



Serge Noiret
European University Institute



Promoting libraries as “publishers”: EHPS - European History Primary Sources

CULTURAL HERITAGE on line
Empowering users: an active role for user communities
15-16 December 2009, Florence, Italy



CULTURAL
HERITAGE
on line

*Empowering users: an active role
for user communities*

INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE
Florence, 15th - 16th December 2009

Index

- ✓ The needs of a user community of historians
- ✓ Small scale e-projects for a specialized public
- ✓ Digital History: new tools and new methods
- ✓ Goals of EHPS
- ✓ Description of EHPS

The needs of a defined user community: historians performing research activities

- ✓ Historians need to find primary sources and secondary literature in the analogical world but also in the digital world.
- ✓ For postgraduate and post-doctoral programs, the need is more precise: historians want to discover original and unexploited primary sources (“serendipity”) and/or to access specific sources in archives and also in online repositories.
- ✓ But important digitization projects are often made of a selection of archival documents , of “treasures” or rare documents which are illustrating the “glorious past” of our nations. These are online exhibitions of artifacts, materials for teaching history but not primary sources for supporting an original research. (Ex.: The *World Digital Library* wants to offer “significant primary materials from countries and cultures around the world”. Significant to which communities of users and in which context ?)

Small scale e-projects connected to a specialized public

- ✓ Edward L. Ayers realized a pharaonic digital history project: «The Valley of the Shadow, two communities in the American Civil War». Ayers is now suggesting to modify our agenda: *«we've tended to build big things in the hopes of capturing as many uses as possible. But maybe now we need to build lighter, smaller things. We might build simpler ways to use our vast collections.»*
- ✓ In fact, digital contents are often accessible in OA digital libraries: small scale web primary sources and digital libraries projects, very useful to scholars, are disseminated in a fragmented web worldwide.
- ✓ They have to be discovered and accessed by their qualified public in a socially networked web.

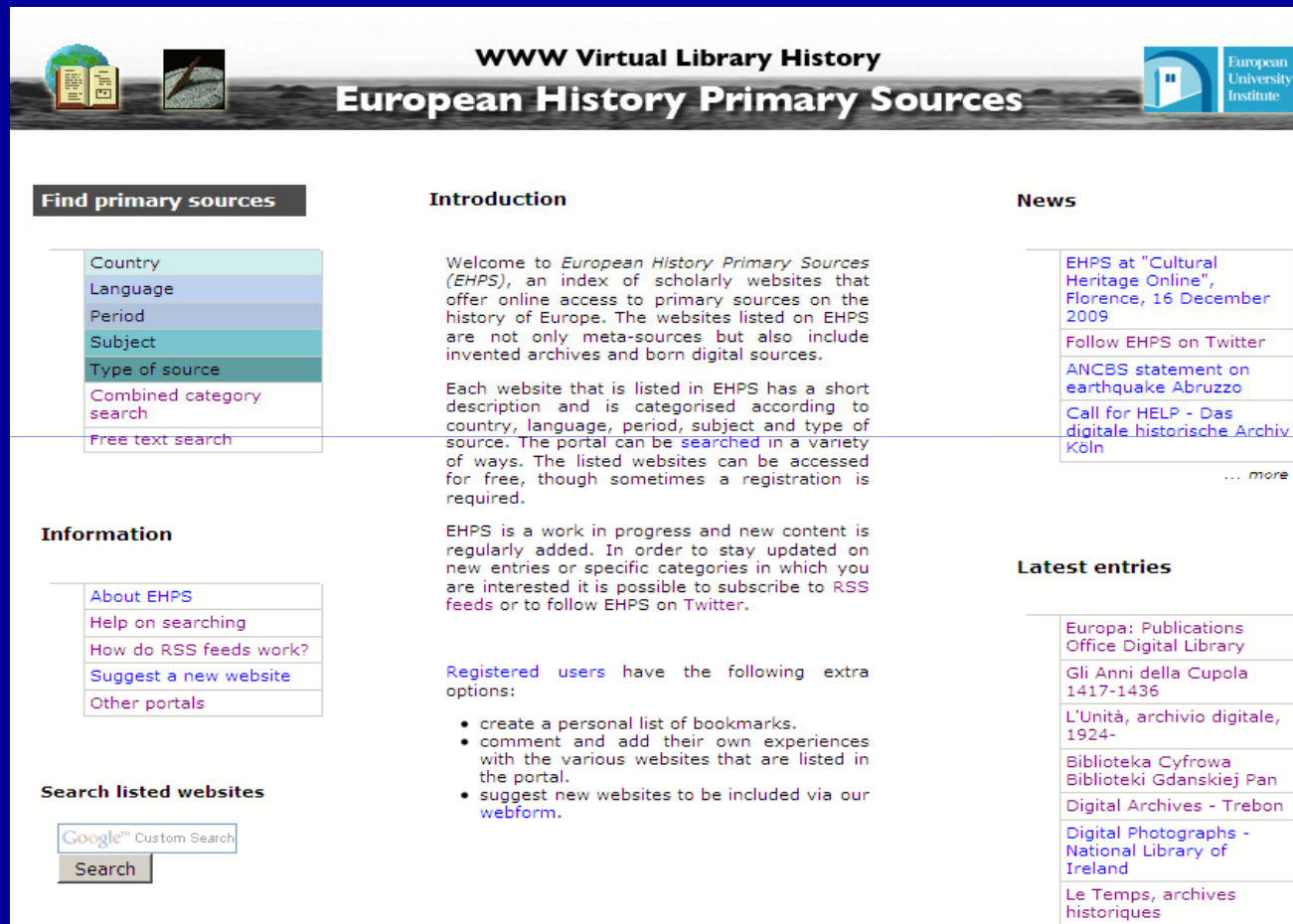
Digital History: new tools and new methods

