

## **“Benefiting from a unique situation”**

### **Experiences within an ERASMUS Intensive Programme at the Berlin School of Library and Information Science**

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### **Curriculum Vitae**

Dr Gertrud Pannier teaches national bibliographic and information services at the Berlin School of Library and Information Science, Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, Germany. She is a member of the institutes' examination board and advisory office and as ERASMUS coordinator co-organiser of the ERASMUS Intensive Programme IPBib 2009 “Grimm-Zentrum – (k)ein Bibliotheksmärchen”.

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## Abstract

*The three-week ERASMUS Intensive Programme IPBib 2009 “Grimm-Zentrum – (k)ein Bibliotheksmärchen” (IPBib 2009) benefits from the historically unique situation that Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin (Humboldt University) is building a new central university library – the Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum (Grimm-Zentrum). This includes transforming a traditional depot library from the 19th century into a modern open access library. The restructuring includes moving twelve branch libraries from the humanities and social sciences into the new Grimm-Zentrum. With its approximately two million media items it will be one of the largest open access libraries in Europe.*

*Within the framework of the European Union Programme for Lifelong Learning (2007-2013), the aim of this project is to enable Library and Information Science students to gain the theoretical and practical skills for necessary constructional, logistical, technological, classificatory and stock-securing solutions. Apart from the implementation of new technologies such as RFID they also sample the expansion of modern library services. Managing and designing processes are part of the project discussions as well as specific issues like information literacy, barrier free accessibility for people with special needs and the general discussion about the renaissance of library buildings as a communal asset.*

*The geographic origins of the participating partners (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany and Lithuania) bridge the multilateral dialogue between old and new European Union members. Comparing national concepts and experiences, it additionally supports the creation of international and interdisciplinary networks on the level of academic studies and education.*

*The IPBib 2009 comprises workshops, seminars, lectures and excursions. The open source e-learning platform Moodle, integrated into the projects’ website (<http://www.ibi.hu-berlin.de/ipbib>), is used for preparing, accompanying and following up the project efforts. The benefit of this project is to support an efficient and multinational professional training that otherwise is not or can only be provided by a very limited number of universities. Working in international groups also gives teachers and students the opportunity to use and prove special learning conditions and teaching methods. Besides, it also enhances social networking competencies.*

*The sustainability of the project in the future is secured by the anticipated programme to draw a balance about new research libraries in Vienna in 2010 as well as the construction of the new University Library in Lithuania in 2011.*

## Once upon a time ... / Preliminary work

It all started with an idea.

The idea for the ERASMUS Intensive Programme “IPBib 2009 – Das Grimm-Zentrum” was born already in the summer of 2008, in view of the fast growing new central library building of Humboldt University the so called Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum. Like the main building of Humboldt University and the Berlin School of Library and Information Science

(Berlin School) also the Grimm-Zentrum is located in Berlin-Mitte in close vicinity to most buildings of Humboldt University. Inspired by the summer school concept of Humboldt University, the ERASMUS-coordinator at the International Office of Humboldt University found people he could convince of this project: e. g. the head of the old book collection at the university library and Gertrud Pannier, associate professor and ERASMUS coordinator at the Berlin School were the first ones to be convinced. Since it would be an additional project to a lot of running projects, initially there was scepticism about the question if we could manage this project. In the end this initial scepticism made room for mere enthusiasm.

Constructing a new library building is from a historical perspective a very scarce process. Besides, also this library building is the very first own central library building at Humboldt University since its foundation in 1810. Not only had to be built a new library but it was also necessary to establish a process of restructuring a traditional depot library that had followed the 19th century concept of a closed stacks library into a modern open access library. Opening the closed stacks but also integrating 12 branch libraries from the humanities and social sciences was a big challenge in this process. The result of this is the largest open access library in Germany with approximately 2 million media items. All this meant for the IPBib 2009 participants that within a very short period of time they could experience how to apply theory (the implementation of services) into practice and the problems coming along with reconstructing and additionally gain individual experience facing the real situation during the set-up process of the new central library.

