

## Werk

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**SUPERJOURNAL PROJECT RECEIVES £833,000 FUNDING  
FROM UK HIGHER EDUCATION**

London, UK. - The SuperJournal Consortium announces today that it has received a grant of £833,000 to develop multimedia electronic journals. The Higher Education Funding Councils will fund the work over three years as part of the Electronic Libraries Programme (eLib). Project work begins immediately, and the first electronic journals will be ready in March 1996.

The SuperJournal Project is a major collaboration between publishers, librarians, and universities. The aim is to develop the electronic journals of the future that researchers, students, and librarians find useful and usable. Electronic journals in the project will be based on quality refereed journals that exist in print today, but with innovative electronic features such as interactivity, hypertext linking, video, animation, and 3-D graphics.

An important feature of the project will be to use industry standards and off-the-shelf tools to develop the electronic journals. Standards for structuring the information, like SGML, and standard file formats will be used. Vendors of user interfaces, browsers, and search/retrieval programs, and multimedia handling tools will be invited to provide software for the project.

Project partners include the 21 publishers of the Superjournal Consortium, University of Manchester, and Loughborough University of Technology. Each publisher will contribute journals and be involved in developing the multimedia features. University of Manchester will develop the host infrastructure to make them available electronically to user sites.

HUSAT Research Institute at the Loughborough University will conduct the research on user testing and evaluation.

In the first year the journals will be tested at 9 Partner User Community sites. These include University of Birmingham, Cambridge University, De Montfort University, Heriot-Watt University, London School of Economics, Oxford University, Ulster University, University College London, and University of Warwick. As the project progresses, the number of sites will grow, and may eventually extend to Europe and the USA.

Of particular interest for the future is answering the scalability questions: How do you handle large quantities of multi-media content? This is the only project in the Electronic Libraries programme that examines this.

David Pullinger, Project Director, said "The project is unique because of its scale and collaborative approach. By teaming together, publishers, researchers, and librarians, we can achieve what none could do alone. The critical mass of journals, the testbed environment and network of users will enable us to translate the printed journal into new electronic paradigms. It's a real opportunity to redefine the scholarly publishing process, from author, to publisher, to library, to reader."

Professor Ken Eason, Loughborough University of Technology, said "Too often we rush blindly into major technological applications. Loughborough University is very excited about the opportunity to evaluate systematically the positive benefits that might obtain from electronic publishing and to identify the problems that organisations face as we move from print-on-paper to electronic publishing."

The Director of the Electronic Libraries programme, Chris Rusbridge, said, "With its involvement of both the universities and many publishers, SuperJournal will be a flagship project for us. The issues of access and presentation it addresses are vital ones for the success of electronic publishing, and it is good to see the users brought into the process. We hope and expect the project to lead on to much wider availability of material and further material throughout the UK HE."

The Subject clusters of journals will include protein genetics, computing, physical chemistry and communication and cultural studies.

The SuperJournal Consortium of publishers was formed in (1993) when 8 publishers collaborated on a pilot project to explore the potential of SuperJANET for journal publishing. Since then the group has expanded to include 21 society, university press, and commercial publishers. These include: Academic Press Ltd, Blackwell Publishers Ltd, Blackwell Science Publishers Ltd, CAB International, Cambridge University Press, Carfax Ltd, Chapman & Hall Ltd, Churchill Livingstone Ltd, Elsevier Science Ltd, Institution of Electrical Engineers, Institute of Physics Publishing Ltd, Society of Endocrinology, Macmillan Publishers Ltd, Oxford University Press, Rapid Science Ltd, Routledge Ltd, Royal Society of Chemistry, Sage Publications Ltd, Taylor and Francis Ltd and John Wiley and Sons Ltd.

The project is supported by the Joint Information Systems Committee of the Higher Education Funding Councils and DENI.

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