



eContentplus

Final Review Report

Project No.: **ECP-2005-CULT-038097**

Project acronym: **BERNSTEIN**

Project website: <http://www.memoryofpaper.eu>
<http://www.bernstein.oeaw.ac.at>

Period reviewed: **01/09/2008-28/02/2009**

Review type: Based on project deliverables and formal meeting (Option 1)
 Based on project deliverables (Option 2)

Names of Reviewers: **Eva MÉNDEZ**
Tom WACHTEL

Date of meeting: **n/a**

A/618169
22/04/09

Overall Assessment

1. Summary

Free text giving the reviewers' overall assessment.

This has been a successful project leading to resources of great value to people researching paper, and also beyond that field to history in general, geography and the development of civilization. A high quality team with excellent skills and expertise has been brought together and has addressed the issue with commendable enthusiasm and professionalism.

High-quality, clear and concise deliverables have been produced in a professional and timely manner. The recommendations made at the last review have been adopted.

Simple multilingual access is supported and is adequate for the purpose. A more sophisticated semantics-based approach, while not appropriate in this initial project, may lead to even better results in the future.

There is evidence of some lack of attention to detail in areas such as the linguistic quality of the interface which detract from the perceived professionalism of the portal.

Sustainability needs to be supported actively, including the integration of the content in Europeana.

2. Recommendations

Free text giving the reviewers' recommendations including actions to be taken.

Consider having the interface proofread by native speakers familiar with interface issues. A number of prominent errors lower the perceived professionalism of the portal. A few examples are: D2.5, pp. 10ff., the help texts - "you can find watermarks on a easy way" (should be "in" not "on"), "you can define your searchterms more exactly" (should be "search terms" and "exactly"), "you can find a - exacter definiton" (should be "a more precise" and "definition"), and Bernstein_systematics.pdf, the classification scheme for hierarchically organized watermark types, quickly reveals errors which could distort search, e.g. "one antler consisting in two lines" (should be "consisting of"). In the Spanish version, "professional" or "experto" should be used instead of "expertisa". Similar effects were also noted for Italian and we therefore suspect that this important aspect of user interface design has been neglected or taken for granted. All of the above errors were discovered without doing a detailed search through the document.

There are some other examples of poor attention to detail: the project's subtitle was correctly changed from "The History of Papers" to "The History of Paper", but the former still sometimes appears in a number of places. In fact, what presents itself as the newer version of the portal, http://bernstein.iicm.tugraz.at:8080/BernsteinPortal_new surprisingly still has "The History of Papers".

Also the link http://www.bernstein.oeaw.ac.at/Bernstein_project_presentation.ppt in D7.8 results in a "Not Found" error message. Carelessness of this kind will not help in promoting the portal as the serious professional tool it is.

The usability of the interface would have been improved by providing more flexible multilingual access. The user can search in the interface language but when using a Spanish interface and searching for "sirena" the system gave the same results as when searching for "mermaid" using the English interface: 75 hits (29 at WILC and 46 in WZMA). However when searching for "sirena" using the English version of the portal there are 0 hits. Multilingual search should be supported independently of the language of the interface, switching language automatically as appropriate. This is a commonly used and well-known technique, for example, in multilingual online dictionaries such as www.wordreference.com.

The names of the databases (POL, WZMA, WILC, NIKI) are opaque and not user-friendly. End users will not know what content to expect...many will not even realise what the acronyms refer to.

3. Conclusions

- The project has achieved its objectives and technical goals for the period.
- The project has achieved most of its objectives and technical goals for the period, but some action should be taken to fulfil the provisions set out in Annex I to the grant agreement.
- The project has failed to achieve critical objectives and/or did not fulfil the project work plan as described in Annex I to the grant agreement.

A. Objectives

Free text giving the reviewers' comments on the degree of achievement of the project objectives as described in Annex I. This might include answers to the following questions:

1. *Have the objectives for the period been achieved?*
2. *Performance indicators: have the targets been reached?*
3. *Are the overall objectives still relevant and still achievable within the time and resources available to the project?*

Under review in this period are the final five months of the project as well as its main results and achievements. In general the objectives of the period and the overall objectives have been achieved and the project has made available a valuable specialised digital collection of paper watermarks, bibliographic records, and related information, as well as software tools (the Paper Study Kit) to support research related to the history of European paper.

The performance indicators (p. 17, D7.7) demonstrate that the targets have been reached as per the Description of Work (DoW, p. 10), but the indicators themselves are not very precise (ex. "resources integration": planned and achieved 100% at year 3, but the indicator does not reflect the success of the project).

B. Work plan:

Free text giving the reviewers' comments on the degree of fulfilment of the project work plan as described in Annex I. This might include answers to the following questions:

1. *Has each work package (WP) been making satisfactory progress in relation to the Description of Work (Annex I to the grant agreement)?*
2. *Have planned milestones been achieved for the activity period?*
3. *Have planned deliverables been completed for the activity period?*
4. *Do the technical solutions employed reflect the "State of the art"?*

All the work packages have made good progress and yielded results. The project has produced the full integrated workspace promised and the appropriate tools and software to provide value to scholars researching the history of paper and watermarks.

The deliverables are clear and concise, setting out issues, approaches and solutions very well. They also have a certain style about them in terms of presentation, which contributes considerably to readability. They have all been delivered in good time. They are marred only by a number of typos and minor errors of grammar. D2.6, however, on Geographical and Chronological metadata is too schematic, and focuses a future work ("...writing of a Handbook of Historical Georeferencing is thus considered, as well as expanding the acquired expertise in projects beyond Bernstein") rather than the vocabulary control work actually done.

