over the management of these services to, for instance, a library systems group.

One example of such a workflow is the implementation of mobile services. Small local experiments to research the feasibility of mobile services turned into prototype services. Researching the best deployment options for a production environment with help of external partners such as Boopsie followed this phase. The end result is a number of mobile services, which have been integrated into the workflow of the library systems group.

Another example is the Archipel project where research into long-term preservation resulted into local prototype services of data repositories and image databases. These services need to be turned into sustainable models by partnerships with commercial or institutional project partners such as Ex Libris, VIAA, or Lund and Bielefeld. The end result should be a system that can be integrated and maintained independently by a digital archiving group.

Information literacy

On top of this rather large pile of tasks, today and to a certain extent the digital library still has to provide information literacy training. This means teaching different stakeholders – library staff members, students and other end users – how to use the library systems, how to look for information, how to use discovery and citation software, what system to use for what kind of information, how to find the right databases, etc and to learn even – on a very basic level – how the library works.
II Outline Of The Investigation

As said before, Ghent University Library and the Digital Library have a mission: to provide scholarly communication for researchers and students. As they have to fulfil this mission in an always changing technological environment, it seemed high time to assess to which degree they were doing a good job. The questions were raised by the Digital Library itself: are we good at what we are doing? Are we visible enough? Do we make things clear enough? Are we up-to-date? What can we do better? To find answers to some of these questions, Ghent University Library invited two internationally renowned experts in the field of automated (and centralized) library services: Herbert Van de Sompel en Kristiina Hormia-Poutanen.

The investigators

Herbert Van de Sompel holds master degrees in Mathematics and Computer Science and has a PhD in Communication Science, all obtained at the University of Ghent. He knows this institution and its library very well: in 1981 he started his career as a member, later leader of the (new) team of Library Automation at UGent. He can truly be called the founding father of the Digital Library of UGent and played (amongst others) a major role in the development of SFX, a search system for the online availability of full-text articles, which is still heavily used today. He stayed in function at Ghent University Library till 2000, when his ambitions as a researcher sent him abroad. He did research and got his PhD on the topic of context sensitive and dynamic linking of scholarly information resources. Since 2002 Herbert has been the Team Leader of the Prototyping Team at the Research Library of the Los Alamos National Laboratory. His team researches various aspects of scholarly communication in the digital era. Based on his wide experience and thorough knowledge, Herbert Van de Sompel has made a name for himself internationally on items such as information infrastructure, interoperability, digital preservation, harvesting of metadata and many standardization efforts such as OAI-PMH OpenURL, info-uri, OAI-ORE, Open Annotation and Memento.

Kristiina Hormia-Poutanen is the deputy national librarian and the Director of Library Network Services at the National Library of Finland. Kristiina joined the national library in 1997 to work as a project manager for FinELib, the National Electronic library, a project launched by the Ministry of Education and Culture. FinELib aimed at supporting higher education and research in Finland by facilitating the digital use of sources. Its basic goals were:
- to increase the amount of electronic information available to users;
- to improve information retrieval from the Internet; and
- to develop a graphical user interface to give access to heterogeneous information resources available from different sources.
Since the year 2000 the Helsinki University Library, i.e. the National Library of Finland, took over the responsibility for these activities. Kristiina Hormia’s specific fields of expertise are strategic planning on a national level, change management, digital library strategies and infrastructure, digital library services and consortia structures and development.
As she explained to different interviewees, the Finnish government made a strategic choice by setting up one national digital library. This choice has resulted in a neatly defined and well functioning library structure such as the Bjørnshauge Plan has laid out for the UGent libraries.

As for the National Library of Finland:
- it finds itself at the centre of a network of which all Finnish libraries are part of;
- it is at the heart of a smooth collaboration between all library members aided by organized communication forums;
- it buys the electronic content for all Finnish universities;
- it develops the digital library services, and
- it develops the library standards.

The investigation

These two experts were asked to have a critical look at the work, the policy and the strategy of the Digital Library of UGent. Their investigation took the form of an intensive series of interviews with different stakeholders of UGent and Ghent University Library. Two days of interviews were followed by structuring all information into a presentation of Findings & Recommendations. This presentation constitutes the core of this report (see p. 23-30).

In order to streamline the interviews, the investigators used a guiding list of questions:

- What kind of services for researchers and students do you expect from Ghent University Library?
- What is Ghent University Library doing for the university and the faculties? In your opinion, what should Ghent University Library be doing for the university and the faculties?
- Could you give a ranking to the Ghent University Library in comparison with other university libraries?
- Communication – What kind of forums do you have in place?
- What is the role of Minerva (teaching platform for students) and how is the connection to the Digital Library?
- What is your opinion on e-books and the way they should be integrated in the library flow?
- What is your view on the preservation of research data?
- In your opinion, what is the digital library’s role in the teaching function of the University?

Day 1

After a welcoming word and the introduction of the investigative team, day one started with three interesting presentations.

Firstly, chief librarian Sylvia Van Peteghem gave a brief introduction on the current state of affairs in the Flemish world of higher education. She talked about the Bologna decree, about how Flemish universities had allied with polytechnic institutions as a result of that, and how that might effect the work of their associated libraries. She also mentioned the lack of cooperation between Belgian (or even Flemish) universities in creating one (digital) library catalogue, but saw a hopeful sign in the existence of other cooperative structures and initiatives meant to unite libraries, both on a Flemish and a European level1.

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1 By the time the present report was published, a Union Catalogue had been put in place.
Second speaker was Inge van Nieuwerburgh, co-ordinator and project manager of the Digital Library. She gave a summary of all projects Ghent University Library had realized in recent years. A brief summary of this presentation is to be found in Addendum IV of this report.

Last in the introduction round came Patrick Hochstenbach, ICT architect of the UB. He gave a comprehensive and thorough insight into the Digital Library as it is functioning today. His presentation can be found in Addendum II of this report. Many items Patrick touched as being susceptible to improvement, later also came up in the interviews with other stakeholders.

The afternoon was spent by interviewing all collaborators of the Digital Library separately. Their names can be found on the List of Contributors in Addendum I.

In addition to the list of guiding questions we mentioned above, this group was presented with another one: “if you were in charge, what would be your first (three) priorit(y)(ies)?” If anything at all, the answers showed a great deal of positive motivation and clear thinking about their own functions. But most of all, it was interesting to see how many of the expressed opinions could be found in the researchers’ final list of ‘Findings & Recommendations’. This means the Digital Library collaborators already have a fair idea of what should be done to improve the services of their department.

**Day 2**

On the second day, the investigators interviewed a consecutive row of UGent stakeholders.

- **A group of faculty librarians**
  In this discussion the focus lay heavily on a pragmatic service level and especially on the shortcomings of the different catalogues used at UGent.
  The discussion was interesting because it revealed a huge gap in the perception of the functionality (effectiveness) of the different Ghent University Library cataloguing systems, a gap between UGent’s professional users (the faculty librarians) and the developers and maintainers of the system in the Digital Library.

- **A group of PhD students**, amongst whom a research lecturer at UGent for more than 17 years.
  Interesting in this group was their ability to compare between UGent as a university (and provider of library services) with the performance of other universities where they had worked or are working in the context of their research.

- **A delegation of policy makers**, i.e. the vice-chancellor, the director of DICT (the IT department of UGent) and the chief academic administrator.
  This interview created a good opportunity to talk about UGent’s strategy for the future and how the role of Ghent University Library is viewed in all of this. Much to the investigators’ surprise the interview with the vice-chancellor revealed that strategic thinking on a university management level did not necessarily involve the University Library. Whilst the brand-new UGent strategic plan did include the set up of a “distant learning campus” in South Korea, it seemed understood that this plan depended mostly on the high performance of the Data Centre and not so much on a smoothly run Digital Library.
  Input from the DICT director on the other hand made it clear that there is a big difference in priorities for a manager of a state of the art Data Centre and those of the guardians of large software data treasures in the Digital Library. Nevertheless IT people seem to agree that you need both technological capacities to evolve as a university.