Why not trying something new at the Berlin School which is moreover an official member of the iSchool Caucus?

There were already existing ERASMUS agreements with universities in Denmark, Italy, Lithuania, Poland, Sweden, the Czech Republic, the Netherlands, Hungary and other countries. The first step to initiate this extraordinary Intensive Programme (IP) was to search for international project partners. As the European Union defines it these IPs must respect the following criteria:

“The consortium involves at least 3 participating institutions from 3 different countries participating in the Lifelong Learning Programme. At least one participating institution must be from a Member State of the European Union. The planned location of the Intensive Programme is in a country which is eligible to participate in the Lifelong Learning Programme. The number of students travelling from countries other than the country where the Intensive Programme takes place must be minimum 10. The activity plan should include at least 10 continuous working days of subject-related work (virtual cooperation activities like e-learning as part of the IP will not be taken into account). The Intensive Programme must take place without interruption and subject-related work days can only be separated by weekends. Proposals that are integral part of an Erasmus Mundus Master Course are not eligible.” ([http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc900\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/education/erasmus/doc900_en.htm))

A survey among our ERASMUS partners was started asking if they were interested in joining the project and if they had students with a good command of German. At that time both Katharina Tollkühn, commissioner for public relations at Grimm-Zentrum and the commissioner for construction at the University Library were already involved in the preliminary work. Then, Mrs Tollkühn and Mrs Pannier decided to apply for financial support for an ERASMUS Intensive Programme and in January 2009 they started to work on the application for the EU Programme for Lifelong Learning which, as a sub programme includes the ERASMUS Programme for higher education:

“As the flagship European Funding programme in the field of education and training, the Lifelong Learning Programme (LLP) enables individuals at all stages of their lives to pursue stimulating learning opportunities across Europe. It is an umbrella programme integrating various educational and training initiatives.”  
([http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/about\\_llp/about\\_llp\\_en.php](http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/llp/about_llp/about_llp_en.php))

As a result of cooperations between library staff and professors and lecturers at the Berlin School the final version of the application was submitted to the DAAD (Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst = German Academic Exchange Service), the national ERASMUS agency. The start-up meeting was held in Berlin in May 2009 where topics and student tasks were defined. Also lecturers from all project partners had to be found who could cover the programme topics in their respective fields of expertise.

Although the DAAD had not yet finalised the assessment, the project partners had to start with the preparations since the schedule of the project was at the very beginning of the academic year the financial support could be asked for. It was moreover difficult to find the ideal date for realising the whole project. The first three September weeks were finally chosen because this was the compromise between the different starts of semester terms in each participating university.

The call for students on national and international level was a very interesting experience because the final group resulted in being rather heterogeneous. German, Czech and Lithuanian students came from different study programmes (Bachelor, Master, Magister), the Austrian students were already in a postgraduate Master programme, while all the Bulgarian students were students in a Bachelor programme. Altogether the final group consisted of seven students from Germany and 18 from abroad plus 12 lecturers from the five partner countries.



IPBib 2009 participants in Berlin

It was later decided to change the projects' working language from German to English because not all students could be expected to have German speaking, listening and writing skills.

During a lot of organisational meetings for developing the concept of this multilateral project such as compiling the programme for every day and defining the students' tasks it was also decided to launch a project website and to use open-source e-learning tools such as Moodle and social networking tools like Facebook. The German students wrote guidelines for the enrolment into the Moodle course and experiences dating from former Summer Schools at Humboldt University were used to find a central and budget accommodation for the IPBib 2009 students.

Besides, the IPBib 2009 could be integrated into the LIS Bachelor and Master degrees of each university. All material, all the presentations and discussion results can be used in various lectures and courses in the future. This material is complemented by a film, a vast photo documentation, interviews and a lot of online and print documentations using different wikis.

