PsyDok: Electronic Full text Archive for Psychological Documents

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Abstract

The Saarland University and State Library (Saarlaendische Universitaets- und Landesbibliothek SULB) runs the Special Subject Collection Psychology which is part of an information system for the supra-regional literature supply in Germany. With the increasing opportunities for electronic information the following question emerged for the Special Subject Collection: how can a contribution to the availability and preservation of electronic documents particularly with regards to grey literature be made? Giving an answer SULB established the repository PsyDok in autumn 2002. PsyDok is one of the few subject-specific digital repositories in Germany. It is a registered data provider of the Open Archives Initiative (OAI) and certified by the German Initiative for Networkinformation (DINI), which developed a variety of standards digital repositories have to comply with to achieve this mark of quality. PsyDok offers many interfaces to disciplinary and multidisciplinary retrieval and information systems. The allocation of Uniform Resource Names (URN) guarantees persistent availability and citeability of the documents. Several services and mechanisms guarantee not only a maximum of visibility and a rapid and global scientific exchange and flow of information stored on PsyDok but also its long term availability and its scientific utilization. PsyDok fits the principles of "Open Access": Many different document types may be published, but PsyDok focuses particularly on diploma theses, dissertations, professorial dissertations and grey literature. Regarding aspects of visibility, information exchange and scientific utilization especially producers of grey literature benefit from PsyDok.

1   Introduction: Scientific information supply in Germany: Special subject collections and virtual libraries

In Germany scientific information supply is coined by a distributed, supra-regional system of special subject collections[1] (in German: Sondersammelgebiet, SSG) which are tied to scientific libraries. There are 121 special subject collections which can be found in more than 40 libraries all over Germany. These special subject collections are funded by the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG).[2] The main function of a SSG is to build a collection of subject related scientific literature which is as complete as possible; this includes domestic and foreign research literature (including electronic media, microfilms and multimedia objects) and especially scientific journals. Within this system Saarland University and State Library (Saarlaendische Universitaets- und Landesbibliothek SULB)[3] runs the Special Subject Collection Psychology since 1966. In 1998 the German Research Foundation adopted a memorandum focusing on the future trends of scientific information supply. This memorandum asked for the enhancement of information supply with regard to the means and opportunities of up to date information technology. Accordingly the German Research Foundation started funding so called Virtual Libraries. In 1999 the Virtual Library of Psychology at Saarland University and State Library went online. Virtual Libraries claimed to be central entry-points to scientific information by bunching subject-specific information on the WWW and making it accessible. These virtual libraries did not try to preserve or publish information but only to link to it. Therefore most virtual libraries are using a subject gateway[4] and a subject specific meta search engine. They usually did not make any contribution to the availability of scientific information on the www.

2   The availability of psychological information

In autumn 2002 SULB and the Institute for Psychology Information (Zentrum fuer Psychologische Information und Dokumentation ZPID, Germany)[5] launched a joint project named „Digital Psychology Information (DPI)", which was funded by the German Research Society until spring 2005. The aim of DPI was to improve the availability and accessibility of electronic psychological information. One of the work packages defined within DPI was the implementation of the subject specific repository PsyDok[6] run by SULB; its home page lives at http://psydok.sulb.uni-saarland.de. By establishing a service like PsyDok SULB did not only react to the ephemeral nature of most online information but made also a contribution to the availability and preservation of electronic documents particularly with regards to grey literature.