- **An extended group of UGent professors** was joined by two more policy makers, i.e. the directors of research and education.
In this group, the focus lay on the evolution in the technological field and how researchers are affected by the performance of digital library services. Echoes of this meeting can be found scattered through the Findings and Recommendations.

✓ A small representation of students (small because the exam period was coming soon). The discussion in this group was nevertheless very interesting. The most important lesson to learn was that students, i.e. the main target group of end users, go for the system that serves them best. They are not occupied with the ins and outs: they just want it to fulfil their needs and get out of it what they want. If the system does not do that, they won’t use it.

Day 3

A rough outline of the present report was drawn up and gradually filled with more details. Herbert Van de Sompel and Kristiina Hormia presented their findings and recommendations to the Ghent University Library Digital Library Team.
III Feedback

Disclaimer

The investigators started their presentation with a ‘disclaimer’: this investigation is bound by the limits of what you can do in only two days time, by only two advisors. Time was too short to present every intended question to each group of interviewees. Moreover, each discussion developed its own dynamics and as a result, in a different output per group altogether. Time was sometimes too limited for the interviewees, especially as the questions were not always easy to answer. The groups were sometimes large and some individuals were rather more dominant than others in the discussion. So certainly not everybody’s voice was evenly heard. Nevertheless, the investigators had no difficulty to reach an agreement over their recommendations: what they heard was a rather large unanimity about the problems, bottlenecks, user needs, priorities etc of the Digital Library.

That is why this report should be read as a cloud of converging opinions. Even though each group had a different way of putting out information, in the end, it appeared not to be difficult at all to come to certain conclusions and formulate them as a recommendation.

But, then again, the investigators wanted to stress that as a team, the Digital Library remains the expert regarding the problems they are facing. This feedback is not an axiom, it is open for interpretation and it serves as a basis for future analysis and actions.

Structural Roadblocks

225 Libraries

Everybody is aware of the fact that the structure of the UGent Library system with its multitude of small libraries remains a bottleneck in an effort to organize it efficiently. Although a long way has been covered – the opening of the Rozier Library of Arts & Humanities in 2011 being one of the highlights – it is clear that the efforts of merging smaller libraries into one faculty library should continue.

The University Library is not a part of the University strategy

To investigator Kristiina Hormia – director of the one National Library of Finland – it seemed incredible that a university could be working on its first strategic plan – as UGent is doing – without involving its own University Library in the process.
Lack of collaboration on a national level

The notion of competition between the universities of one country (or region) seemed to be difficult to understand for our Finnish colleague. If it is not possible to overcome this structural non-cooperation between Flemish/Belgian university libraries over the development of a unified Digital Library, then cooperation should be sought with other (international) institutions.

Library renovation/moving

The fact that the University Library is housed in a building that is up for a thorough renovation, which involves (amongst others) the move of the entire collection to (an)other location(s), is bound to have an effect on reorganizational ambitions.
Even if the move and the renovation will result in the implementation of better preservation conditions and more efficient working processes, in the meantime it brings along a huge amount of extra work and disturbances in the daily workload.

Revisiting The Network

In the interview it became clear that the outlines of the Lars Bjørnshauge Plan were widely known and understood.
- Regarding the roles and responsibilities of the University Library versus the Faculty Libraries and on the positive side, we heard overall agreement on the co-ordinating role Ghent University Library plays (and should be playing), plus agreement on the necessity of centralizing the digital library services.
- Then again, there were quite a few and outspoken concerns about communication issues, about guidance from the Digital Library and its responsiveness to (critical) input.
- Regarding the dichotomy between the Repository Library and the Digital Library we noted that this dichotomy was widely perceived as being artificial. Everybody is highly aware of the fact that the digital now permeates everything – whatever you do as librarians, you are developing a Digital Library. This understanding should be the starting point of any (new) thinking about the structure of your organization and of any strategy you develop for the future.

Findings – What did we hear/see?

As the investigators have included all collaborators of the Digital Library in their interviews, it should be no surprise that many of the views expressed below come from within that team. As said they are the experts on the performance of their own department. However, it was very gratifying to see that the team shows a great capacity for constructive criticism combined with justified pride in their work.
Respect for the UB and its team

These positive vibes echoed through the interviews with other UGent stakeholders.

- The investigators heard great respect for Ghent University Library and for its ICT team.
- The ICT unit is seen as a department with a great track record, consisting of smart people who love their jobs and are proud of their work.
- Asked to compare the Ghent University Library to other similar institutions, the digital library services were perceived to function better than in some institutions, but worse than in others, although in the last case it was admitted that much depended on financing. You cannot perform on a same level as another institution if you have to do so with a tenth of their budget.

Specific Position of Ghent University Library and the Digital Library

Amongst the interviewees there was a general understanding of the challenges faced by the UB with regard to handling both the traditional collection (paper and digitized) and the licensed/OA e-collections.

- Nevertheless it was understood – in the interview with the policymakers even stated explicitly – that Ghent University Library should continue to fulfil its two main functions: that of an important cultural heritage repository library and that of a state of the art digital library. “We preserve and we make it available to the public and should do both with equal quality of service”. The fact that these two functions are often difficult to combine seemed to be considered a practical day-to-day problem the University Library should resolve by itself.

- At the same time there seemed to be a lack of understanding with policymakers and researchers regarding the scholarly data management challenges. Combined with the absence of Ghent University Library in the strategic vision of UGent, there seems to be a lack of awareness on a university level about the role the Digital Library should play in the future.

Appreciation of the Services

Different groups of interviewees named different services as important to them.

- The digitization of cultural heritage is deemed very important by different people. There is of course a difference in appreciation between humanities people and science people, but all in all, everyone agrees that this has to be done and that it is important for the university.

- However, different people expressed the need for a more transparent policy on digitization priorities. This may be clear for Ghent University Library collaborators but from an outsider’s standpoint, the digitization process sometimes seems random and ad hoc.

- A permanent updating of the Bibliography is considered very important, especially by policymakers and researchers.

A point of positive criticism here is the need to strive for consistent coverage.

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2 With the exception of the project Architectuurfocus, with clear digitization plans.

3 At this point in the presentation there was a discussion about what could be meant by ‘inconsistent coverage’. At some point an interviewee claimed that “not every publication is put into Biblio” which was denied by the responsible Ghent University Library collaborator. Upon this, the head librarian suggested that perhaps people were talking about publications by UGent professors and researchers who are not employed by UGent at the moment of publication. In the end, everyone around the table agreed that whatever may have been at the basis of the criticism, clarifying this issue was worthwhile.
On the whole, users (and especially faculty librarians) seemed satisfied with both the licensed and the Open Access collections. So, when it comes to the availability of e-journals, e-articles, databases etc, there was satisfaction with the general coverage of the collection.

Nevertheless there was a considerable amount of confusion about:
- what to find where (in what system);
- what exactly is available and how to know that it is available;
- what is acquired and why.

This confusion seemed to reign both at an end user level – translated into the simple question “if I need this piece of information, where should I get it?” – and as a logistics matter.

This last point was especially stressed by the faculty librarians group, where it was said that they could not detect “where the information comes from”, meaning “who is paying for it?” Apparently there are availability changes in the digital collection year by year – also due to changes in the collection of e-publishers – with no clear view on what had changed and why. This does not facilitate the faculty library’s decision on what they should buy on their own budget this year as compared to the last year.