Attention to standardisation issues is good and improved since the last review. Providing uniform access to the four watermark databases (Piccard-Online, WILC, WZMA, NIKI) is a significant achievement.

A simple solution to multilingual access has been adopted, quite appropriately, and is perfectly adequate for the task, except that some of the English phrases contain errors. This could impact the quality of the search results. The correctness of entries in all the other languages should also therefore be checked, as the English examples indicate that quality control has not been applied to full effect in general. At least one error in French was detected ("Occidentale", D2.7, p. 2).

Also, more in-depth consideration of user expectations with respect to language, based on end-user experiments, would have been valuable. For example, a search on "mermaid" produces 75 hits, but a search on "siren" (a synonym of "mermaid") produces none. Likewise, "ship" yields 76 but "boat" and "craft" yield none. On the other hand, "vessel" (a synonym of "ship" as well as meaning a drinking vessel) produces 768. This is where a thesaurus in the true sense of the word might be useful.

In spite of the general quality of the results, milestone M2.2 ("Definition on how the multi-lingual support across systems will be implemented") and deliverable D2.5 ("Multi-lingual support [1] Multi-lingual textual content for the user interfaces of the databases, tools and workspace and [2] watermark standard available in several languages") have not achieved an appropriate solution. Although the portal has a multilingual interface, it does not guarantee multilingual access to the textual content.

C. Project management and resources

Free text giving the reviewers' comments on the project management. This might include answers to the following questions:

- 1. Is the management of the project of sufficient quality*
- 2. Has the project implemented an active risk management?*
- 3. Is the consortium interacting in a satisfactory manner with other related projects or other national/international programmes (if relevant)?*
- 4. Have resources been deployed as foreseen in Annex I, overall and for each beneficiary?*

Excellent in all respects apart from quality control, as mentioned above. The management of the project has been effective in achieving project's goals. Resources have been deployed as foreseen in the technical annex (Annex I - DoW).

Not using a native speaker to control the English in a multilingual search portal represents a serious risk which is very easy to avoid.

There has been good contact with other institutions and several are participating actively (e.g. ICPAL, IVCR, and SHM in Russia) and there is a plan for a follow-on proposal in ICT-PSP to ensure continuity.

D. Consortium partnership

Free text giving the reviewers' comments on the consortium partnership. This might include answers to the following questions:

- 1. Has the collaboration between the participants been effective?*
- 2. Have the partners contributed as planned to the project and tasks assigned to them?*
- 3. Do you identify any conflicts or evidence of underperforming partners, lack of commitment or change of interest of any partners? Do you recommend any changes in responsibilities?*

This is a well-structured and extremely capable consortium enthusiastically pursuing projects goals, with access to all the relevant resources in terms of both content and specific technical expertise. Each partner has participated in the project as expected and planned, and the coordination and collaboration is evident and has produced good results.

The high level of technical expertise in the area of paper studies and watermarks is, however, counterbalanced by a lack of experience of standards for content interoperability, interface design issues and multilingual issues beyond basic aspects.

E. Dissemination and awareness activities

Free text giving the reviewers' comments on the effectiveness of the dissemination and awareness activities. This might include answers to the following questions:

1. Is the project website up-to-date and a relevant source of information for the project activities?
2. Has the consortium disseminated project results and information as foreseen?
3. Are potential users and other stakeholders (outside the consortium) suitably informed?

Excellent. The itinerant exhibition was a good and novel idea at the outset of the project, and its value was quickly perceived and acted upon, leading to dissemination activity that has reached a broad audience in terms of both user type and geography.

The project website and also the project portal are both up-to-date. However a dissemination policy in terms of SEO/SEM (Search Engine Optimization/ Marketing) should be considered, especially at the end of the project. Given that the content available through the portal is part of the "deep web", optimizing the visibility of the portal through Google and other generic search engines would be valuable.

The project website does not include an obvious link to the portal. It is present in the "Latest Releases" list and in the banner, but, given that the project is about creating the portal, there should be something like "GO TO THE PORTAL" in a very prominent place on the project website. There is also no obvious link from the portal to the project website. The "About the project" link goes to a portal-internal page. The project website URL can eventually be found under the "Contact" link, but even there it is not labelled as a link to the project website. Attending to apparently minor details of this kind can greatly affect how information-access work of this kind is perceived by users.

F. Impact and Sustainability

Free text giving the reviewers' comments on the extent to which the project results impact on the specific field. This might include answers to the following questions:

1. Have intellectual property rights for the underlying content been solved?
2. Are there any risks related to intellectual property rights for the project results?
3. Are the user needs properly reflected in the user requirements and/or the implementation?
4. Does the project contribute significantly to achieving the eContentplus objective of making "digital content in Europe more accessible, usable and exploitable"?

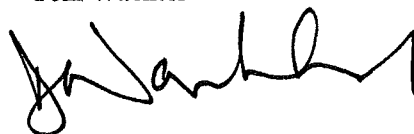
The project is likely to have a large and positive impact in its area, and beyond, and certainly meets the objectives of eContentplus. There are no IPR issues. End users and their needs are addressed well.

The tools developed (PSK, WMT package, etc.) are released as "free software" so IPR issues do not arise here either. However, the PSK is provided as a collection of ready-to-use tools and data that give people the means to set up their own digital services for paper watermark studies, yet some database skills are required, which may limit its impact and enduring usability.

Name(s) of the reviewer(s): Eva Méndez

Tom Wachtel

Date: 17 April 2009



Signature(s):

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