

## **Transforming and opening up Swiss newspapers to the world : successful partnerships for rights management and funding digitization at the Swiss National Library**

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### **Abstract:**

*With ever more limited financial means at their disposal, increasing expectations of users for online access and better search options for newspaper content, and the need to better preserve original documentary cultural heritage, how can libraries fund digitization today ?*

*Over the past few years, the Swiss National Library has worked with publishers, rights holders and other libraries to create a unique model of public private partnership which offers unrestricted online access to digitized newspaper holdings from the 18th through to the 21st century. Additional funding has also been found through innovative approaches. Taking the example of the project to digitize the complete collection of *Le Nouvelliste* from its beginnings in 1904 until today, the presentation will illustrate how the library has succeeded in putting online 724'436 pages of French language newspapers from Switzerland, and compare this with a project to digitize *Die Tat* which it has self-funded, highlighting the pros and cons of each approach and lessons learned for future activities.*

*url: [http://newspaper.archives.rero.ch/Olive/ODE/NVE\\_EN/](http://newspaper.archives.rero.ch/Olive/ODE/NVE_EN/)*

**Keywords:** Newspaper, Library, Partnership, Access, *Nouvelliste*.

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## 1 Summary

With ever more limited financial means at their disposal, increasing expectations of users for online access and better search options for newspaper content, and the need to better preserve original documentary cultural heritage, how can libraries fund digitization today ?

Over the past few years, the Swiss National Library has worked with publishers, rights holders and other libraries to create a unique model of public private partnership which offers unrestricted online access to digitized newspaper holdings from the 18th through to the 21st century. Additional funding has also been found through innovative approaches. Taking the example of the project to digitize the complete collection of *Le Nouvelliste* from its beginnings in 1904 until today, the presentation will illustrate how the library has succeeded in putting online 724'436 pages of French language newspapers from Switzerland, and compare this with a project to digitize *Die Tat* which it has self-funded, highlighting the pros and cons of each approach and lessons learned for future activities.

This paper describes the digitization of two newspaper titles according to different procedures: *Le Nouvelliste*, in what it is now a standard procedure for the NL, which has been digitized via a public-private partnership, and *Die Tat* which the NL has digitized on its own, without external funding. First we will discuss the digitization of *le Nouvelliste*, describing the partners' financial and organizational contributions, explaining the contractual arrangements as well as the process of digitization and online access.

This is followed by a description of the project to digitize *Die Tat* covering the same elements. Finally we will compare the two approaches highlighting the advantages and disadvantages of each, the lessons learned and conclude with a look to the future.

## 2 Introduction

In accordance with its strategy, summarized by "The future is digital. But paper remains " The Swiss National Library (NL) is very active in the area of digitization, especially that of the Swiss press as this is one of the most important national sources for Swiss heritage. In addition, in recent years it has become clear that more and more people wish to have free online access to the national press. The NL has responded to this need by seeking to digitize the highest possible number of newspaper pages and to make these available online. The advanced search options provided (searches in full- text, searching in specific years) offer tremendous value for historians, teachers, students, journalists and private individuals. In order to provide the greatest possible number of pages, to ensure free access over the Internet while respecting copyright, the NL works in partnerships with private and public organizations. The model for these partnerships grew out of a pioneering project with the publishers *Le Temps* in Geneva and the Geneva Library in which three newspapers - *Le Journal de Genève*, *la Gazette de Lausanne* and *le Nouveau Quotidien*<sup>1</sup> – were digitized and made freely available online in December 2008, giving access to 200 years of history and encouraging both the NL, other publishers and libraries across French-speaking Switzerland to continue in this vein, based on a series of recommendations for the digitization of the Swiss French press drawn up by Swiss French libraries, the NL and the Association Presse

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.letempsarchives.ch>

Suisse: Un patrimoine en ligne : digitaliser les collections historiques et contemporaines de la presse suisse pour en garantir la pérennité et les rendre accessibles - recommandations .This was signed in December 2007 and encourages publishers and libraries to work together to offer researchers and the general public free access to the press.