An important observation on the part of the investigators – that also occurs in the presentation on the Digital Library (Addendum II) – is the total lack today of surveys on user needs and satisfaction.

**Use of Systems**

One interesting point was that, except for librarians, no one knew Meercat by name. Most people who use the system to locate publications – faculty librarians, PhD students, students and professors – talked about using “the catalogue.”

However, there was a serious amount of frustration about the functionality of the system, e.g.
- stemming, i.e. the possibility of fuzzy search,
- identity that is not maintained (you have to re-enter your name & e-mail address every single time),
- the ranking of results, a.o. the fact that found paper publications come first and only several pages later their e-version,
- the impossibility to sort (alphabetically or thematically) nor to export the results to another programme that allows sorting,
- result overload,
- ILL ordering, or the fact that you have to repeat your identity even if you order twenty books in a row etc

A second, even more interesting finding, was that each group named a different system as the one they used and found important.
- Students use Google Scholar, PubMed and full content (via SFX).

The reason for this is they want a similar experience wherever they are (at home, at another university, in the library etc). An interesting consideration in this respect is that mobility plays an important role in the students’ lives, although they do not mention this explicitly (they take it for granted). This should be taken into account in all considerations about the Digital Library.

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4 In the discussion about Meercat, Aleph and Verde, it became clear again that there is a big difference in the view on the functionality of the catalogues between the system developers at the Digital Library and the professional users in the Faculty Libraries. This is why an improvement of the communication between the two parties is one of the important recommendations.
Note: no one talked of text books. Nevertheless it is clear students use the system to find the books, they want to be able to make online reservations, if the library buys the book, they will use it.

- **Staff**
  - use Aleph, but there are complaints about the lack of integration with UGent authentication (a different password but only different in the last digit?)
  - want to use Verde (but can’t?)
- **Policy makers** use Biblio and consider it to be really important.
- **Researchers**
  - use Web of Science (WoS), other secondary sources and full content (via SFX);
  - use digitized content and state that it optimizes their time enormously.

*Note:* in this study only a few researchers were interviewed.

- Last but not least, different interviewees identified a need for *serendipity* in the digital discovery. Browsing through a physical library can be inspiring because you might stumble on things you were not looking for. For that matter, systems should make suggestions and draw your attention to related subjects and publications.

  Investigator Van de Sompel elaborated somewhat on the fact that technically this is not easy to realize but recognized at the same time that people do expect it and are unaware of the technological difficulties (as they see it in commercial applications every day).

**The University Library as a partner in the University’s teaching programme**

- The Digital Library Services are not visible “in the flow”, meaning that they do not appear spontaneously in the educational workflow or in the research workflow. To name only one example, in the teaching platform Minerva, which all UGent students use, there is no fixed entry to the University Library.

- Across the board it was recognized that much more should be done about adequate education on information literacy. The policymakers seemed to realize that the best way to do this, should be to include an information literacy course every curriculum but at the same time recognized that no concrete steps had been taken yet in that direction, which is a remarkable fact, because even students think such a course should be part of their curriculum. In the meantime, every faculty and the digital library do what they can to provide some education in the field of information literacy.

**Opinion on the Digital Library Projects**

- The presentation of Inge Van Nieuwerburgh and the talks with different members of the Digital Library made clear that the projects the Digital Library had engaged in, had born fruit in different ways:
  - it improved communication between the digital team and the preservation team of the University library and created motivation for internal learning;
  - it created networking and collaboration opportunities with other institutions and external partners;
  - in that way it had a positive effect on the visibility of the Digital Library and its knowhow.
On the negative side it could be said that:

- the strategic importance of some projects to Ghent University Library and to UGent was not always clear. The decision on which projects to engage in, sometimes seemed to have been taken ad hoc;

- due to the fact that projects often had to be fulfilled by the same (existing) Digital Library team, there was the risk of interference with other priorities and other ongoing activities.
IV Recommendations

Short-Term Recommendations

The short-term recommendations are directly related to the tasks of the ICT team of Ghent University Library as schematically presented below. Even if this diagram constitutes a serious simplification of reality, it is an aid to see the main lines. The three vertical columns stand for the three major activities, while the two horizontal ones represent respectively the back-office functionality – e.g. cataloguing, Aleph etc – and the front-end functionality, i.e. the users services.

1 Tasks

We have seen before that the digital permeates everything. So, it is not because a process or task involves digital knowledge or computer skills that ICT needs to own it.

- Based on the diagram above, the Digital Library team should clarify for each of their present tasks if their involvement is essential or not.
- If it is not, the next logical step should be to hand off that particular task to other UB staff.
- This implicates that other members of the UB staff should get adequate education and training so they are enabled to perform these (new) tasks efficiently.
- The time and resources that are freed up in this way for the ICT team should be focused on specific challenges that really require the ICT team’s skill set and on the exploration of new developments.

In his presentation of this recommendation, Herbert Van de Sompel strongly insisted on the fact that it is really important to start this evaluation process right now. It is a pragmatic strategy of task that should be integrated in the overall strategy of Ghent University Library (and in its accompanying road map), but there is no need to wait another year to start doing it.
2 Technological know-how and infrastructure

It is a visible fact – and a recognized problem – that Ghent University Library performs its library functions by means of too many different platforms and without substantial cooperation (till now) with the ICT department of UGent. Though it is recognized that most flaws in the digital library performance are a direct result of the historically grown idiosyncrasies of the UGent library household, it really should be the ambition of a digital library to outgrow these pre-existing anomalies and produce digital remedies for them.

In order to do so, the following steps should be taken.

Rationalize platforms

- Start by making an inventory. As the presentation of UB collaborator Patrick Hochstenbach has shown, such an inventory already exists but it should be (re)made in terms of user needs.
- Define these needs, by answering the question “What kind of system do we need to do what?” Evaluate each platform in terms of what you need.
- Think hard and dig deep, your goal being to end up with as few platforms as possible.
- While going through this process Ghent University Library should introduce criteria and develop a decision process on the question of buying versus developing major platforms. In the past this kind of decision has repeatedly been taken on an impulse and ad hoc. Now is the time to rationalize the decision process and to stick to expert criteria you have defined yourself.

Remember that given the complexity of the digital library domain:
- you really need a strong motivation to develop any major platform in-house: everything you develop you have to maintain, so it continues eating up time in the years to come.
- sometimes waiting can be cheaper, while the needed functionality could be in the running for development.
- apart from buying (extensions) of existing platforms, another way to achieve your goals is to collaborate with other developers (who know your system): open source communities, vendors, colleague institutions etc

Note: Herbert Van de Sompel stressed that he was only talking about the development of major platforms. As a digital library expert he was well aware of the fact that in the periphery of such platforms and in order to match specific (local) needs to the functionality of any given system, a certain amount of in-house development would always be necessary.

Optimize existing platforms

On a practical level and in order to improve the functionality of the systems used, there are several things that need to be done on a short notice.

- **Meercat**
  - Specify its identity and functionality.
  - The digital team has to make a decision (based on objective criteria) whether to continue the current development or to look for an alternative commercial system.
  - If the choice has been made to continue with Meercat, the system should be ‘promoted’ in a better way, i.e. improve the communication on its functionalities with the people who have to use it.

To Kristiina Hormia it seemed clear – also with regard to professional Aleph users (see next) – that the strong frustration amongst users was not recognized by the digital library as regular ‘input’. In her opinion the digital library should listen better to its users and do something about the functionality flaws that cause so much anxiety.
**Aleph**
- There is a clear problem with all the databases the digital library has to process. Try to merge databases where possible.
- Use an ‘intelligent’ approach to augment the number of scanned catalogue cards. Herbert Van de Sompel was rather optimistic that some of the digitizing work of the card catalogue could be automated and faster.
- Another way of accelerating the digitizing speed could be to work with masters or PhD students for the job.