### **Let's see what happens ... / Work in progress**

After welcoming the students and lecturers the official start of the IPBib 2009 was a breakfast on September 2<sup>nd</sup> which was followed by a guided tour through the new building hosting the University Library and the Computer and Media Centre of Humboldt University which was at that time not yet open to the public. The name of the new building Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum reminds of the famous intellectuals, researchers and authors Jacob and Wilhelm Grimm the so called Brothers Grimm. The Grimm-Zentrum was supposed to be the centre, the heart of the IPBib 2009.



Jacob-und-Wilhelm-Grimm-Zentrum: central University Library and Computer and Media Centre of Humboldt University

From a methodological point of view the organisers had chosen a large variety of methods such as lectures, seminars, workshops, brainstormings and discussions which were complemented with practical work and excursions to other new library buildings in the regions of Berlin, Brandenburg and Saxony. This variety was put into action from the very first day on. Thus, the focus of the first day was barrier-free built environment in libraries and the students had to explore the accessibility of the building for disabled people. After a lecture with the same topic the students developed a leaflet for disabled customers of the library.

In order to connect the getting to know each other with the educational programme and in order to guarantee international exchange at the highest possible level, the project leaders set



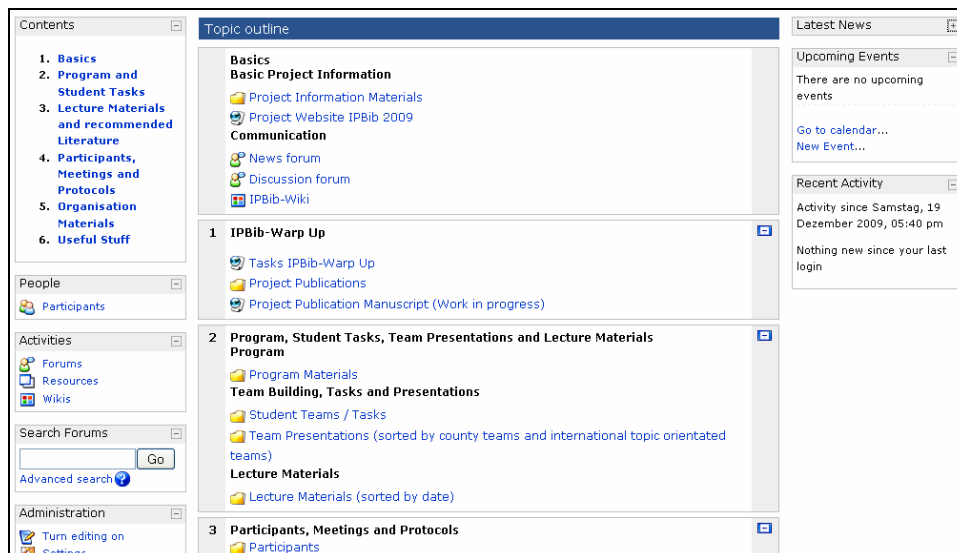
high value on mixing the teams internationally. Thus, some tasks had to be carried out by national teams others by international topic teams. The students had to work on different topics and got familiar with constructional, logistical, technical, classificatory and stock securing solutions which have to be carried out when building a new library. These topics were completed with new ideas on professional topics such as barrier-free design and information literacy. The aim of focusing the IPBib 2009 in this way should also enhance the exchange of experience on an international level. Plus, the Grimm-Zentrum offered the students the possibility to get familiar with the latest technologies in the library environment such as RFID technology.

Composing international teams of students also enhanced the development of language and social networking skills. Since English was not the students' mother tongue, the IPBib 2009 also worked as a very intensive English course and the students could extend their Library and Information services related vocabulary in English. Apart from gaining knowledge in Library and Information Studies, the exposure to sometimes very different cultural and educational backgrounds was a tremendous enrichment for the future and resulted in stimulating professional and personal partnerships which lead to a creation of international and interdisciplinary networks on the level of academic studies and education. Plus the multiple methodological character of the whole programme improved the communication and presentation skills of all participants.