### **3 Le Nouvelliste : short history**

Le Nouvelliste is a Valais newspaper, which was published for the first time on 17 November 1903. Founded by Charles Haegler, the newspaper followed a conservative and Catholic line and from the start addressed all the Valais. In December 1929 it became the first Valais newspaper to be published daily, which explains in part its future success. In 1960, it merged with Le Rhône, and in 1968 it absorbed the Journal et feuille d'avis du Valais. Today, together with the Walliser Bote, it is the main Valais daily newspaper.

The NL digitized Le Nouvelliste from March 2012 to January 2014. using a public-private partnership model

### **4 Identifying the partners**

Following the successful digitization of the Valais daily newspaper, Le Confédéré, the Médiathèque Valais (MV) and the NL sought to extend their partnership to other digitization projects. As with the previous project, when defining the project structure and the allocation of costs, it was soon clear that the Association pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine des médias valaisans (ASPMV) should be included, while the Groupe Média Rhône, the publisher of the Nouvelliste was invited as the private partner:

The publisher of the newspaper to be digitized is an essential partner in the project for a number of reasons. Together with the partner libraries, the publisher is a useful source for the compilation of as complete a collection as possible for digitization. Most important, in addition to financial support, the publisher is well placed to find sponsors, and is the first contact point for copyright and usage rights for the newspaper. Under Swiss copyright law, a work is protected until 70 years after an author's death. In the case of newspapers, the publishers manage the rights and so the NL needs their consent to digitize recent issues. In addition, while there is an internal rule that documents published 110 years ago or earlier may be digitized and put online without the need for additional rights' clarification, for serials this period only applies from the publication of the last issue. Without active support from the publishers, therefore, only the earliest issues of newspapers could be put online, depriving users of most of the 20th century news coverage.

### **5 Private Public Partnership – Partners' agreements and contributions**

Following the first contacts and discussions, the project participants' contributions were defined in two contractual agreements covering the rights, duties and responsibilities of the project participants and conceding usage rights of the digitized titles to the NL and the MV to allow free on-line access worldwide. The agreements were signed between the Groupe Rhône Média / Le Nouvelliste, which also acted on behalf of the Association pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine des médias valaisans and the Médiathèque Valais, and between the Groupe Média Rhône and the NL. Each agreement was part of the other. In more recent projects, this has been simplified and there is just one agreement, which governs the rights and responsibilities of all project partners.

The contents of the two agreements for Le Nouvelliste project were very similar. The project goal was defined as free online access to approximately 725,000 pages of the following newspapers "Le Nouvelliste" (1903-2011), "Le Rhône" (1929-1960) and "La Feuille d'Avis du Valais" (from 1903 to 1968 ) on the platform "Swiss Press Online " hosted by The Library Network of Western Switzerland (RERO) and using the software Archive Express from the Olive company. The major components were also the rights and obligations of the different project partners, their financial participation in the overall project, and the clarification of the copyright and usage rights.

### ***The agreement between the NL and the Groupe Rhône Média***

In its agreement with Groupe Rhône Média, the NL agreed the following: to take part in the project organization; to provide part of its collections for digitization so that a complete collection of the titles concerned could be put together; to act as main contact for Olive, the software provider; to ensure updating of the platform's user interface (in four languages), and to participate in the financing and promotion of the project. The Groupe Rhône Média's tasks included the main responsibility for project organization (including the development of specifications and the contracts with the digitization service providers); to make available part of their collections for digitization; to carry out quality checks; to participate in the financing, and in particular to take care of the intellectual property issues.

### ***Rights' clarification***

As rights manager of the newspapers, the Groupe Média Rhône undertook to free the NL and the MV from all potential claims of copyright infringement by third parties. In the event of a complaint from an author about the dissemination of a text or images the NL would undertake to remove the item(s) from the server.

