

1. General

1.1. What is the Publications Office Digital Library?

The Publications Office Digital Library is an ambitious project encompassing the retrieval from the archives and scanning of all publications ever published by the Publications Office on behalf of the European Union institutions, agencies and other bodies since 1952. It is available through EU Bookshop.

1.2. What is the EU Bookshop?

The EU Bookshop is the European Union bodies' online library, aiming to become the historic memory of the EU institutions: authentic information and as exhaustive as possible. It contains books, reports, studies, brochures and leaflets from all European Union institutions, agencies and other bodies; it provides information on all European Union policies and activities: from health to fisheries, from transport to education ...

PDF files from 2003 and later are 'born digital', i.e. directly created from the digital source file, while older PDF files are generally scanned images deriving from the Publications Office Digital Library project. Anyone can download all these publications as PDF files for free, or order one free paper copy of available publications.

Only 5% are priced publications, however, the PDF for download remains always free of charge. EU Bookshop is a valuable source of information for businesses, administrations, scholars, librarians, documentalists and anybody interested in the European Union. New EU publications are added to EU Bookshop every day.

1.3. What is the relevance of EU publications from 50 years ago; why are we spending public money on restoring an archive of old books?

The Publications Office Digital Library is a response to a demand. In 2006 the references i.e. bibliographic notices/metadata of some 65 000 books, which were stored in the physical archives of the Publications Office, but not available as PDF files, were uploaded onto EU Bookshop. A small 'scan-on-demand' service was established in-house to respond to requests for copies of these publications which as a by-product produced a PDF for upload onto EU Bookshop. Due to an overwhelming response of EU Bookshop users, a backlog of several months soon built up. In searching for a solution to the problem the idea to start a scanning project in a more industrial manner was put forward.

Making available some 110 000 publications creates a unique critical mass of electronically retrievable, non-legal information about the European Union. At the same time it ensures the long-term preservation of these publications.

A content-based selection was considered but rejected, as the requests received for scanning on demand were as inhomogeneous as the content offered. It was deemed more valuable to keep the archived material as a collection rather than as single parts taken out of context. Due to copyright problems, very few digitisation projects cover publications published in the second half of the 20th century. But the European Union

bodies are generally the authors themselves, thus permitting the publication of these titles without major copyright problems.

After the scanned PDFs were uploaded to EU Bookshop, the response was overwhelming. While in 2008 on average 65 000 PDFs per month were downloaded, the historic content offered has now reached over 230 000 PDF downloads per month so far.

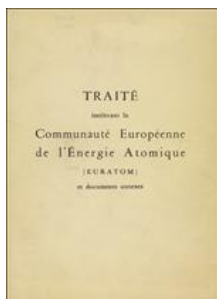
1.4. How many publications are available in EU Bookshop and where do they come from?

Roughly 142 000 PDFs are available as of October 2009, of which some 115 000 PDFs containing 11.8 million pages derive from the scanning project of the Digital Library.

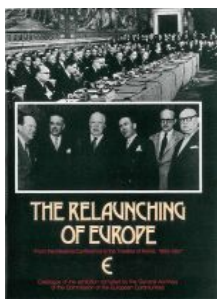
1.5. Can I find publications about Europe and EU published by other publishing houses?

No, EU Bookshop contains only publications edited by European Union institutions, agencies and other bodies. The publishing industry caters for other private and public sector publishing.

1.6. What kind of interesting publications can I find on EU Bookshop?



[Euratom treaty 1957](#)



[Relaunching Europe in 1985](#)



Early warnings about environment in 1970s



1.7. Are the publications in EU Bookshop free of rights? Can I reuse them for private and commercial purposes?

As a rule, publications in EU Bookshop available for re-use but it is necessary to check the copyright statement on each publication. This can be found by opening the corresponding PDF file and reading the copyright statement usually to be found on the back of the title page.

EU Bookshop also contains publications with a restrictive copyright notice. Users should therefore verify beforehand the copyright notice of the relevant publication(s) and whether reproduction is authorised. It is the author service of the publication who decides about the copyright wording. Usually (but not always), publications with a restrictive copyright notice contain third-party copyright material and therefore they are entirely protected. [See also Commission Decision on the re-use, 2006/291/EC, Euratom, under 2(b)

<http://eur-lex.europa.eu/LexUriServ/LexUriServ.do?uri=OJ:L:2006:107:0038:0041:EN:PDF>].

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1.8. Is the Publications Office Digital Library retrievable via Europeana?

Europeana is a thematic network funded by the European Commission under the eContentplus programme, as part of the i2010 policy. Originally known as the European digital library network (EDLnet), it is a partnership of 100 representatives of heritage and knowledge organisations and IT experts from throughout Europe. They contribute to solving technical and usability issues. The European Digital Library (Europeana) is a single, multilingual portal through which content of the participating libraries, museums, archives and audiovisual archives is directly accessible to the public. The Publications Office Digital Library is working towards making available its content via this portal: <http://www.europeana.eu/portal>.

