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Providing Collaborative Access to German Political Science and Historical Resources: a Pilot Project of the Association of Research Libraries

WINSTON TABB

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I. Project Overview

The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) requests \$ 100,000 for a pilot project to develop a distributed, network-based system of acquisitions, access indices, and document delivery in support of German political science and historical research. This grant is contingent on an additional multi-institutional commitment of at least \$ 60,000 from ARL libraries with strong German collections and commitment to research in German political science and history. This project will create a prototype for comprehensive and fully interconnected collections for German studies in political science research, as well as a model for other scholarly fields. The project will focus on three specific activities:

1. We will establish distributed collecting responsibilities for a cross-section of monographs published in Germany, and we will develop complementary systems for cataloging and document delivery.
2. We will identify serials published in Germany that are critical for furthering scholarship, but are not widely held in North America, and devise a strategy to ensure that at least one U.S. or Canadian library commits to acquiring, serving, and preserving each title.
3. We will verify that a network of ARL libraries provides coordinated access to German federal documents, including general government publications, parliamentary documents, and statistical publications. The German Demonstration Project will seek the cooperation of German research libraries and German government agencies in

locating or encouraging development of digital versions of these documents.

These three project components will enable us to develop the techniques and procedures essential for German political scientists, and ultimately scholars in other fields, to take full advantage of the economies and efficiencies promised by the combination cooperative acquisitions and electronic delivery mechanisms. We will thus address issues such as the local implications of decisions to rely on remote collections, the legalities and logistics of copyright clearance for foreign publications, implementation and enforcement of cooperative commitments, cataloging and indexing requirements, and cost analyses and sustainable fee structures for effective cooperative programs.

To succeed, this pilot initiative will require funding for a Project Coordinator who will carry out major project tasks, provide logistical support, and maintain high levels of project energy and participation. Additional funds will support leadership meeting of directors and specialist librarians from participating institutions. About forty percent of the project's \$ 160,000 budget will be raised from ARL libraries with strong German collections and commitment to research in German political science and history. These libraries will also contribute funds for materials and staff time. The ARL membership has unanimously endorsed the concepts of distributed collection development and effective resource sharing.

This proposal will first describe the project's institutional background. It will follow with more detailed descriptions of what we seek to accomplish and how we will proceed, and end with our project budget.

II. The Institutional Background

North American research libraries have a strong tradition in the collection of literature published in Germany. Richard Dorn, in an article in the *Harvard Library Bulletin* published in 1973, chronicled the first hundred years of the Otto Harrassowitz firm and its role in the building of substantial collections of German literature in American libraries through the provision of millions of volumes of publications over the course of a century.¹ Annual production of documents in Germany continues to be quite high, and the importance of the materials is such that its availability and easy access is essential for historical scholarship and political decision-making in North America. As an outgrowth of a study on acquisitions of Western European materials completes in March 1992 by a subcommittee of the Western European Specialists section of the

¹ Dorn, Richard W.: *Otto Harrassowitz, Buchhandlung-Verlag-Antiquariat: the First Century*. In: *Harvard Library Bulletin*. Vol. XXI, No. 4 (October 1973), p. 365-371.

Association of College and Research Libraries, James Spohrer and Michael Olson developed a project to assess the holdings of U.S. libraries in German political science materials. Spohrer and Olson concluded that "U.S. research library collecting for German political science for the period under consideration [1985-1992] falls short of adequacy in every significant category [important works for any U.S. research library with an interest in German politics; important works which should be held in at least one U.S. research library; relevant English-language titles; and relevant titles in languages other than German or English]..."² This study highlighted the need for a more comprehensive collection policy in the area of German political science. One way to close the gaps is to achieve increased cooperation among North American research libraries. By improving the efficiency of collecting and providing access to an important segment of German political science documents, the libraries will be able to conserve resources which they can direct to the collection of important, unique German political science and historical publications. Since demand for timely access to German publications continues unabated, libraries, finding their resources inelastic, are seeking new and cost-effective ways to provide access to materials. Cooperative collection development, based on agreements to share publications acquired on the basis of a systematic plan to divide up responsibility for acquiring, cataloging, serving, and preserving materials in a particular topical or geographic area, has enabled libraries to expand their coverage. Arrangements to share materials have frequently been imperiled, however, by local perceptions and experience that an item must actually be held on site to be truly accessible. Yet, with the proliferation of publications, and the increasingly higher costs of acquiring materials, libraries must either reduce the number of items they collect or develop a new model for access to information. Through a digital, networked environment, libraries now have means to transcend the impediments to cooperation engendered by the need to maintain a permanent physical object in a given location.

