



**THE LIBRARY OF THE DEVELOPMENT CENTRE OF THE ORGANISATION
FOR ECONOMIC CO-OPERATION AND DEVELOPMENT
IN THE DIGITAL ERA**
www.oecd.org/dev

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This article reports on our success with reorganising a specialised library in smaller premises and with fostering co-operation between the different parts of the OECD and other organisations.

The mission of the OECD Development Centre Library since the inception of the Centre as regards its educated and expert public is to serve as a link for the transmission of knowledge and enhancement of the collections in its keeping. This mission has made it a key location for the dissemination of culture, dialogue and information exchange.

Its cultural services, featuring consultancy and meetings, have developed substantially. The meetings which we organise on a regular basis with information professionals, our digital library training sessions and the development of our consultancy and information exchange activities in the information and communication sciences are rooted in a commitment to knowledge sharing. We regularly propose and organise seminars in digital knowledge publishing.

I regularly give conference presentations and advice on key information-related topics, particularly concerning digital resources and intranet site creation (Unesco/ International Institute for Educational Planning, Paris, World Bank European Office, Paris, Agence française de développement Paris, OECD Nuclear Energy Agency).

The Development Centre Library, an acknowledged centre for documentary resources on development, shares its expertise and gives priority to collaboration built on human and scientific ties.

The Development Centre is an OECD knowledge centre on development. Its mission is to forge on-going dialogue between Member and non-Member countries. Currently, it is an acknowledged source of authoritative reports tailored to the needs of decision-makers and thus facilitates dialogue on the adoption of evidence-based policies. The Development Centre focuses its efforts on its role as a recognised interface between decision-makers and the scientific community. It provides added value for the OECD, its Member and partner countries, through its substantial and innovative contributions to development policy.

My article is organised in five parts:

1. Our experience of reorganising our collections in a smaller space, particularly our heritage stock for conservation.
2. Development of the digital-library: new methods of disseminating knowledge.
3. Donation to a cultural NGO: ethics, selection criteria, targeted endowment methods.
4. Current premises
5. Consultancy

I should note that our partnership with the OECD Nuclear Energy Agency (NEA), which has its premises in the same building, evolved as an intellectual partnership which has been particularly active since 2004.

The library, established in 1963, is as old as the Development Centre itself. It is a vector for the recognition of knowledge on development and a testament to the transmission of such knowledge. The very first librarian was from the Economic Growth Center at Yale University, which explains our established tradition of open stacks and the use of the Library of Congress classification, Class H (Social Sciences), the same classification as is used at the Joint World Bank/IMF Library in Washington, D.C.

The fate of the library has always been closely linked with that of the Centre: from the very start, its collections were built up around key programmes and activities. Acquisition policy is conducted in liaison with researchers.

Moving the collections of a well-endowed library is a huge cultural heritage problem, an almost insoluble one. A library is a working tool for the use of the Organisation's economists. In its specialised area, development economics, it is unanimously acknowledged as a centre of excellence and a valuable asset: its collection of approximately 15 000 volumes and a hundred or so current print periodicals, can be consulted by authorised readers by appointment. Most of the collections have been kept on open access.

The Centre's administration and management – my management – ever attentive to heritage and ethical aspects – were very actively supportive and of unfailing help during the different phases of the move and reorganisation in these new premises.

1. Our experience of reorganising the collections in smaller premises, particularly heritage stocks for conservation

This mammoth task, in both volume of collections and duration, required:

- Preparation of the existing collections (storage/checking, weeding out and large very much appreciated donations to a cultural NGO).
- Supervision of the long and complex process of moving out of the old premises and into the new, greater reliance on the digital library.

2. Development of the digital library

Sound management of a library's stock necessarily requires:

- **Trade-offs:** particularly choices between paper/ **digital** subscriptions.
- **Increasing development of digital/e-library**
- Seeking **innovative solutions** to identify the right choices which **safeguard the future** for paper and electronic stock by using new methods of disseminating knowledge. We are taking out more digital subscriptions.
- As a result, the financial resources that we used to devote to paper subscriptions are now used for digital subscriptions ("share cost" system with other OECD libraries).

- Access to on-line journal catalogues:

Access to digital resources: we have access to over 12 000 scientific journal titles i.e. the entire catalogue of Elsevier/Science Direct periodicals: 1 900 titles with digital archives going back to 1995; Blackwell: 800 titles with digital archives from 1997; Springer : 1 200 titles with digital archives from 1997, plus JSTOR : 110 titles, OpenJGate, with 4 386 open access titles; DOAJ 3365 open access titles; the Economist Intelligence Unit; DataStream...

- Access to on-line books : we are having access to the complete collection of Elsevier/North-Holland's Handbooks in Economics series.

- The development of consistent, up-to-date paper collections (particularly books). This means having enough space for paper collections to be accessible.

- I also designed and put in place an internal library communications strategy, developing a new tool for this. In May 2007, I created an Intranet SharePoint /Wiki 2007 site, which is the first of its kind at the OECD. This new Intranet site – a Microsoft product – is highly regarded; I update it daily. I have a free hand. This new site replaces the library's old Intranet site, which was created in 2002.

