

## **The Information Gateway Vascoda, the Access to scientific Information in Germany**

Talk to be held at the 24-th annual IATUL Conference in Ankara, Turkey 02-05 of June 2003 by **Martin Boemeke**, M.S. Engineering, scientific asisstant, German National Library of Science and Technology, Hannover Germany

### **The integration of the Electronic Journals Library, the Information Alliance and the Virtual Libraries in Germany**

#### **Table of contents**

#### **Abstract**

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. History and Background or How it all begun**
- 3. Three major ways to access scientific information in Germany**
  - 3.1. Electronic Journals Library**
  - 3.2. Information Alliance**
  - 3.3. Virtual Libraries (Subject Gateways)**
- 4. The future, one central way to access, Vascoda**
- 5. Summary**

#### **References**

#### **Acknowledgements**

#### **Abstract**

At present there are three important ways to reach scientific information in Germany:

The electronic Journals Library  
four separate academic Information Networks and  
23 different Subject Based Virtual Libraries,

The Electronic Journals Library (Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek, EZB) focuses on offering structured and standardized access to scientific and academic full text journals of all kinds of subjects.

Second the Information alliance with four separate academic Information Networks consists of,

- GetInfo (<http://www.getinfo-doc.de/>),
- EconDoc (<http://www.econdoc.de/eindex.htm>)
- Information Network Medical Science,  
[www.medpilot.de](http://www.medpilot.de)

- and in preparation the Information Network Education- Social Sciences and Psychology. (<http://www.infoconnex.de>)

The content of the Networks ranges from science and technology (GetInfo) to economy (EconDoc), medicine and psychology.

The Information Alliance is a cooperation of hosts, libraries and research institutions of a certain subject. They offer combined services for accessing subject literature and Information plus document delivery supply. There is a strong emphasis on providing electronic fulltext access.

The third major source are 23 different Subject Based Virtual Libraries, which cover a variety of subjects from history across science and engineering to art and other topics.

The virtual libraries offer subject oriented access to scientific information, literature and documents. This information is available worldwide. It includes both electronic and printed sources. The decision about which information is included is mainly dependent on the content relevance not the product itself or the information source. The electronic resources are Internet sources of various types. All the Subject Based Virtual libraries are based on libraries that cover the supply with printed sources.

The target group of all three information sources are basically the same, making a merging of them very logical. These cover academic people from students and scientific staff to professors, working people at all kinds of functions within big or smaller business units and private people interested in sophisticated scientific information.

**The information provided by these projects will be integrated to form a single interdisciplinary Gateway for scientific information. The new Portal named Vascoda is available national and international.** One possible vision is to integrate the Gateway into a European scientific oriented Gateway.

## 1. Introduction

Vascoda is the new portal for scientific information in Germany that will go online in August 2003. It shall be a central access point for all kinds of scientific content.

The idea behind the Information Gateway Vascoda is the connecting of the electronic journals library, the four Information networks in Germany Infoconnex, GetInfo, EconDoc, and MedPilot with the 23 virtual libraries in Germany. This leads to a focused portal/gateway for the user.

Vascoda:

- is one central access point for all fields of science from Anglo-American Culture to Wood-Technology,
- allows interdisciplinary searches as well as complex navigation and browsing
- offers access to all types of documents: born-digital as well as digitised and print materials can be obtained either free of charge or through pay-per-view options

- includes full-texts, link-collections, bibliographic and other databases, subject-specific search engines and more.

And so it reflects the high diversity of information sources in Germany.

## **2. History and Background or How it all begun**

Since 1996 the German Research Foundation (DFG) supports the development of 23 Virtual Libraries (subject gateways) financially at the moment. 15 of these are online at this point of time, 8 more are to go in the near future. You can reach these Gateways so far through <http://www.virtuellefachbibliothek.de/VLibEnglHome.htm> until the Vascoda gateway will go online in late summer this year.

The Federal Ministry for Education and Research of Germany (BMBF) supports the constitution of the four information networks since 1999.

In 2001 the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Federal Ministry for education and Research of Germany (BMBF) decided to make an agreement about co-operation in order to focus the sponsoring instead of supporting two competing access points. August 2002 all parties concerned decided to concentrate their offers in one portal/access point. The idea behind it is to offer the user a one-stop-access point to information.