The Association of American Universities (AAU), in collaboration with the Association of Research Libraries, in 1993 established the "Research Libraries Project" to address the prospects for research libraries at this time of both heavy pressure and unprecedented opportunity. The AAU Task Force on Acquisition and Distribution of Foreign Language and Area Studies Materials, charged with finding ways to improve access to foreign language resources, was one component. The Task Force in turn created an action plan calling for research libraries to share responsibility for collecting foreign imprints and to ensure shared access within a "distributed North American collection of foreign materials." This goal would be met through three demonstration projects, one

² Spohrer, James H.: ARL German Political Science Project. In: *Western European Specialists Section Newsletter*. Vol. 17, no. 1, (Fall 1993), p. 3-4.

focused on social science documents published in Germany. (The others are Latin American studies and Japanese science and technical information).

III. Project Goals

The German publication output is abundant, and the literature of political science and history is important for supporting and enhancing the North American understanding of Europe. Yet, at a time when the significance of global politics and interaction is increasing, U.S. and Canadian libraries are recognizing that it is becoming more and more difficult for them to sustain comprehensive foreign language collections. Not only does the acquisition of a growing number of titles evade them, but even acquiring a selected number of titles strains their budgets when they take into account the processing, servicing, and preservation needs of library materials. The ARL German demonstration project in German political science literature seeks to improve North American coverage or access to important monographs in political science published in Germany in the German language; to guarantee, through coordinated, cooperative commitments, ready access to key serial titles not currently held in Canadian and U.S. research libraries; and to determine the level of holdings and access to German federal documents, including parliamentary proceedings and statistical data as well as national agency publications.

The project will devise a mechanism for identifying monographic titles of value that are not currently collected by any major U.S. or Canadian library, and a group of experts in West European studies will analyze the reasons for the failure of libraries to acquire these titles. The group will make recommendations for expanded approval plan policies, improved collection strategies, and remedies for closing the gap so that coverage of important monographs in German political science and history is comprehensive, albeit in a networked fashion.

For serial literature, the project will compare titles published in Germany in the area of political science and history with titles held by North American research libraries. The project will propose ways to expand coverage of titles held in North American through cooperative agreements to collect and provide access to particular titles. The project will also investigate the availability of titles in machine-readable form, and partners will seek opportunities to test the feasibility of access to digital archives substituting for the collection of documents in paper form in some cases. This aspect will probe issues such as licensing of digital access, copyright considerations, and technical requirements for efficient and reliable access.

The third component in the project, access to German federal documents, presents an opportunity to collaborate with colleagues in German research libraries. Although the traditional model has been for many institutions to acquire substantial holdings, the German demonstration project will pursue the

potential of access to digital materials as a supplement or replacement for collecting the hard-copy originals. To achieve success in this area of the project, the partners will take stock of current holdings and access to these materials, and will develop a list of electronic equivalents and their sources. Working with their German counterparts, the ARL libraries represented in the project will seek to promote alternative forms of access, such as access to digital documents, that will reduce the cost of acquiring, archiving, and providing document delivery for these materials, and which will, at the same time, increase the reliability and timeliness of access to them.

IV. Work Plan

Two preconditions must be met for this pilot project to succeed. The tasks associated with each project component are substantial and complex: a Project Coordinator must thus be appointed in order to carry out some of the tasks, and to assign others to the project participants. The project also requires tangible commitments from participating members of the Association of Research Libraries to reflect active, top-level support for a practical cooperative initiative. Subsequent sections of this proposal will more thoroughly address these preconditions. The following plan assumes that both these requirements are met.

Project activities will center on three distinct endeavors:

1. We will establish distributed collecting responsibilities for representative cross-sections of German political science publications, ensure timely indexing to their contents, and implement expedited (preferably electronic) document delivery mechanisms.

The Project Coordinator, in conjunction with bibliographers from participating institutions, the Western European Studies Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries, American Library Association, and in consultation with scholars working in the field of German political science and history project, will identify materials in scope.

The Project Coordinator will work with bibliographers and with administrators for technical processing at each participant institution to ensure that bibliographic records and holdings information are widely available.

Each institution will develop an estimate of costs of acquiring and maintaining selected monographs, serials, and German government publications; any additional expenses associated with indexing or

document delivery; and data on requests and use. The Project Coordinator will tally all these statistics as a basis for reporting on and evaluating the costs and benefits of the arrangement.

2. We will determine the availability of selected government documents from Germany - digitized form and work will colleagues in Germany on expanding the list of publications available electronically.

The Working Group will consult with the Project Coordinator and Library of Congress staff concerning categories of documents for which electronic access will be particularly important. Additional and more specific requests will be invited from both librarians and scholars as the project unfolds.

The participants will develop a plan for distribution of these materials, or the acquisition of publications relating to political science in electronic form.

3. The Project Coordinator will monitor demand for these documents, and also assess the benefits of electronic access and effective bibliographic control relative to traditional procedures for acquisitions and retrieval.