3. Donations to a cultural NGO

In the spirit of information exchange and sharing, which is part of the Centre's mandate, we prepared **targeted** endowments of books/CD ROMs (French and English) and journals (French) for an NGO, "Le français en partage". These endowments were for university libraries and translation/interpreting schools in various countries.

The OECD Development Centre Library has always had a tradition of targeted endowments that can be used directly by the recipient.

Figure 1 : A view of the new premises



4. Current premises of the Centre Library

The new premises are the work of Alexandre Deslandes of Meudon (Hauts de Seine, France), an accomplished architect who is familiar with cultural heritage properties.

The project, with its understated elegance, uses specially manufactured materials (for instance, the glass partitions made by St Gobain, which involved a great deal of research into light and lighting) and allows for developments in new technologies.

This work space for researchers is rectangular in shape, almost industrial, its austerity tempered only by its brightness, day-light being provided by the rhythmic flow of the bays of its transparent facade.

The detailing is more secular, more practical: the glass façades are designed to modulate heat and light and the result is anything but the closed sanctuary of the classic library (not a temple, an open space).

The sophisticated shell, the use of light and the work done on transparency, allow the use of a simple method of assembling books, journals, images and digital archives together in one and the same space, which holds a mass of information that just cries out to be close together rather than split off into a series of rooms.

This site of recognised scholarship, useful at a cultural level, also plays a part in the dissemination of publications and in the visibility of the Centre's library: hundreds of professionals pass through each year to attend meetings of the three units at the Issy-les-Moulineaux site (to the West of Paris): the Nuclear Energy Agency, the Sahel and West Africa Club and the Development Centre.

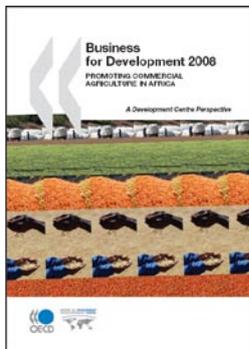
Now, we are keen to maintain a certain standard of excellence, reliability and prestige at the same time, which is quite a challenge in itself.

The library, which plays an active part in the visibility of the Development Centre, by developing a cultural heritage centre that is largely open to the outside world, organised a two-month exhibition (October-December 2007) featuring the Centre's new logo, which has been seen by a hundred or so professionals.

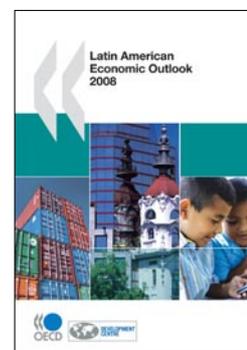
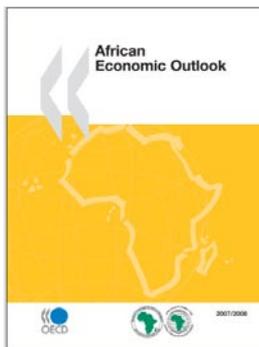
The library currently occupies 583 linear metres in a surface area of 108 m² (98+10).

Staff : 1 professional librarian (myself) + part-time assistance

Figure 2 : Flagship publications of the OECD Development Centre



Flashline



5. Consultancy:

In the last 20 years of the 20th Century, libraries went through the introduction of digital technologies: the first digitisation work undertaken benefited from higher visibility and usage thanks to these new resources being on line.

Now the time has come for mass digitisation, the widespread virtualisation of documents, increasing quantities of metadata and collaborative and community access.

This is indeed a great turning point for libraries, which are seeing their activities profoundly changed under the significant impact of this new phase of the digital age.

- My responsibility is to advocate the long-term conservation of a development heritage unparalleled in its richness and diversity and to identify the issues it involves. We have attempted to find innovative solutions consistent with **responsible library management** for this location, which is host to and expressly designed for research work and the needs of researchers.
- If we must discard material: irrevocable loss of memory/waste of cultural assets/public money: prejudicial to the image of the Organisation/ethical issue.
- If we must discard portions of a collection in a good state of conservation, it is essential that we prepare targeted endowments: we have a duty to share knowledge. This is a fundamental principle in sound library management.
- Careful/prudent identification of the parts of the collection which must remain in paper form.
- Conserve knowledge for future generations: taking heritage aspects into account.
- The Development Centre Library plays a major role in knowledge and culture in the field of social and economic development.
- Political commitment – vision – the most renowned research Centres all have well endowed libraries.
- Our information and research library is now one of a very exclusive circle of heritage resources directly which originated with a policy decision to make a commitment to future generations.

The new library at the OECD's "Issy site", which has the advantage of very high visibility, gives us an opportunity to build synergies with, for instance, the Units of the OECD Development Cluster * and the NEA, along with other partners, and to accommodate researchers and external experts in international relations for on-site consultation.

The library, which is WiFi enabled, has also recently taken a major step in environmental responsibility and sustainable development.

* OECD Development Cluster : Development Centre, Centre for Co-operation with non-Member Countries, the Sahel and West Africa Club, the Development Co-operation Directorate – Development Assistance Committee, Africa Partnership Forum.

Relevant Internet links

OECD: www.oecd.org

Development Centre: www.oecd.org/dev

CCNM: www.oecd.org/ccnm

DAC: www.oecd.org/dac

African partnership forum: www.africapartnershipforum.org

NEA: <http://www.nea.fr/>

OECD Online Bookshop : <http://www.oecdbookshop.org>