## **3. Three major ways to access information in Germany**

So far the three ways of access to scientific information in Germany are the electronic journals library, the information alliance and the virtual libraries. All of these want to offer the user sophisticated, easy to handle, fast, reliable information, without a time limit and direct on hand.

### **3.1. Electronic Journals Library**

The Electronic Journals Library (Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek, EZB) is a Service developed and provided by the University Library of Regensburg in cooperation with the University Library of the Technical University of Munich.

There are 211 Libraries and other Research Institutions participating. This means that on the one hand the service of the electronic journals Library is offered at those Libraries and on the other hand those institutions help collect titles and taking care of the data at a joint database.

The focus of the Electronic journals library is to offer structured and standardized access to scientific and academic full text journals.

At this point of time about 14,121 titles, including 1,669 online only journals are offered. The access to the full texts of 4,101 of these journals is unlimited.

There are different possibilities of access depending on the point of access. If the user reaches the electronic journals library from any place in the world via the Internet he/she has only direct access to the free journals. If the access is made through one of the participating institutions the number of journals one can reach will most likely be higher because of campus licenses that enables faculty and students of these institutions to further access.

The access through Vascoda will be just the same only the starting point is different but for the campus licenses the IP address of the institution connected is relevant.

### **3.2. Information Alliance**

The supply with digital full texts, published materials and grey literature is the goal of the Information Network. Partners of the Information network are specialized libraries and subject information centres like FIZ Karlsruhe. They want to combine the search results of databases with full texts provided by publishers, grey literature servers, preprint servers etc..

The partners of the Information alliance are:

- GetInfo <http://www.getinfo-doc.de/>
- EconDoc <http://www.econdoc.de>
- Information Network Medical Science [www.medpilot.de](http://www.medpilot.de)
- and in preparation the Information Network Education- Social Sciences and Psychology <http://www.infoconnex.de/>.

GetInfo provides full texts on science and technology including electronic documents and literature that is not yet available in electronic form (like print or microfiche) through the services of the German National Library of Science and Technology and FIZ Karlsruhe, TIBORDER and FIZ Auto Doc.

EconDoc is an information alliance of German libraries and publishers specialising in economics and business administration. Databases related to theory and practical information on economy are offered including access to full text documents.

The Information Network medical science realized through Medpilot is already partner of the Information Network and the Virtual Libraries to offer any kind of medical information.

Infoconnex offers an integrated access to a collection of databases related to pedagogy, psychology and social sciences, the gateway is about to go online.

At all of the above the search results are free of charge, some full text is charged for while other full texts are available free.

### **3.3. Virtual Libraries (Subject gateways)**

Through the Virtual Libraries (Subject Gateways) the user gets access to a variety of information sources including electronic, printed and databases. One part of these gateways is to offer evaluated and commented Internet sources of high quality.

The Virtual Libraries try to fulfill the specific needs of their respective scientific communities as good as possible. This is why their appearance differs and they offer different modules. However, most Virtual Libraries offer subject guides and/or search engines. Within the subject guides the user finds different categories and /or subject areas to choose from in order to offer the user the possibility to focus the search.

The vision is to offer meta-search engines that allow a combined search on different databases or other sources within a certain Virtual library.

In the following two virtual libraries, one from the branch of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Virtual Library of Anglo-American Culture and one from Science, Medicine and Engineering, the Engineering subject gateway are described as examples:

The Virtual Library of Anglo-American Culture functions as an interdisciplinary research library for scholars and students of Anglo American culture. It focuses on collections of Anglo American literature and History, combining different sources like print, electronic and Internet. Also the access to databases, catalogues and electronic full texts is offered. So far, the majority of the databases offered can only be accessed via the campus of the Goettingen University library because of restricted campus license access, but license agreements that open the databases for other users are being discussed.

The Engineering subject gateway, ViFaTec offers an integrated access to information resources related to engineering. There are 5 different modules to access information that are:

- the planned meta-search-engine,
- the document delivery system TIBORDER,
- the full text system GetInfo,
- the subject guide and
- the specialized search engine.

**The Meta-search-engine** for technical literature shall, when in action, offer a parallel search on 10 different data sources. The search and the display of search results like titles in the databases will be free and it is charged for when fulltext is ordered.

