

Tilburg University

Journal articles on the desktop

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JOURNAL ARTICLES

ON THE DESKTOP

ELSEVIER AND TILBURG EXPERIMENT

HANS GELEIJNSE

Elsevier Science BV and Tilburg University in the Netherlands have started a pilot project for the electronic storage and distribution of scientific journal articles. This pilot project is a breakthrough in the relationship between libraries and publishers and is a follow-up of the cooperation between Elsevier and Tilburg University with respect to new electronic services which started some years ago.

Electronic information services on the desktop of all university staff, and availability of these services for our 10,000 students, was one of the main focuses of the innovative programme launched by Tilburg University in 1989. We were convinced that the service for the user could be improved by the use of new information technologies.

One of the seven key projects of this programme focused on the disclosure of journal articles. Other projects emphasized computer architecture, campus network, database development, self service circulation, networking CD-ROMs, desktop integration and publishing. In 1991, Tilburg University (the library, in close cooperation with the Computer Center) started to develop its own Online

Contents database with the bibliographic information of 1800 current scientific journals available in the library. The contents pages of journals were scanned, the images were transferred into ASCII by means of optical character recognition and the information was loaded into a database which was made accessible on campus in April 1991. Within 48 hours after the arrival of a journal issue in the library, the users were able to access the contents pages of these journals online from their desktop computer.

This project was regarded as the first step in providing better information about the content of the journals which the library subscribes to. With relatively simple procedures the accessibility of this valuable and expensive information could be improved. At the same time we knew that this was

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only the first step. The second step would be to extend the bibliographic information by adding abstracts to it. With full-text search methods abstracts would clearly provide better information about the useability of an article. The third step would be to provide an electronic full-text service.

Abstracts could be added by library staff or directly obtained from the authors or the publishers. We decided to do both. In the area of applied computer science, the library staff of Tilburg University produces abstracts, on a daily basis, of articles from more

than 300 key journals, creating input for a special database, *Excerpta Informatica*. This database is currently also accessible via the European host-organization, ESA. In addition to this in-house production, a pilot project started in 1991 in cooperation with Elsevier Science Publishers on CAPCAS (Computer-Aided Production for Current Awareness Service). Elsevier delivered tapes with SGML-encoded bibliographic information and abstracts of approximately 50 Elsevier journals mapped with the library holdings. In 1993 this project was finished. The Online contents database could be integrated with the CAPCAS information provided by Elsevier. The delivery of CAPCAS is now embedded in a regular service. The integration with the abstracts which are produced in-house will be realized this year.

In December 1993, Elsevier Science and Tilburg University agreed to start a new pilot project on the full text of 114 Elsevier journals to which the library subscribes. Since Tilburg University is a specialized university with a focus on social sciences and the humanities, the majority of the journal titles will be in economics, applied computer sciences and social sciences. As part of this experiment scanned images of the articles in these Elsevier journals will be delivered by Elsevier Science to the university in electronic format and will be included in the university database. The university has obtained a permit to distribute these articles electronically on campus. The information is fulltext and includes the figures, charts and diagrams of approximately 15,000 articles per year.

The goal is:

- to enable our end-users on campus – by mid-1994 – to make print-outs on their department printer of relevant articles which will be sent to them over the network;
- to enable end-users on campus – by the end of 1994 – to browse through the full-text images and to retrieve them at their workstations.

The new service will be made available campus-wide and will make optimum use of the IT infrastructure of the university, offering various services on 2000 desktop computers in an integrated way. In the library there are 400 80386/80486 PCs available for students and 200 PCs are available for student use in seminar rooms; 1400 PCs are available for university staff. All these computers are linked to the university network and to various local and central servers, by Ethernet and FDDI.

Elsevier Science and Tilburg University are convinced that the availability of electronic articles improves the quality and the speed of the scientific information chain. From the library's point of view it is also a very important experiment:

- to improve the service to end-users;
- to get more out of the present, very expensive information;
- to get more information about user behaviour;

- to get more information about the use of the journal collection in order to support collection development and to improve collection management;
- to get a better view of the opportunities and constraints of the electronic library.

Important research issues of the project will be:

- to create an interface between the bibliographic information and the specific image of the requested article, in other words an interface between the reference database and the image database;
- to develop a user interface which is appropriate for both bibliographic searches and image browsing in a Windows environment and to make full use of the client-server architecture. In order to achieve this goal the Mercury software of Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, USA, has been adapted by Tilburg University in cooperation with Digital Equipment.
- to monitor the use of these services and user behaviour; this is not only relevant to the publisher, but also to the library. The library will

have more management information on the use of its journals when the information can be accessed electronically. The project will also furnish further indications as to future policies with regard to new forms of disseminating scientific information.

- to develop an accounting system in order to secure access to the full-text information and to charge users for printing and downloading.
- to test an economic model. It is clear that the library has to respect the legal rights of publishers and make fair use of their licences. It is of great importance to both the library and the publisher to have a clear understanding of this issue, and to examine the cost-effectiveness of licensed electronic journals.

This project has similarities with the TULIP project in the United States. In this project nine major research libraries are cooperating with Elsevier Science in the provision of the full text of 43 journals in the field of materials science. An important distinction of the Tilburg project is that it covers the whole range of Elsevier journals to which the library subscribes. Another difference in our project is that Elsevier delivers the CAPCAS information and the full-text images separately.

We intend to inform others regularly about the progress of the project through publications, presentations and demonstrations. We believe that this experiment can also be of importance for others in the library community since libraries are now gradually moving towards the electronic access of primary and secondary information. A close cooperation between publishers and libraries to examine the electronic opportunities can be of great value for both of us.

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