- ✓ Digital history (and history performed through digital means), need new tools for **discovering, accessing and organizing critically** digital contents in the process of making history.
- ✓ Digital libraries are often externally connected with other web resources (ex. the ODNB) and also primary sources are aggregated in only one website through a semantic harvesting of contents (ex.: *London Lives*)
- ✓ The web in itself is a primary source but how could historians search and retrieve selected original materials and meta-sources online ?
- ✓ Nowadays, like at the beginning of the web when “indexing” all the e-resources was possible, there’s a need for scholarly portals, qualified disciplinary reference tools to support digital humanities and history.
- ✓ We need finding aids, indexes and portals to select contents but using new ways to communicate and interact with the user’s communities.

The goals of the EHPS portal

- ✓ EHPS wants to monitor the web, **indexing** scholarly **meta-sources**, born digital **invented archives** or *meta-sources* belonging to new digital contexts separated from their “analogical” existence and finding new forms of authenticity.
- ✓ EHPS would like to **collect and connect** with its user community, an atomized reality of digital primary sources for the History of Europe, either as a whole or for individual countries.
- ✓ EHPS is entering the second stage of a historian’s digital craft: 1. production of e-sources; 2. information about e-sources; 3. selection of e-sources; 4. use of e-sources in the process of writing history. Its main goal is about **informing** of the existence of digitized primary sources and offering a way to access them inside the browser.
- ✓ EHPS responds to the question of how we could link better communities of historians around the process of searching for primary sources using **web 2.0. services** .
- ✓ Capacity to **indirectly “publish” contents** (accessibility) not belonging directly to a library like the EUI library.
- ✓ Few staff, **low financial costs** and simple technological solutions.