Working in international topic teams

The open source e-learning platform Moodle was used to allow internal communication in the IPBib 2009. It makes it possible to add online material to the courses taught in the classroom and provides access to learning material such as the presentations made by the students. All the other numerous activities such as wikis and forums were used by the students to perform both preparatory and follow-up course work and also served as communication and exchange platform.



IPBib 2009 Moodle course

From the very start of the project the organisers wanted to make sure that the whole programme is documented as transparently as possible and thus offers the interested public insight in the project conception and project work also after the project finished. So a bilingual project website was launched immediately and embedded into the website of the Berlin School: <http://www.ibi.hu-berlin.de/ipbib/>. It shows detailed project description, programme information, project news and other useful information. A picture gallery was set up to reflect the project work visually and, there is an area for publications, too. In the course of an evaluation of the project more documents, freely accessible, were added. The official project report, project videos, an article to the university magazine Humboldt and a contribution to the high-circulation Library Science journal BuB: the IPBib 2009 has always strived to promulgate its activities to the public. Thus only very short time after the end of the project the IPBib 2009 was presented at the Frankfurt Book Fair 2009. Other activities, such as participations in international conferences, besides the BOBCATSSS Symposia, for example the upcoming IFLA Main Conference, are planned.



IPBib 2009 project website

## **Theoretical and practical work ... / Educational Programme**

As already mentioned before, the concept, in regard of the content of the educational programme, should be related very closely to the new building of Grimm-Zentrum and the necessary constructional, logistical, technical, classificatory and stock securing solutions. Accordingly, the project partners centred all activities around a range of topics such as modern library services, library classifications, information literacy, library and space, digitisation and e-publishing which were complemented with further aspects of Library and Information Science, practical work in the Grimm-Zentrum and excursions to libraries in the region.

With regard to the 'schedule' (among others!) the following range of topics formed part of the programme:

- **Library classifications**

This topic is closely related to the restructuring process from a traditional 19<sup>th</sup> century library with closed stacks to a modern open access library with a systematic arrangement. Part of this process is also the integration of 12 former branch libraries which have been using different classification systems which now have to be harmonised in order to offer the customers a usable systematic arrangement. In this thematic complex the students were given a general overview about the history of classification schemes and the classifications in use and also an evaluation of different classification systems. After this input the students in national teams presented the classification systems in use at their respective libraries. These contributions and a workshop about a classification project imparted new perspectives and knowledge about this topic.

- **Information Literacy**

This topic was chosen because Information Literacy is one of the pillars of modern university libraries and a challenge for the next decades. To make this visible the Information Literacy Logo was developed which points at highly important aspects of this very field of Library and Information Science but is not yet in very frequent use. Edgar Luy Pérez says:

“The logo communicates, in a simple way, the human ability to both search and access information, not only through traditional means, but also through the use of ICT (Information and Communication Technologies), as it uses graphic resources known all over the world, such as the book and the circle. The first one symbolizes study, and the second, knowledge and information, which today are made more available through informatics, showing with this that its social aim is to communicate. The book, open and next to the circle, comprises with it a visual metaphor representing those people who have the cognitive tools to reach information in a nimble way, as well as the desire to share this ability.” (<http://www.infolitglobal.info/logo/en/about>)

- **Library and Space**

In this thematic complex the concept of the modern open access library as opposite to the traditional depot library was picked out as the central theme. Additionally, in regard to the Grimm-Zentrum, the development of a multi-functional library space was discussed in relation to concepts of 'mediathèque' and 'idea store'. Contemporary library buildings in Europe were presented to the students, the main focus was put on libraries in Eastern Europe and their concepts of library as a place of learning and as a place of



communication. Presentations by the national teams about 'My favourite library' rounded off the picture of the renaissance of library buildings as a communal asset.

