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Information

WISSENSCHAFT & PRAXIS



book- and overhead scanner

Innovative technologies at the Free University's Philological Library

Berlin: new library buildings improve the study environment at Berlin's Universities

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The grand opening of the new Philological Library building took place on 14 September 2005, and it was attended by the Mayor of Berlin, Klaus Wowereit, and the famous architect Lord Norman Foster.

The new building, which is designed to look like a brain, was built over a period of four years. It is an architectural landmark that provides an excellent study and work environment for library users and staff. Eleven departmental libraries with approx-

imately 700,000 books are housed in the new building.

Together with Volkswagen Library that was opened at the Technical University of Berlin in October 2004, this modern university



Philological Library, FU Berlin



*Bookeye®-Scanstation,
Philological Library, FU Berlin*

library represents another important step towards improving study conditions at Berlin's universities.

The libraries also incorporate innovative technology. Bearing in mind today's shortage of public funds, the library managers decided to focus on the protection and conservation of the existing stock of books in conjunction with the use of modern multimedia concepts. One objective was to minimise the costs for the restoration and repair of existing books, and the purchase of new books to replace the ones that have been damaged through being pressed on the photocopier glass.

The solution chosen for the Free University is based on the approach taken by the Technical University of Berlin for its Volkswagen Library. This solution included the most uniquely intricate network of computers, printers and planetary scanners ever to have been installed in Germany.

Colleagues from the Bavarian State Library and the Saxon State Library and the Dresden State and University Library provided additional reasons to support the Free University's decision. These libraries have been using the Bookeye® book and planetary scanner (manufactured by ImageWare Components, Bonn) in conjunction with copier card systems for the payment of the copies that are made.

The Free University Library's system, like the one at the Technical University's library, has been extended by the option of automated transmission of the scanned pages via e-mail. Not only can they make A3 and A4 copies, library users can also send their scanned pages via e-mail at the touch of a button. All they have to do if they want to use this e-mail service is to register an e-mail address in the system's database when they purchase a copier card (See 'Description of the Scanning Process' for further details).

Thanks to a special keypad, the Bookeye® book and planetary scanner is as simple to use as a photocopier. First of all, the user scans all the required documents. Bad scans can be deleted and the page rescanned. The user only pays for the print-outs that are actually made or the pages that are sent via e-mail.

Description of the transmission process

The scanned pages are uploaded to a Web server in HTML format as image and PDF files. The BCS-2® scanning and capturing software that is integrated in the Bookeye® book and planetary scanner generates an e-mail with a link to the scanned file. The user's e-mail address is automatically inserted, based on the copier card ID, and the mail is then sent to the user's address. This procedure enables the trans-

mission of large files that exceed standard mailbox capacity. When he arrives back home, the user downloads the scanned documents to his own PC. Clicking on the links in a standard browser displays the selected image in the main frame. The other images are shown in the scroll bar as thumbnails. The data can then be processed if the user has OCR software.

systems. All printers have a card reader so that the print orders stored in the database can be accessed and printed out with the user's card ID.

The Philological Library is a reference library and it only loans out very few books, which is why there is such high demand for

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Technical equipment

A total of eight Bookeye® systems (grey scale systems) are installed on four floors at the Free University of Berlin's Philological Library. There is also a Bookeye® colour system at the service point. All systems have an A2 scanning surface. The use of the X-Print billing system enables both direct print-outs of the copies at the book scanner and print-outs at other locations in the library. Print orders – using the card ID – are sent to the X-Print server for output at the available printing

photocopies. The selected technology based on planetary scanning not only protects the books, it also provides the users with much-appreciated advantages. They don't have to keep turning the books, bad copies are minimised or avoided and the copies can be transmitted straight to their home PC via e-mail. The result means cost savings for everyone involved.

This innovative solution makes the libraries attractive information providers and modern partners to students and information seekers.

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