### ***The agreement between the Médiathèque Valais and the Groupe Rhone Média***

The contents of the agreement between the MV and the Groupe Rhône Média differed only slightly from that between the NL and the Groupe Rhône Média. The rights and obligations on the part of the Groupe Rhône Média remained the same. The rights and obligations of the MV differed only in small details from those of the NL, for example, the level of financial participation and the responsibilities towards the software provider. In addition, the MV also undertook to guarantee the long-term digital preservation and hosting of the digitized data. The cost of the hosting at RERO is CHF 2,500 per terabyte per year for libraries which are members of the network meaning that 1.9 TB an annual sum of CHF 5,000 is required.

Basically it can be said that in return for their financial and organizational involvement in the project and their commitment to access and long-term preservation of the content (digital or analogue), the NL and MV acquired the right to provide unlimited public online access to the data for private use by the public.

### ***Financing***

In addition to the labour costs of the participating institutions (which determined internally by each partner), a variety of costs must be met. These include digitization costs (outsourced to a private company), plus the costs of the OCR and structuring of the pages by the software provider, and the development of the user interface on the online platform for each newspaper title . The total cost of the digitization, processing and upload is calculated at approximately CHF 0.50 per page resulting in a budget of CHF 362'500 for the 725,000 pages of the newspapers Le Nouvelliste , Le Rhone and Feuille d' avis du Valais.

For such newspaper digitization projects, the NL provides 20% of the one-time project costs. For this project, the MV contributed 10% , and the Groupe Média Rhône financed 30 %. The remaining 40 % were funded by sponsorship. To this end, the Association pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine des médias valaisans, which was founded on the occasion of a previous digitization project, was included in the project.

### ***Sponsorship***

Founded in 1937, the Loterie Romande is an association operating lottery games which distributes 100% of its profits to non-profit making bodies and organizations in the fields of culture, social welfare, health-care, heritage projects, research, education, the environment and sport in French-speaking Switzerland. It is thus a potential major donor for digitization projects but does not provide funding directly to public institutions or private companies. However, a non-profit association - the Association pour la sauvegarde du patrimoine des médias valaisans (ASPMV) – was eligible. The Association’s goal is the conservation, preservation and access to the documentary heritage of the Canton of Valais, in particular the press, where possible in collaboration with the respective rights holders and public institutions. The Association has no commercial interest and supports different digitization projects of the Valais press. Its main tasks are: coordination between partners, project organization and the procurement of private funding. When the Association was founded, it was clearly specified that the Mediatheque Valais would be the public partner, for each project organized by the ASPMV, and that the MV would ensure the long-term preservation of the cultural heritage used in such projects, whether it be in paper or electronic form.

The Loterie Romande agreed to a request from the ASPMV and has subsidized 40% of the costs of the project to digitize Le Nouvelliste, thus ensuring that 70% of funding has come from private partners and 30% from public institutions (not counting the latter’s contributions in staff time).

## **6 Distribution of tasks**

### ***Selecting the collections for digitization***

All project participants committed to making their own collections available in order to obtain as complete a collection of the titles for digitization. In order to ensure very high quality digitization at the lowest possible cost , different criteria were applied: were the newspapers bound, how tightly were they bound (i.e. what space between the binding and the text), how well the paper had been preserved (brittleness, discolouration etc.) Whenever possible, unbound copies from the collection of the newspaper publisher were used. If no unbound collection was available, bound copies with a sufficiently large distance between the binding and the text and as wide an opening angle as possible were selected. The remaining volumes were then selected according to their condition and then disbound. This analysis and selection was made by the partners, but in addition, the companies invited to submit tenders were also given the opportunity to consult the collections and to make recommendations .

### ***Outsourcing digitization (contracts, invitations to tender, workflow definition)***

Invitations to tender were restricted to companies in Switzerland as the collections had to remain in the country. The NL and MV drafted the call containing technical and organizational specifications, size of the collection and deadlines, which was then sent by the ASPMV to different Swiss companies specializing in digitization.

Following the selection of the digitization company best fitting the requirements, a contract between Groupe Rhône Média and the company was established, covering the technical, organizational and financial aspects, the exact sequence of work (size and frequency of the data supplied by the digitization company, project end date etc). A contract was also signed with the software provider covering similar elements. During the digitization and data load all partners had to be informed at all times about the progress of work and the next steps planned, as well as about any difficulties and delays.