**Biblio**
The Academic Bibliography and Institutional Repository is a most important instrument for the decision makers of UGent. Ghent University Library should be fully aware of that.
- Maybe this knowledge can be used as a leverage to get additional resources.
- If possible and asked for – is this a real user need? – the question should be addressed of the ‘full coverage’ of publications by UGent professors or researchers during periods outside their UGent employment.

**Outsource IT infrastructure wherever possible**
This recommendation goes along the lines again of “do what you do best as a team and hand off tasks that are not your core business.” With the installation of a state of the art UGent Data Centre under the lead of ICT Department, this should be easier than it has been in the past.
- However, this new collaboration has to be seen as a strategic move on the part of UB Gent. So a first thing to do, is to achieve full clarity on the relationship between the Digital Library and DICT, especially concerning the responsibilities of each department.
  In his interview DICT director Danny Schellemans confirmed that there was no (need for a) written ‘agreement’ on this subject because it concerned a collaboration between two UGent departments. Both investigators nevertheless insisted that some work should be done on the formalization of a ‘service level agreement’ with DICT.
- The digital Ghent University Library team should be fully aware of the fact that the inauguration of a UGent Data Centre marks the beginning of a new era with a whole new range of possibilities. In other words: it is recommended that they should use the DICT leverage to its fullest extent.
- Regarding the Ghent University Library management the investigators insisted that Ghent University Library should communicate its library strategy to DICT more extensively.
  On this point, Head Librarian Van Peteghem claimed Ghent University Library was doing so already whilst DICT director Schellemans confirmed in his interview that both departments met on a very regular basis. Nevertheless, he also admitted that “we are not thinking together in the development of services” and “we do not discuss the direction in which we have to (or want to) evolve.” Therefore the investigators stand by their recommendation: “tell DICT what you want to do, so they understand your requirements and what you expect from them.”
- Last but not least: during the Ghent University Library collaborators’ presentation it was said that the actual back-up system did not cover all Ghent University Library data and server stock. Only one possible recommendation is in place here: solve the backup issue as soon as possible!

**Digitization & Representation**
One of the most important realizations of Ghent University Library has been (and is) the digitization of their paper collections (via Google Books and previous projects). In this context you could call the University Library truly a digital pioneer. How come then that in other digital areas it is so invisible that users of library services hardly know of its existence?
As the cultural heritage digitization project is deemed really important by UGent researchers and decision makers, there is no doubt it should be continued. It makes Ghent University Library unique in Flanders and Belgium. Maybe it should also be used as a leverage to get additional resources?

One digital area where Ghent University Library is literally invisible, is the student platform Minerva that provides digital versions of courses and all kinds of information students need. Every student (and professor) the investigators encountered, named Minerva as the first system students use and cannot do without. Nevertheless, there is no gateway from Minerva to the digital library. Hence the recommendation: integrate library services in the Minerva platform. In other words: talk to the people who develop and sustain it (often professors themselves) and make sure you can be found through Minerva. Ways of becoming visible: by making a daily screen appearance (publish a ‘message of the day’ about a new product); integrate SFX journal articles into that environment; have a ‘library button’ installed etc.

The investigators’ interview with the UGent decision makers has made it clear that the university intends to invest heavily into ‘distant learning’. This includes the inauguration of a South Korean Campus and the teaching (in real time) of simultaneous live courses in Ghent and South Korea. Ghent University Library should make sure that the university library services become part of this distant learning process, so the University Library becomes visible for everyone who studies at UGent via this channel as well.

Be in the flow ... As a digital library Ghent University Library has to be present in the digital flow, wherever that may be.

Digital Preservation

As we already mentioned in the closing paragraph of the Introduction it appears that university wide, there is only a limited awareness about the problem of preserving digital (research) data. Even though this constitutes one of the biggest challenges in the field of education, research and the preservation of scientific heritage, no one at UGent seemed really occupied with this problem nor by the question what role the University Library should play in this.

In the mind of investigator Herbert Van de Sompel however, there is no doubt that these issues have to be tackled by digital libraries worldwide. So this is not a problem the ICT team of Ghent University Library is going to solve on its own. For the time being, Herbert formulates it this way:

- The UGent Digital Library should build a strong awareness in this matter. There is a difference between knowing, understanding and actually doing it. So the first steps have to be taken on the level of knowing and understanding.
- Given the size of the Ghent University Library digital team and the state of the technology they should focus on bit-level preservation and the availability of essential metadata. So they have to make sure that they possess all the technical metadata they need.
- In the future, digital preservation activities will probably have to be outsourced or developed in collaboration with other expert groups.
- However, developing its understanding of the issue will enable the digital library to put its knowledge to commercial use (e.g. for other libraries or universities) or to become an important partner in a consortium for digital preservation.
3 User Needs

The world has changed and still changes daily. It seems clear that, as an institution, you cannot base your strategy on what you know about user needs from five years ago. So, the recommendations in this field are quite simple:

- Find out what students, researchers, policy makers really need. In order to do so, you need to listen more, i.e. listen better, repeatedly and systematically.
- Two instruments you can use, are surveys regarding user satisfaction – to be conducted on a regular basis – and a needs analysis, e.g. in terms of computer literacy. Such analyses could include the different levels of information literacy in different faculties and what these faculties are already doing themselves.
- Note. It is the opinion of investigator Herbert Van de Sompel that the intended UGent distant learning project with South Korean students will provide an excellent test case for UB Gent. No doubt, a collaboration with foreign students who remain in their own land will effect UB Gent’s view on digital library services thoroughly.

Long-Term Recommendations

The long-term recommendations are all about rethinking the organization structurally. Especially the awareness of fact that there is no such thing as ‘a digital library’ anymore – every library has become digital to some extent – should lead to a new vision on the functioning of Ghent University Library as parts of UGent and as a service provider to all stakeholders of the university.

4 The Organizational Structure

By way of an example Kristiina Hormia sketches the outlines of her own organization at the National Library of Finland. This structure was set up in five months.
Of course the model is not presented to be taken over as such, but to serve as a source of inspiration in the strategic process. Nevertheless, we present some facts here, interesting because of their practicality and sometimes similarity with the situation at UB Gent:

- The team of the National Library consists of ca 70 people, divided over six teams.
- Each team has a director as the team leader and a vice director.
- The management team is chaired by the general director of the institution and consists of the directors of each team.
  - The management team meets every week for one and a half hour.
  - There is another weekly meeting on Mondays with the whole staff.

Even though some people complained about this in the beginning, soon everybody realized that this meeting serves to inform them on all things that might have an effect on their activities. These ‘things’ could come from within the organization, from the Library Board, from other partners in the network or from some decision making level (administration, ministry, steering committee).

- There has been a clear definition of the roles of each management level: that of the director, that of each team leader and that of the management as a whole.
- Apart from the team structure, which divides staff into well defined working fields (the vertical columns), three activities have been recognized as important to everyone and each team should be aware of them. The work these activities entail, is organized in working groups in which every team is represented.

So in her presentation Kristiina Hormia summed up her (re)organizational recommendations as follows:

- Rethink your organizational structure, understanding that the digital permeates everything.
  - Define your new structure and its management. Ask yourself what teams you need and how you would define their working fields.
  - Clarify the roles and the responsibilities of the staff involved on each level.
  - Provide education for new roles and responsibilities, e.g. for digital librarianship. Without this it will not be possible to move tasks from the digital team to ‘ordinary’ librarians.
- Introduce a leadership position for digital initiatives (if there is still need for such a role in your new structure). This ‘Digital Manager’ should be able to:
  - set out strategic directions in the technological field (preservation & development issues)
  - represent the UB as a digital stakeholder at university (decision) level, and
  - take care of the communication with the outside world.
- Increase/improve the communication with and amongst library staff members, both internally (in your own UB) and with the faculty libraries.
- Develop a uniform approach for on-boarding new staff members. This is very important for the future because if you fail to have a welcoming programme you will miss the chance of getting new co-workers immediately on the right track in your strategic vision.