- Digitisation and e-Publishing

This very important challenge in contemporary libraries had to be a topic in the IPBib 2009. The students were acquainted with international digitisation projects like EOD (Digitisation on Demand) which provides electronic access to copyright free material and the edoc-Server at Humboldt University which as a form of institutional repository contains, among other document types, full texts of publications, theses etc. in digital format. Questions of long-term preservation and workflows for repositories were discussed in the workshop.

The students' tasks during the whole programme were manifold: e. g. creating a leaflet for disabled people, designing outline notes for the sessions, preparation of presentations in national and international teams. However, probably the most important task was to keep the project pulsating with lively discussions and interaction.

In order to complement the educational programme excursions to new library buildings in Berlin, Brandenburg and Saxony were organised. Each of them represents a different concept of library building: the Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Landesbibliothek Dresden (State and University Library Dresden, SLUB) whose reputation with a very long tradition is also reflected in the conception of the library building whereas the Informations-, Kommunikations- und Medienzentrum der Brandenburgischen Technischen Universität (Information, Communication and Media Centre, IKMZ, of the Brandenburg Technical University) integrates a wide range of services which are essential at a modern university and are catered to a special user group. Also libraries in Berlin were visited such as the Philologische Bibliothek der Freien Universität zu Berlin (Philological Library of the Free University) built by Sir Norman Foster and the new branch library for Theology of Humboldt University.

Practical work in the Grimm-Zentrum included raw and fine sorting of the stocks according to the Regensburger Verbundklassifikation (Regensburg classification, RVK), the most widespread library classification in the German speaking countries. This was a big challenge taking into account that on the one hand the students had to work under unpleasant conditions due to the construction work carried out at that time with a lot of problems such as dust and irregularities in the shelving caused by the moving company. On the other hand a lot of concentration was required especially from the international students because they were not familiar with the German classification system.



Practical work in Grimm-Zentrum

### **Did you enjoy the last three weeks ...? / Evaluation**

Continuous evaluation formed part of the project from the very start. The organisers had integrated weekly evaluation conversations into the programme which were seen as a supplement to the programme units which were always open for criticism by the students. Thus, the programme underwent a couple of changes because the organisers reacted to occurring problems immediately (e. g. problems with the internet connection in the students' accommodation, English as working language, working conditions during practical work).

The final evaluation on the penultimate day has been documented. A very interesting result is among others that the different national views coincide largely whereas in the details considerable differences could be detected. The international students emphasised the tourist attractions of the German capital whereas the German students analysed the IPBib 2009 in mainly in relation to their programmes of study.

The most important results of the final evaluation will go into the 'sequel' of the IPBib 2009 which will most likely take place in Vienna in 2010: more detailed planning of the programme, specification of responsibilities and contact persons, defining the share of content related to Library and Information Science, integration of 'Public Relations' as topic, better 'tooththing' of theory and praxis.

## **See you soon in ... / Sustainability**

The benefit of this project is to support an efficient and multinational professional training that otherwise is not or can only be provided by a very limited number of universities. This is due to the historically unique situation that Humboldt University is building a new central university library and most project partners have to deal with the challenge of building new libraries nowadays or in the near future. The sustainability of the project in the future is secured by the anticipated programme to draw a balance about new research libraries in Vienna in 2010 as well as the construction of the new University Library in Lithuania in 2011.

The geographic origins of the participating partners (Austria, Bulgaria, Czech Republic, Germany and Lithuania) bridge the multilateral dialogue between old and new European Union members. The IPBib 2009 has offered the unique opportunity to compare different national concepts and experiences. Working in international groups gave teachers and students the opportunity to use and prove special learning conditions and teaching methods. Besides, it also enhanced the development of language and social networking skills. In addition, the manifold methodological character of the whole programme has raised communication and presentations skills of the participants. Furthermore, dealing with different cultural and educational backgrounds was a big challenge both for the organising committee and for the students but accompanied by expanded knowledge of Library and Information Science related issues. It has tremendously enriched the personal experience of all participants and resulted in stimulating professional and personal partnerships creating international and interdisciplinary networks on the level of academic studies and education.

To be continued in Vienna 2010.