The Project Coordinator, in conjunction with participating bibliographers, will develop lists of appropriate publishers and their publications. Dealer lists, topical bibliographies, lists of specialized research institutes, and above all the personal knowledge of librarians and scholars will be essential.

Participating bibliographers will commit their institutions to comprehensive acquisitions from specific organizations. The Project Coordinator will ensure that all major organizations are covered and will publicize the assignments.

The Project Coordinator, participating bibliographers, and technical processing administrators at each institution will ensure priority, item-level processing for these materials.

Each institution will maintain cost statistics for the materials acquired through this project, savings for any materials canceled, any additional expenses associated with cataloguing or document delivery, and data on requests and use. The Project Coordinator will tally all these statistics as a basis for reporting on and evaluating both cost and benefits.

The Project Coordinator, in conjunction with staff at the Association of Research Libraries, will publicize the components of this pilot project within the ARL community and also with the German Studies Association, the Association of College and Research Libraries Western European Specialists Section, the American Historical Association, the American Political Science Association, the research library community as a whole, and through librarian and German electronic discussion lists.

V. Staff and Governance

The Association of Research Libraries will provide the administrative umbrella for project support, for coordination with other demonstration projects, for communication with the research library community as a whole, and for project evaluation.

The ARL Working Group on the German Demonstration Project, consisting of no more than seven librarians and scholars specializing in German political science, will provide general counsel concerning project policy. Winston Tabb, Associate Librarian Collections Services at the Library of Congress and member of the ARL Research Collections Committee will chair the Working Group. Current members of the Working Group have been selected in consultation with ARL library directors. The members of the Working Group are

Roger Chickering	Department of History Georgetown University Washington, D.C. 20057
Martha Brogan	Yale University Libraries New Haven, CT
Konrad Jarausch	Lurcy Professor of European Civilization University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, NC
Michael A. Keller	University Librarian and Director of Academic Information Resources Stanford University Libraries Stanford, CA 94305
James Spohrer	Librarian for Germanic Collections 390 Main Library Annex University of California at Berkeley Berkeley, CA 94720
Winston Tabb, Chair	Associate Librarian for Collections Services Library of Congress - LM 642 Washington, DC 20540

Karin Wittenborg **University Librarian
University of Virginia
Alderman Library
Charlottesville, VA 22903-2498**

ARL Staff:

Jutta Reed-Scott **Senior Program Officer for Preservation and
Collections Services
Association of Research Libraries**

Duane E. Webster **Executive Director
Association of Research Libraries**

Information Liaison:

Margaret Hsu **ALA, Western European Specialists Section
Subcommittee for the Collaborative
Collection Development in German Social
Sciences, Cornell University**

LC Advisors:

Margrit Krewson **German and Dutch Area Specialist
Library of Congress - LJ 100**

Sarah Thomas **Director for Cataloguing
Library of Congress - LM 642
Washington, DC 20540**

The Working Group Committee will also publicize the pilot project, strengthen the consensus for the associated activities, and encourage participation as needed. The Working Group convened at ARL in December 1994. It will meet again midway through the project's eighteen-month implementation phase, and for a third time as a final evaluation and report are taking shape.

The Project Coordinator will hold a three-quarter time position during the project's initial year. The Project Coordinator will be a senior librarian who is familiar with the field of German political science and history with the broad concepts and the organizational details of cooperation, and with the constituencies of scholars, administrators, and librarians who will together implement and benefit from networked resources. The Project Coordinator will enjoy institutional grounding at the Association of Research Libraries and formal endorsement by such groups as the German Studies Association and the Western European Specialists Section of the Association of College and Research Libraries. The Project Coordinator will coordinate the pilot activities, assist local efforts to develop necessary structures in support of cooperation, and publicize

this venture among all appropriate constituencies. Preliminary discussions have been held to identify potential candidates.

Experiences during this pilot project will indicate whether a durable cooperative program requires a permanent Coordinator. Any such permanent staff would comprise an extra expense associated with interlibrary cooperation and would require longterm funding from those participating in and benefitting from the arrangement. The cost-benefit studies prepared by the Project Coordinator, plus evaluations from participating libraries, librarians, and scholars, will indicate whether a permanent position is necessary.

VI. Project Timetable

The work plan outlines an array of interconnected tasks. The project timetable set targets for accomplishing the project activities.

October 1994	Working Group members named
December 1994	Working Group meets
February 1995	Pilot project initiated
September 1995	Plan for ongoing operation completed
January 1996	Project evaluation
June 1997	Completion of pilot project, papers, presentations

VII. Conclusion

This proposal frames the issues for a project to improve access to German publications in the field of political science and history through a project constituting a strategic and collaborative effort by North American research libraries. It seeks funding to demonstrate the feasibility of cooperative collection development buttressed by access to digital information in a networked environment. Through its implementation, research libraries will surmount the barriers imposed by time and space and offer scholars an unparalleled way to access German publications.