5 The UGent Library Strategy

As we have seen before, UGent has been working on the development of a strategic plan for the first time. So, what should the Ghent University Library be doing?

- Clarify a long-term strategy and relate it to the university strategy (e.g. South Korea distant education)
- Evaluate your performance with regard to the 2003 Bjørnshauge Plan:
  - What goals have been achieved?
  - What remains to be done?
What points need rethinking?

In this respect, it is very important that Ghent University Library continues its focus on the integration of smaller UGent libraries into representative faculty libraries.

- Start with a road-map, i.e. the strategic lines translated into practical steps to take in every strategic plan you have to prioritize — the investigators recommend that the road-map is seen as a priority number one.
- Implement a working plan, workflow design and testing.
- Identify core strategy partners (e.g. DICT, VIAA, Lund).
- Integrate your project strategy into your general strategy.
- Continue to focus on the maintenance of the digital library (digitization of the repository collection, the maintenance or improvement of platforms etc).
- Focus on new developments (e-books, data management, distant education etc)

6 The Project Strategy of UB Gent

- The choice of projects in which to participate should be guided by an overall Digital Library strategy, i.e. each project should fit into the strategy. Define where you want to be and why and decide on the basis of certain criteria you have outlined beforehand.
- ICT projects should focus on:
  - further digitization of the collection;
  - gaining knowledge in the field of digital preservation (cf supra)
  - other educational projects to gain advocacy in the realm of:
    - data management
    - Open Access issues. As a digital library, you should never let go of your involvement in that.
- As a general rule, the Digital Library should try to be a core player in a few projects rather than a small player in many.
  - For the near future this means definitely becoming a core player in VIAA, the Vlaams Instituut voor Audiovisuele Archivering (Flemish Institute for Audiovisual Archiving).

7 On Branding and Communication

It is a fact that the branding of the Book Tower has been very successful: thanks to a lot of public engaging activities and intensive lobbying/representation on the part of head librarian Sylvia Van Peteghem the Book Tower now really is on the agenda.

- In the same way, something should be done for the branding of the digital library services. Improving the communication with all UGent stakeholders (see next point) could be one way to go about it.
- Devise a communication plan to improve the interaction with researchers, students, faculty library staff. Talk to your users and ask for their opinion.
- The communication channels in function (meetings) could be followed up more effectively than through the one way intranet channel: put in place an interactive wiki by which you can exchange knowledge, for example.
- Information literacy: in many European universities, this has already been integrated in the curricula, so:
  - the Digital Library should lobby for inclusion in the curricula at UGent, and
  - in the meantime cooperate (continue cooperating) with the faculties to insure students get an adequate education on this topic.
What is next?

To conclude the presentation, both investigators stressed the fact again that their feedback should not be seen as the end of an assessment but as the beginning of a new strategy. To stay ahead of future challenges, they deemed it urgent for the digital library to come up with a tangible working plan. They also suggested that Ghent University Library should engage an external consultant and a digital library expert to get this work promptly done. However, there was no doubt in their minds that the Digital Library team members have all the ideas, and that a consultant can only act as a facilitator and supplier of tools.

The truth to be told, the first bits of a tangible working plan have been assembled during the preparation of the assessment by Herbert and Kristiina and have been developed further during the investigation and writing process of this report. No doubt, and with the help of an expert library consultant a full-blown working plan could be realized in the months to come.
Addenda
BIJLAGE 1 — Model van structurele regeling voor de collectievorming

A LIBRARY WITH A VIEW
Investigation into the Digital Library of UGent
ADDENDUM I

List of Contributors

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Presentations UB
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Omar Reygaert, ICT UB, Hardware System Manager

Interviewees Day 2

1. Heads of Faculty Libraries
Saskia Scheltjens, Arts and Philosophy
Philippe Standaert, Economics and Business Administration
Koen Van Rumste, Political and Social sciences
Ann De Meulemeester, Biomedical Library (Medicine and Health Sciences Pharmaceutical Sciences)
Mieken Osselaer, Engineering and Architecture
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Monica De Loose, Sciences
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Dirk Reheul, Bioscience Engineering, Chairman of the Faculty Library  
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5. **Students**
Evelyn De Blieck, 2nd master year in Business and Economy, member of the Board of Governors  
Sam De Keyser, 3rd master year in Medicine  
Leen Aper, PhD student in medical sciences
Strategy of the Digital Library of UB Gent

By Patrick Hochstenbach

Sources
Laeven, Hub. “Leven in de boekentoren”.
Van Peteghem, Sylvia. “Architecture of libraries”.
Internal reports; strategy discussion with the management team, the ICT team and selected network partners

Context

1. Trends
   – Users expect online and real time information.
   – The cloud is becoming the gateway to information.
   – Preservation of electronic items, which are used in research and teaching, is viewed as important.
   – Library services are tailored to specific teaching and research needs, and require open systems and data.
   – All of the above result in embedded services for teaching and research. E.g information commons, digital literacy programs.

2. User Expectations
   The user expects the library to buy and archive works and to provide teaching and research support. The library should serve as a two-way gateway for researchers, i.e. both as a provider of information and as a publisher of research work.

3. Global Challenges
   – Buying relevant content
   – Curate, digitize and preserve the paper and digital archive
   – Create an infrastructure to suit the information needs of the library network
   – Meet the users needs by embedding library services in teaching and research

4. Local Challenges
   – 300 libraries (200 at UGent + 100 in network)
   – We are in the middle of a reorganization
   – Renovation of the Book Tower
   – Large cultural heritage collection
   – Only 25% of all collections are in Aleph
   – An ad-hoc development style using a decision process that is not transparent
   – Very small team: 5 ICT, 4 Biblio/Archive, 1 Co-ordinator
Strategy

1. **Content dissemination and discovery via the cloud**

2. **Curation and preservation services** for cultural and scientific heritage

3. **Build an open information infrastructure** and innovation platform
4. **Build interlibrary services which promote the embedding of the library in teaching & research**

5. **Meet users’ needs**: ensure and maintain a 21st century study landscape

6. **Collaborate** with other institutions to build a sustainable cyber infrastructure
7. **Experiment and innovate**, engage new technology proactively

The most important strategic timelines are:

1) **2012-2014** when the digital library has to support library services in the middle of a big transition; and
2) **2015-2017** when the digital library needs to transform into next generation services with the opening of the new library and the 200 year celebration of Ghent University.
Obstacles & Choices

1. Web Content Management

The digital library maintains too many services on too many platforms with little or no integration nor a common data infrastructure.

The digital library needs to decide on what platform it wishes to create library websites. Phase out older platforms and choose one standard CMS and one standard development environment.
2. IT Infrastructure

The digital library needs to consolidate the server park, phase out historic services, keep the strategic core services.

Storage capacity
The digital library needs to invest in extending the back-end storage infrastructure. The backup and mirroring of digital assets is in a critical state.

Financing
The digital library needs to invest immediately in these assets, as budgets for this kind of investments will decrease in the near future.

- 2009 : € 136.000
- 2010 : € 136.000
- 2011 : € 132.000
- 2012 : € 68.000
- 2013 : € 68.000
- 2014 : € 68.000

The digital library has two choices
a) Integrate the IT infrastructure with the University data centres
b) Integrate the IT infrastructure with the Cloud

Option a) is easier to implement, no institutional boundaries need to be crossed, but it carries a management risk (are there enough human resources available to support the growing infrastructure?)