2. Technical

2.1. When have the files been produced?

The project has been split into 2 phases: The pilot project scanned more than 6 100 publications containing 1.1 million pages within 8 weeks in February and March 2008. The main project ran between September 2008 and July 2009 and scanned some 115000 publications containing around 10.7 million pages.

2.2. Quality of the delivery

The specifications required to produce TIFF 6.0 in min. 300 dpi native resolution, in 24 bit RGB or 8 bit greyscale, with Gamma: 2.2, geometrically corrected, de-skewed, shadows eliminated, brightness variation deleted, operator's fingers masked, cropped, in original size, correctly rotated to enhance readability and ZIP compressed. This is one delivery, received on external disks.

The above-described TIFF images must also be embedded into a PDF/A-1b, being at the same time compliant with PDF/X-3 to guarantee print-on-demand capability. Pure text pages have to be binarised in order to save storage space. The metadata are encoded in the XMP stream and in the PDF properties. The PDF also contains an ICC profile, volume optimised to reduce file size. The amount of typefaces is also limited to further reduce file size. An **OCR background layer**, basic metadata and **bookmarks** are added. This PDF/A-1b is sent via Internet/FTP to the Office, in a ZIP package also containing the metadata files (separately in XML) and a JPEG thumbnail of the cover page. These files are also separately delivered on DVD.

Thanks partly to the use of robot book scanners, publications have not been damaged in the scanning process.

2.3. Is the published PDF full quality?

The PDFs are generally downgraded for publication to reduce file size, generally from 300 dpi to 150 dpi, reducing the size ratio from 10:1. The full quality is currently not retrievable from outside and will only be used for the future print-on-demand service.

2.4. Why are the published PDFs still that heavy?

A scanned PDF may not be compared with a 'born digital' one. Every single page of a scanned PDF is an image which is much heavier than a vectorised text like in 'born digital' files. The current reduction ratio is a good compromise between fast downsizing, good readability and printability on office/home printers and acceptable file size. We are aware that the download of most files requires a DSL connection. Extremely large files (full coloured ones with large amounts of pages or maps) will be reduced further in file size at a later stage using a specific technology, as this requires a lot of server time currently used for the general downgrading.

2.5. Can I request a printed copy of the scanned PDF?

A print-on-demand service is in preparation for 2010.

2.6. Have all PDFs in the collection older than 2003 been created by this project?

No, when EU Bookshop started, the Office tried to obtain as many PDF as possible from the printers. Therefore, the collection is not 100% homogeneous.

3. Bibliographic records

3.1. Can documentalists and librarians retrieve metadata about the publications?

Currently the full bibliographic metadata are not available in a downloadable format via EU Bookshop. However, in the context of improving accessibility to our publications, various possibilities are being explored to enable the collection of metadata for direct use by libraries and other information providers.

4. Languages

4.1. How multilingual is EU Bookshop?

You can choose from the 23 official European Union languages when using EU Bookshop. The website contains publications in about 50 different languages.

4.2. Why don't I find all publications in all official languages?

The language choice is made by the European Union body who edits each publication. Some publications exist in one or two languages, others in more or all official languages of the European Union; sometimes also additionally or exclusively in other languages, like publications of EU delegations in foreign countries.

5. Financial

5.1. How much did the digitisation project cost?

The Office pays less than 0.21 euros for the production of a regular page up to A3 format (transport, preparation, scanning, image enhancement, production of basic metadata, searchable text layers and bookmarks as well as the electronic delivery of the PDF including a thumbnail of the cover page).

5.2. What is the value for money for the European tax payer?

EU publications hitherto inaccessible in the archives of the Publications Office are now within easy reach for the public. Moreover, the long-term preservation of publications is guaranteed so that users can take advantage of the collection for many years to come — be they students, researchers or citizens with a more general interest in European affairs.

5.3. Why isn't all content in EU Bookshop free of charge?

Some authors want their books available in physical and Internet bookshops in order to have a wider distribution. This is only possible via a market model. However, only about 5% of all books on EU Bookshop are priced while PDF files available online remain free of charge.

5.4. Is VAT included in the price?

No, it is not, as VAT rates vary from country to country. From October, only subscriptions will be handled by sales agents and they are likely to add VAT. Monographs will be sold individually on the site, exclusive of VAT.

5.5. How much will handling and shipment cost?

EU citizens do not pay any handling or shipment fee for free publications. When ordering subscriptions, the chosen sales agent will add VAT and may apply a fee for handling and shipment. The sales agent will inform you about these fees when contacting you about your order. For direct sales or shipment of free publications to countries outside the European Union and associated countries, shipment costs will be added by Publications Office and included in the final cost.

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