EHPS – European History Primary Sources



The screenshot shows the homepage of the 'WWW Virtual Library History European History Primary Sources' website. The page is organized into several columns and sections. At the top, there are logos for 'WWW Virtual Library History', 'European History Primary Sources', and 'European University Institute'. The main content area is divided into three columns: 'Find primary sources', 'Introduction', and 'News'. The 'Find primary sources' column contains a list of search filters: Country, Language, Period, Subject, Type of source, Combined category search, and Free text search. The 'Introduction' column contains a welcome message and a description of the portal's purpose. The 'News' column lists recent updates, including 'EHPS at "Cultural Heritage Online"' and 'Follow EHPS on Twitter'. Below the main content, there are sections for 'Information' (with links like 'About EHPS' and 'Help on searching'), 'Search listed websites' (with a Google Custom Search box), and 'Latest entries' (listing various digital libraries and archives).

WWW Virtual Library History
European History Primary Sources
European University Institute

Find primary sources

- Country
- Language
- Period
- Subject
- Type of source
- Combined category search
- Free text search

Introduction

Welcome to *European History Primary Sources (EHPS)*, an index of scholarly websites that offer online access to primary sources on the history of Europe. The websites listed on EHPS are not only meta-sources but also include invented archives and born digital sources.

Each website that is listed in EHPS has a short description and is categorised according to country, language, period, subject and type of source. The portal can be [searched](#) in a variety of ways. The listed websites can be accessed for free, though sometimes a registration is required.

EHPS is a work in progress and new content is regularly added. In order to stay updated on new entries or specific categories in which you are interested it is possible to subscribe to [RSS feeds](#) or to follow EHPS on [Twitter](#).

[Registered users](#) have the following extra options:

- create a personal list of bookmarks.
- comment and add their own experiences with the various websites that are listed in the portal.
- suggest new websites to be included via our [webform](#).

News

- [EHPS at "Cultural Heritage Online", Florence, 16 December 2009](#)
- [Follow EHPS on Twitter](#)
- [ANCBS statement on earthquake Abruzzo](#)
- [Call for HELP - Das digitale historische Archiv Köln](#)

... [more](#)

Information

- [About EHPS](#)
- [Help on searching](#)
- [How do RSS feeds work?](#)
- [Suggest a new website](#)
- [Other portals](#)

Search listed websites

Google™ Custom Search
Search

Latest entries

- [Europa: Publications Office Digital Library](#)
- [Gli Anni della Cupola 1417-1436](#)
- [L'Unità, archivio digitale, 1924-](#)
- [Biblioteka Cyfrowa Biblioteki Gdanskiej Pan](#)
- [Digital Archives - Trebon](#)
- [Digital Photographs - National Library of Ireland](#)
- [Le Temps, archives historiques](#)

Example of an indexed web-site

WWW Virtual Library History
European History Primary Sources

European University Institute

Find primary sources

- Country
- Language
- Period
- Subject
- Type of source**
- Combined category search
- Free text search

Information

- About EHPS
- Help on searching
- How do RSS feeds work?
- Suggest a new website
- Other portals

Рукописи- Manuscripts of The Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra Church, Russia

View **Comments**

This website is part of a project of the [Russian State Library](#) and [The Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra church](#), one of the most important centers of Russian orthodoxy. The aim of the project is to gather a "universal collection of written and graphic manuscripts in Latin, ancient Church Slavonic and Greek languages as well as modern Slavonic, West European and Eastern languages." The collection includes rare documents and manuscripts from the 12th to the 20th century (liturgical books, annual chronicles, documents related to economic and social history, etc.).

The website currently offers access to 2954 digitised manuscripts, unique books and treatises from the holdings of the church library and can be browsed by the following sub-collections:

- Main Library
- Additional Library
- Unique Library
- Collection of manuscripts of the Moscow Theological Academy
- Awards, orders, bills of sale, documents, etc.