Option b) is a financial interesting choice (no need to invest in human and hardware capital), but carries a sustainability risk (cloud services come and go, lock-in)
3. Curation Services

The digital library needs to operate in a complex environment running (by nature) different types of curation services: Aleph for paper, Verde and SFX for electronic, ABS for archives, Fedora Commons for digitized material and Bibliography for academic output.

The catalog is not only a complex curation environment, in addition, each of these systems currently runs many overlapping virtual datasets.

The digital library needs to consolidate all these overlapping datasets in the future in one merged curation service for paper, one for electronic resources, one for archives etc.
For digitized content there are new challenges in the future. In the paper world it was relatively easy to catalog a book, but in the digitized world this is no longer possible. Digitized items are collections of bits and bytes that need to be interpreted by software before a human can make any sense out of it.

These digital items are very fragile. A new type of metadata needs to be curated and new types of material will enter the digital library.

**Challenges**
- New types of metadata: Administrative, Rights, Technical, Provenance
- New types of data: ETD, learning-object, datasets, LaTex, Word, PDF, SpreadSheets,
- Source Code, Video, Audio, Executables, WebSites
- Cultural & Scientific Heritage starts now.

**Strategy**
- Selection plan: what to curate and what not
- Standards: how to describe, digitize
- Submission plan: do it ourselves, user generated?
- Preservation plan: how to deposit into (inter)national depositories.
- Based on this: evaluate systems, storage & partners
4. Discovery Services

- **Content**: rug01, rug02, bkt01, cgw01, hog01, Elsevier, Springer, HighWire, Hathi, Ebrary, ...
- **Types**: (e)books, (e)journals, (e)prints
- **Integration**: request, availability
- **Open Platform**: OpenSearch, UnApi, Custom Ranking, Custom Indexes
- **Network**: UGent, CageWeb, Athenaeum, Oost-Vlaamse, Memorialis

See Addendum III on Users Statistics. The graph below shows the evolution for 2009-2010.
5. Project Management

Services, service, datasets, the pattern is clear. The digital library is working too much in an ad hoc style where new projects are being started very easily but old projects very seldom stopped. Furthermore, in case of external projects the digital library needs to decide how many projects can be maintained and which fit the strategic mission.
### Users Statistics of UGent Platforms

Based on Google Analytics

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<td>168.441</td>
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<tr>
<td>2007</td>
<td>91.219</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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5. Website: information pages, search box (MeerCat), news
6. MeerCat: search engine through UGent and open sources, not through licensed sources
7. Aleph: combined catalogue of all UGent library collections.
8. Biblio: academic bibliography and institutional repository
9. Libhub: discovery tool for e-articles UGent has subscribed to
10. SFX: software to search for the full text version of articles in various publishers’ sites or databases so as to be able to download them
Presentation of UB Gent Digital Projects

By Inge Van Nieuwerburgh

Context Open Access

1. Driver & Driver II
   EC funded: FP6 and FP7
   June 2006 – Nov 2007 (I)
   Dec 2007 – Nov 2009 (II)

   Partners
   European research institutions (research groups and libraries)

   Project Focus
   – Infrastructure for open access repositories (guidelines + validator)
   – OA advocacy
   – Studies, technology report
   – Text only (I) -> enhanced publications (II)

   Role of UGent
   – Advocacy / networking
   – Guidelines
   – Study on interoperability between OA Systems
   – Usability test
   – Setting up a Belgian network

   Results
   COAR: confederation of open access repositories
   D-NET: software for open access portals

2. OpenAIRE
   EC funded: FP7
   Dec 2009 – Nov 2012

   Partners
   All member states involved, except for Luxemburg, including Norway: research institutions, libraries, research associations.

   Project Focus
   – Support the EC FP7 open access pilot and ERC guidelines on open access
   – Helpdesk + network of National Open Access Desks (NOAD)
– OpenAIRE repository for researchers without a repository
– OpenAIRE portal for dissemination, statistics, etc
– Exploration of and experimentation with Scientific Data Management Services

**Role of UGent**
– National Open Access Desk (NOAD) for Belgium
– Regional co-ordinator
– Networking partner

### 3. Mutable

Flemish fund: IBBT
Jan 2008 – Dec 2009

**Partners**
Research institutions / cultural institutions

**Project Focus**
– New media for dissemination: multi-touch tables
– How to use multi-touch in cultural institutions?
  ✴ Improve interaction techniques
  ✴ Improve support for creative applications
  ✴ New software architecture irrespective of hardware

**Role of UGent**
– Content delivery (Google books)
– Scenario / use case development
– Support of user tests

### 4. UNICAT

Informal Belgian project: not funded

**Partners**
Belgian universities, schools of higher education & cultural institutions

**Project Focus**
Create one collective Belgian catalogue.

**Results**
[www.unicat.be](http://www.unicat.be)
Aggregation

5. European Libraries
EC funded: CIP
Dec 2009 – Nov 2012

Partners
25 partners: research libraries through LIBER (11 countries)

Project Focus
- Content delivery for Europeana
- Aggregator service for research libraries
- Add full text searchable content to Europeana

Role of UGent
Ingest digital content + metadata

Digital preservation

6. BOM_vl
Flemish fund: IWT
Jan 2008 – Dec 2009

Partners
Include broadcasters, research institutions, heritage institutions

Project Focus
‘BOM’ stands for ‘bewaring & ontsluiting van multimediale data’, or the preservation of and access to mixed media data.
- How to organize digital preservation centrally on a Flemish level?
  ✳ We need to investigate the users’ needs
  ✳ Develop a process of selection for archiving
  ✳ Develop metadata standards
  ✳ Implement rights management
  ✳ Develop business models
  ✳ Demonstrator of an infrastructure

Role of UGent
- Research on metadata standards and recommended metadata model
- Studies on user needs: scientific users
- Selection rules and processes behind it

11 In this context the existence of VIAA was introduced briefly. This ‘Vlaams Instituut voor Audivisuele Archivering’ (Flemish Institute for Audiovisual Archiving) is a nonprofit organisation that unites different stakeholders in the cultural and research field to investigate the set-up of such an archive, keeping in mind the different views they have on archiving and their different needs. As an organisation it is not (yet) structurally financed; the budget is now mainly spent on specific projects.
7. **Archipel**  
Flemish fund: IWT  
Oct 2009 – Sep 2011 (extended to Dec 2011)  
Follow-up project BOM_vl

**Partners**  
Cultural institutions / ICT industry / research groups

**Project Focus**  
- Focus on a distributed infrastructure:  
  ✳ one central digital archive  
  ✳ one central dissemination repository  
  ✳ federated dissemination of different archives  
  ✳ several dedicated portals

**Role of UGent**  
- Long-term dissemination: workshops & studies on  
  ✳ Remembering and forgetting  
  ✳ Roadmaps to a Flemish digital archive  
  ✳ User strategies  
- Develop a portal for research and higher education  
- Advise on APIs / interoperability

**Older projects**

**Recollecting landscapes**  
http://www.recollectinglandscapes.be

**Antifonarium Tsgrooten**  
http://www.antifonarium-tsgrooten.be

**Digitization of the card catalogue**  
http://search.ugent.be/catfich-browse/

**Liber Floridus**  
http://www.liberfloridus.be

**DIDLTools**  
http://african.lanl.gov/aDORe/staging/DIDLTools
ADDENDUM V

Internal Interviews UB Gent on the performance of www.lib-ugent.be

AGConsult – Els Aerts
Europastraat 71
B-2850 Boom
Tel. +32 (0)3 293 39 96
E-mail: els.aerts@agconsult.be
Website: www.agconsult.be