**TIBORDER** is the document delivery system of the German national library of science and technology in Hannover.

**GetInfo** is a joint venture of the German National Library of Science and Technology and the Subject information center Karlsruhe (FIZ Karlsruhe) for the supply of full-text in science and technology as described above.

**The Subject guide** has ten different major categories with related sub-categories to choose from plus 9 different filters, so a focused search can be carried through.

The standard information sources of a library like technical literature, books, professional articles in journals, microfiche, CD-Rom collections, databases, free and liable for costs, and others are offered.

Added to that are special chosen Internet resources. Most of the sources are not company sites which offer their products but sites of organizations, unions and others which offer competent and well sorted link collections and other information of a broad range.

Through the specialised search engine the potential of knowledge working in research centres or professional associations is offered to the user. The offers range from free laboratory space to consulting offers of university related and private research institutions. Among others the websites of technical oriented Max-Planck Institutes, the websites of Fraunhofer Society, engineering associations like the VDI, VDE, VDMA and other professional associations all from Germany are indicated.

#### **4. The future, one central way to access, Vascoda**

In order to support the user to find sophisticated information as described above the portal Vascoda is formed. In a first release it will offer a simple search across the products of the information alliance, the Internet resources of the Virtual Libraries plus links to electronic journals related to the search phrase. Links to other services of the three partners are offered also.

In the second release a complex meta search and browsing across the data of all the participating partners shall be available, dependent on the interfaces, like XML. This shall be realized through a standardization of metadata, the implementation of meta-search-engines and possibly in some parts, a joint cataloguing database for the Internet resources.

Some of the offered services will be free of charge others especially the search in licensed databases and the display of certain full-text will be charged for.

The base and background of Vascoda will be the participating German institutions. Access will be possible from all over the world through the Internet. In the age of globalisation international information sources play a relevant role at the future science information gateway of Germany Vascoda.

The hardware part (Server) of the portal will be positioned at the University Library of the University of Karlsruhe, [http://www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/index\\_engl.html](http://www.ubka.uni-karlsruhe.de/index_engl.html) for the first release.

The coordination team based at the German National Library of Science and Technology in Hannover will handle the organisation and coordination of the portal in the first release.

#### **5. Summary**

In this talk the forming of a one-stop-access-point for sophisticated scientific information national and international, Vascoda is described.

The background and history of the access point are, the already existing three major ways to access information for academic users, the electronic journals library, the information alliance and the virtual libraries.

The important facts about these access points were described. These are for the Electronic Journals Library the 14,121 titles, including 1,669 online only journals with free access to 4,101 of these journals.

Others are the Information alliance with the four Information Networks GetInfo, EconDoc, Information Network Medical Science and Infoconnex, with contents from science and technology across economics to psychology.

The third one is the collection of 23 virtual libraries of which 15 are online and 8 others are to go, some of them within this year. Its contents cover a very broad range from cultural, social sciences, psychology, etc. to science and technology.

Then a look at Vascoda that shall go online in August this year was taken. The main structures of the first and second release offering different depths in search structures were described. The possible integration/embedding into a European wide portal is one goal. Finding international cooperation partners and building up international networks is another goal to be reached.

#### **References:**

**Rosemann, Uwe, "Vascoda – Discover information", Chinese German Symposium, Current developments in Scientific Libraries, Chengdo, China, planned in 2004**

**Rosemann, Uwe, „Die Arbeitsgruppe der Informationsverbände und die virtuellen Fachbibliotheken: Beginn einer wunderbaren Zusammenarbeit“ In: Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie, 50, 2003 S. 13-19,**

**Dr. Tamara Pianos, Christine Burbliès, Website: [www.vascoda.de](http://www.vascoda.de)**

**Interview mit Dr. Christine Thomas BMBF Digitale Bibliothek, <http://www.dl-forum.de/news/informationpolitik.html>, 03/19/2002**

**Positionspapier „Information vernetzen – Wissen aktivieren“, des Bundesministeriums für Bildung und Forschung, ( Ministry for education and Research, BMBF), <http://www.dl-forum.de/Foren/Strategiekonzept/strategischespositionspapier.pdf>**

#### **Acknowledgements:**

**I thank Mr. Rosemann, Director of the German national Library of Science and Technology for his support when preparing the talk.**

**Also thanks to Dr. Tamara Pianos, from the coordination team Vascoda at the German National Library of Science and Technology for the support.**