Visit the website: [Рукописи- Collection of manuscripts of The Holy Trinity-St. Sergius Lavra, Russia](#)

★★★★★
Your rating: None

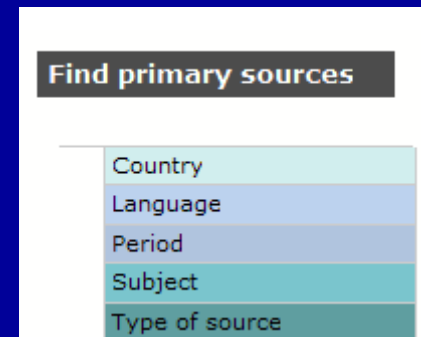
Login or register to post comments

in [Russia](#) [Russian](#) [all periods](#) [cultural](#) [economic](#) [foreign relations](#) [political](#) [images](#) [letters](#) [manuscripts](#)

Searching Primary Sources in EHPS

Four different ways to search EHPS:

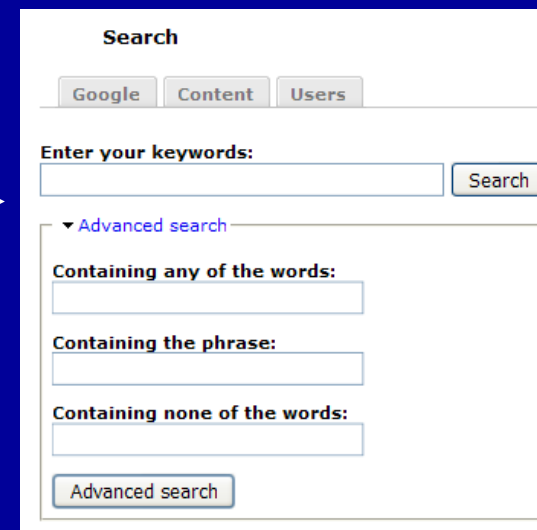
- 1) Browsing one of the five EHPS categories
- 2) Most selective: search EHPS combination of tags
- 3) Free Text Search in all entries and also in advanced mode with precise queries
- 4) Using Google Custom Search inside the listed web-sites.



Find primary sources

- Country
- Language
- Period
- Subject
- Type of source

Combined category search



Search

Google Content Users

Enter your keywords: Search

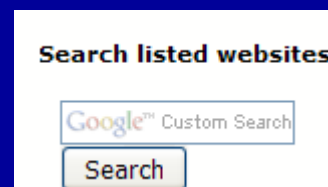
Advanced search

Containing any of the words:

Containing the phrase:

Containing none of the words:

Advanced search



Search listed websites

Google Custom Search

Search

Being Informed from EHPS

- RSS Feeds connected to *Google Reader*
- Following EHPS directly from *Twitter*
- Becoming Fan of EHPS in *Facebook*
- Knowing about ongoing statistics for EHPS through *Alexa*

The image displays a collection of digital tools and social media interfaces used for staying informed about EHPS. At the top right, a row of icons includes RSS, Twitter, and Facebook. Below these, three screenshots are shown: a Twitter profile for 'European University Institute EHPS' with a tweet about online exhibitions; a Facebook page for 'European History Primary Sources' with a post about a conference; and a screenshot of the Alexa website showing statistics for the EHPS website.

S.Noiret: European History
Primary Sources

16/12/09

Participation of EHPS specialized public

Registered users -after creating an account- may annotate a single web-site entry: EHPS needs critical judgments from its users for the benefit of other users.

Quoting entries within many social networks.

They may create a personal bookmark area.

They may suggest via a web-form new web-sites to be included in the portal.

A screenshot of a web form titled "Suggest a website". At the top, there are tabs for "View", "Edit", "Results", and "Track". Below the tabs, there is a paragraph of text: "We very much welcome suggestions for websites that could be included in the portal. If you want to suggest a new website please bear in mind that EHPS only includes websites that are relevant to the exhibition, however useful these might be." Below this text are four input fields, each with a label and an asterisk: "Name: *", "Email: *", "Title of website: *", and "Description: *".

1 to 5 stars for each web-site

EHPS in other indexes

- **Intute** is quoting EHPS



- **Delicious** pages are bookmarking EHPS