Report March 2011

Interviewees
Saskia Scheltjens, Faculty of Arts and Philosophy library, at UGent since 2009
Fien Dejonckheere, Public services UB, at UB Gent since 2001
Frank Vandepitte, ICT UB Gent, at UB since 1997
Hendrik Defoort, Collections UB, at UB since 2009
Paul Bastijns, Information Desk & Information Literacy UB, at UB Gent since 2000
Daisy De Sutter, Reference Librarian at the Biomedical Library, at UGent since 2010

Questions & Answers

1. According to you, what is the website’s main target audience?
   - UGent students ▸ 6
   - UGent staff ▸ 6
   - Other students ▸ 2
   - Other researchers ▸ 2
   - Everyone ▸ 2

2. What is the website’s main function according to you?
   - Making it easy for users to find what they’re looking for ▸ 5
   - To offer information to users, draw their attention to things they might find interesting (cf Amazon) ▸ 3
   - Use the users’ login and lending history to create personalisation ▸ 2

3. Do you sometimes get feedback about the site?
   - Yes ▸ 6

From whom?
   - Users of the website ▸ 4
   - Students ▸ 2
   - First-time users of the website/library ▸ 1
What do they say about the website?

- Can I order a scan from work x? ▶ 1
- Opening hours ▶ 1
- Book request, how does that work? ▶ 1
- Can I order a work online or do I have to go get it in the library? ▶ 1
- Confusing, all these different websites with different interfaces and sometimes different information (about lib.ugent.be and the various other sites of smaller libraries) ▶ 1

4. Do you think there’s anything missing on the website? Any information or functionalities you expect to be on the website but aren’t?

- Personalisation options: links to favourite databases, saved searches, articles and books. Suggestions based on login and lending history ▶ 2
- Reservation of PCs or study places. Especially during exam periods this would be a real plus ▶ 1
- A structured archive of course materials that is easy to search ▶ 1
- Links to the Minerva library site. What good is a digital learning environment if it doesn’t provide access to e-books and e-articles? ▶ 1
- Short manual that explains the basics of using the library website. How to look for a book? How to request a book etc ▶ 1
- Exact physical place indicator of a work in the library ▶ 1
- Faculties and departments should be able to edit their own pages on lib.ugent.be ▶ 1
- A long-term plan for the library is what is really missing ICT ▶ 1

5. Do you think everything is explained adequately? Is everything clear for the visitor?

- Info about the basics (how to look for a book etc) is missing or hard to find ▶ 5
- Explanation about the databases is missing. People cannot tell the difference between several databases ▶ 1
- No, it’s not clear. And the fact there are so many different library websites doesn’t help ▶ 1
- People do not read. Explaining things is no use. The website simply has to work properly. It needs to be easy to use. The fact that you need to explain something is a symptom something’s not right ▶ 1
- No, it’s not always clear. The people at the library’s front desk often can’t help with website questions either ▶ 1

6. What are the website’s biggest assets and shortcomings according to you?

Assets

- Search feature prominent on the homepage ▶ 3
- New features: chat and mobile (the fact we have them, not the way they are presented) ▶ 3
- Beautiful, contemporary layout and look & feel ▶ 2
- Sfx: link to full-text articles ▶ 1
- Huge offer ▶ 1

Shortcomings

- Important information and features are hidden
- We’re a closed shelf library. That’s fine if you know what you’re looking for, but we need to show what else we have ▶ 2
We’re not service oriented enough. Reserving a book is so complicated, some people think it’s simply impossible. All the services that apply to a work (request, ILL, scan, etc) have to be offered on the detail page of the work.

Chat: call it ‘Ask a librarian’ and give it a prominent place.

Opening hours: do not hide it under ‘information’.

You have to go to Aleph for ILL, but that has been hidden now we have Meercat.

Search
- E-books: search full-text
- Search on keywords should be possible. Suggest keywords (cf Aquabrowser)
- There’s no overview of the selected filters

Homepage
- Too much text and unimportant things (all those projects and little blocks)
- Focus more on search and practical things, e.g. interesting databases based on login, an overview of new books related to your search history etc.
- Opening hours more prominently displayed

Results pages
- Ordering could be improved
- E-version of magazine is lower in the results list than the paper version (due to size of entry in the description field). E-entries should always take preference
- There are no covers for the e-books and books. This visual aid could be a great plus
- Not possible to print the results list or to save it (e.g. online or in Excel format)

Magazines
- Paper and e-version are separate entries. It should be one entry with two different ‘format types’
- The selection and order is not very logical

Databases
- Unclear structure
- Not clear to users what’s in there. If they don’t find what they’re looking for on the homepage, they don’t go to the articles or databases
- LibHub: what’s the advantage? It only searches the articles of the databases UGent subscribes to. And you can’t request an ILL from LibHub

Library network
- The link between lib.ugent.be and other library websites is far from ideal
- There are too many differences in structure and look & feel between the various library websites
- Lib.ugent.be is too much focused on being the site of UB, not of all UGent libraries. The faculties should get more official input. Especially now with a lot of changes on the way, this is a very important issue
- Ideally, the libraries of the faculties are integrated in lib.ugent.be
- Cooperation between the faculty libraries isn’t always great
- Confusing terminology, too much jargon and abbreviations
- Link between lib.ugent.be and Minerva: clickable literature list, thesis subjects etc
- Layout: boring, could use a face-lift.

Do you know any other library websites that lib.ugent.be could learn from?
- University of Amsterdam
- Cornell University
- Columbia University
8. What features would you like the new website to have the old one hasn’t? What would it take you to call the website renewal project a success?

- Focus more on search and find. Spend less attention on frivolities: 2
- Homepage: improve the search feature and offer links to the most used databases and a small overview of the most frequently asked questions. ▶ no figure
- Personalisation: address the user as an individual based on login ▶ 1
- Better integration of all libraries in the UGent network ▶ 1
- It’s good you’re doing this research. But if the changes following the results of the research will take a long time, everyone will be very disappointed again. Offering perspective and a timing for the planned changes is very important ▶ 2
About the surveys

Intention

- The survey has been carried out twice, on two different points in time:
  - during a holiday week (after the exams)
  - during a course week
- The survey appeared directly in an overlay windows, as soon as people arrived on any page of the website
- People could only see each survey (holiday week, course week) once (cookie)

Contents – Three questions

1. **Who are you?**
   - Student at UGent
   - Student at another university or school of higher education
   - UGent researcher
   - Researcher at another university or school of higher education
   - Other (+ form field)

2. **What information are you looking for today on this website? Be as specific as possible.**
   - Open form field

3. **Do you have any remarks about this website?**
   - Open form field
Duration and number of answers

Holiday week
- The survey was online from 7 to 8 February 2011.
- 523 answers
  - Everyone answered the first two questions
  - The 3rd question was answered by 77 people

Course week
- The survey was online from 16 to 20 February 2011.
- 593 answers
  - Everyone answered the first two questions
  - The 3rd question was answered by 64 people

II Results

1 Who is visiting the website?
- Especially students, from UGent as well as other universities, visited the site during the course week.
- During the holiday week, percentage wise, there were more UGent researchers—because they didn’t have to teach and had more time?—and ‘other’ visitors.
There are not enough answers (53) to give percentages. These are the absolute numbers. We haven’t included answers that have only been given once.

- Administrative & technical staff UGent 11
- Member of staff UZ Gent 7
- Member of staff UGent library 7
- Member of staff other library 5
- Alumnus 3

There are not enough answers (42) to give percentages. These are the absolute numbers. We haven’t included answers that have only been given by one person.

- Administrative & technical staff UGent 4
- Alumnus 3
2. Why do people visit the website?

Who is looking for what? A lot of people only filled out the subject, about which they were looking for information, sometimes preceded by the general term ‘information’ or ‘publications’. Those answers have been included in the results but we are not mentioning their numbers in the list of top tasks.

2.1 Who is looking for what? – UGent students

Remark: Because the Group of ‘UGent students’ is so large, we have only processed the first two hundred answers manually.

- Article(s) 29,5%
- Book(s) 16,0%
- Database(s)/database(s) 8,5%
- Loan information/Account information 5,5%
- Availability of a work 5,5%
- Theses/Doctoral work 5,5%
- Opening hours libraries 5,5%
- Web of Science 5,0%
- PubMed 4,0%
- Location of a work 3,5%
- Magazines 2,5%

Holiday week – Top tasks UGent students

Course week – Top tasks UGent students
Remark: Because the group of ‘UGent students’ is so large, we have only processed the first two hundred answers manually.

- Article(s) 30,5%
- Book(s) 17,5%
- Database(s) 8,0%
- Web of Science 4,5%
- PubMed 4,0%
- Opening hours libraries 3,5%
- Magazines 3,0%
- Loan information/Account information 3,0%
- Availability of a work 2,5%
- Location of a work 2,0%
- Theses/Doctoral works 2,0%

Differences holiday week versus course week
We are not seeing huge differences.

The three top tasks are the same:
- Articles
- Books
- Databases

In addition, the same databases were mentioned most frequently:
- PubMed
- Web of Science
2.2  **Who is looking for what?** – Students of another university or school of higher education

**Overview ‘other’ students**

Because of the relatively low number of ‘Other students’, it doesn’t make sense to draw up a percentages top ten. As such, the numbers are absolute numbers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Holiday week – total other students</th>
<th>30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book(s)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Article(s)</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
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<td>Opening hours</td>
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<tr>
<td>Database(s)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book(s)</td>
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<td>Article(s)</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Magazines</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opening hours</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How to look for something?</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Differences course and holiday week?**

Not really.
2.3 Who is looking for what? – Researchers UGent

Holiday week – Top tasks researchers UGent

- Article(s) 26%
- Web of Science 20%
- Book(s) 19%
- Database(s) 9%
- Location of a work 9%
- Availability of a work 7%
- PubMed 6%
- Opening hours libraries 5%
- Magazine(s) 5%
- Academic bibliography 4%

Course week – Top tasks researchers UGent

- Article(s) 27%
- Book(s) 23%
- Web of Science 13%
- PubMed 6%
- Availability of a work 5%
- Magazine(s) 5%
- Database(s) 4%
Location of a work ........................................ 3%
Academic bibliography ................................... 3%
Opening hours libraries ................................... 2%

Differences between course week and holiday week?
There are no major differences. During the holiday week, more researchers are looking for the opening hours, but that seems to be logical.

The three top tasks are the same, although not in the same order:
- Articles
- Books
- Web of Science

The same databases were mentioned most frequently:
- Web of Science
- PubMed

2.4 Who is looking for what? – Researchers other university
Overview ‘other’ researchers

Because of the relatively small number of ‘Other students’, it doesn’t make sense to draw up a percentages top ten. As such, the numbers are absolute numbers.

**Holiday week – total other researchers 14**
- Book(s) ▶2
- Magazine(s) ▶2
- PubMed ▶2
- Availability of a work ▶2
- Opening hours/Contact info (e-mail address) ▶2

**Course week – total other researchers 24**
- Book(s) ▶6
- Article(s) ▶4
- Magazine(s) ▶4
- PubMed ▶2
- Web of Science ▶2
- Thesis/es ▶2
- Availability of a work ▶2

**Differences course and holiday week?**
Not really.
2.5 Who is looking for what? – Other

Because of the relatively small number of ‘Other’, it doesn’t make sense to draw up a percentages top ten. As such, the numbers are absolute numbers.

**Holiday week – total other** 53  
- Article(s) ▷ 5  
- Book(s) ▷ 4  
- Academic bibliography ▷ 3  
- Magazine(s) ▷ 2

**Course week – total other** 41  
- Book(s) ▷ 4  
- Thesis(es) ▷ 4  
- Article(s) ▷ 3  
- Magazine(s) ▷ 3  
- Visual material ▷ 2

**Differences school and holiday week?**

Not really. This group of users is the most diverse group anyhow and their needs differ the most.
2.6 **Who is looking for what?** — General overview

The following two tag clouds show the results for all visitors. In the statistics, 200 answers from students have been processed manually at each time.

**Holiday week — Top tasks general**

- Article(s) 24%
- Book(s) 16%
- Web of Science 9%
- Database(s) 7%
- Availability of a work 6%
- Location of a work 5%
- PubMed 5%
- Opening hours libraries 4%
- Magazines 3%
- Theses/Doctoral works 3%
- Loan information/Account information 3%

**Course week — Top tasks general**

- Article(s) 25%
- Book(s) 20%
- Web of Science 6%
- Magazines 5%
- Database(s) 5%
- PubMed 4%
- Availability of a work: 3%
- Theses/Doctoral works: 3%
- Opening hours libraries: 3%
- Location of a work: 2%
- Loan information/Account information: 2%

### Differences between course week and holiday week?

![Graph showing differences between course week and holiday week]

We are not seeing major differences.
All top tasks are the same, although not in the same order.
The general top tasks equally correspond perfectly to the top tasks of the UGent Students, the largest users group, however statistically underrepresented with only 2x200 manually processed answers.
3 Other remarks?

Answers such as ‘no’, ‘not really’ etc have not been taken into account. There were:
77 answers during the holiday week
64 answers during the course week.

Number and nature feedback

Top ‘points of improvement’

There were no considerable differences between the different target groups or periods. Therefore, we have combined all the answers after this.
**Search function and result reproduction**

**Search**
- Search option can be better ▷ 9
- One search box for everything instead of different tabs for Magazines, databases, etc ▷ 6
- A more specific search function would be convenient (sort on library, genre etc) ▷ 4
- Sometimes some more explanation on how to use certain search engines would be welcome, in simple wording, not in technical jargon ▷ 2

**Search results**
- Not enough results for a search ▷ 2
- Double of seemingly double results ▷ 2
- Order is not logical ▷ 2

**Databases**
- Too many clicks to get to database and magazines ▷ 3
- Bring Web of Science/PubMed more to the front ▷ 3
- Elin can be a lot more user friendly, I think it is an unwieldy search engine ▷ 3
- Many different databases without a clear overview what can be found where ▷ 2
- Better integration of different databases ▷ 2

**Aleph -> MeerCat**
- Having to log in over and over again and confirming your name before being able to request a work.
  In Aleph you only have to log in once, now you have to do it again and again ▷ 3
- Meercat creates confusion. Aleph was better ▷ 3

**General remarks**
- Sometimes unclear, inconvenient ▷ 8
- The information (especially on the individual libraries) should be more current ▷ 3
The Bjørnshauge report from 2003-2004 is the key report for the library organization at Ghent University. The principal goal was to create a new and modern structure that will be able to adapt itself to future changes. The Ghent University Library had to be the centre of scholarly communication and a cultural heritage institution.

Services and user needs for scientific research and education have changed more than ever during the last decade, so the Ghent University Library team thought it important to have regular surveys on all library functions with special attention for the library as a repository library and as a service provider for students and researchers.

This study focuses on the Digital Library, which is an ever-changing world with often difficult decisions and choices. So we selected two internationally renowned library experts: Herbert Van de Sompel and Kristiina Hormia-Poutanen who interviewed our stakeholders and were themselves sounded out on the topic in April 2011. The report gives their most important ideas and suggestions for the future.