The paper was digitized in stages, the images uniformly named, and at regular intervals external hard drives in predefined folder structures were sent to the software provider for preparation.

On 14 January 2014, the collection was launched at [www.swisspressarchives.ch](http://www.swisspressarchives.ch).

## **7 Preparing and uploading the data**

After data delivery, preparatory work was carried out for uploading the material online. The digitized output was structured at the page level and OCRd for full text searching. In addition, the company prepared one interface per newspaper title, including specified search functionalities. Once this work has been completed for all pages, the data sets were delivered to RERO to load on their server. A copy of the original files were provided to the MV for long-term archiving.

### ***The interface***

In addition to the user interface for each newspaper the hosting platform must be updated for each new title. These must be added as a link on the home page under the correct Canton; this leads directly to the search interface of the newspaper in question. Here, a short description of the title as well as the project participants and the sponsors is added. These updates are carried out by another company which specializes in website programming . The descriptive texts and all interface elements must be prepared in the four languages by the public partners (English, French, German, Italian).

### ***Quality control of the final product***

It was only after launch on January 14, 2014 that detailed quality controls were performed on Le Nouvelliste. In current projects, these quality controls are already carried out immediately after digitization with the work shared among public partners. After the launch partners had to check that the complete collection was online, that the interface layout was as planned and that the presentation texts were correct.

## **8 Marketing**

The initial agreements between the project partners only stipulated that all parties had to participate in marketing activities. During the course of the project and before the launch a more detailed marketing plan was defined indicating each partner's activities.

### ***The publisher's role***

In the print and online version of Le Nouvelliste itself, the launch was marked by the issue of January 14, 2014 which was headlined "110 ans de " Nouvelliste " à portée de votre souris" [100 years of LE Nouvelliste at a mouse click] showing the title page of the first issue of November 17, 1904. In the same issue, pages 2 and 3 covered the launch of the new online archive. Previously, in October 2013, an article on the launch of the newspaper archive at the

Foire du Valais was published. In addition, on the newspaper's website under the category 'archive' there is a link which leads directly to the Swiss Press Online.

### ***The other partners***

Both the NL the MV focused their marketing on digital communication: the MV website provides a number of links to the website from different pages. One of the most prominent access points is under the heading " Découvrir ". In addition, there is a link to the newspaper via the bibliographic entry for that title in library catalogue.

The NL publicized the launch via the Swiss-lib mailing list [a widely read list throughout the Swiss library world], highlighted the event in their "News" section which appears in a prominent position on its home page. Facebook and Twitter were also used to announce the launch and different access points provided on various pages of the NL's website. Again, the descriptive metadata can be searched in the library catalogue and from there a link leads directly to the digitized title.

Several months after the launch which saw a peak of 15,000 visits per day, usage is stable at about 5,000 visits per day. This follows a similar pattern to usage statistics for other similar projects, and shows the need for ongoing marketing.

## **9 The project Die Tat**

The NL prioritized this newspaper for digitization because of its great cultural and historical significance.

Die Tat was a daily newspaper, founded by Gottlieb Duttweiler and published between 1939-1978. Initially, it was the official publication of the Independent Alliance and enjoyed a good reputation as a critical and serious journal. From the beginning it positioned itself as a firm opponent of National Socialism. It produced a weekly supplement " Die Literarische Tat", which was directed by Max Rychner and later by Erwin Jaeckle. With a print run of over 40,000 copies its strongest phase was during the Second World War. After that, it lost more and more readers and finally shut down at the end of March 1977. For one year, a tabloid with the same title was published; this was founded by Migros and its chief editor was Roger Schawinski . In 1978, the journal finally ceased publication<sup>2</sup> .

In the field of newspaper digitization, the NL normally seeks to set up public-private partnerships and this was also the initial plan for the newspaper Die Tat. The cantonal library concerned was approached to see if they would agree to cooperate on an organizational and financial level. However, they did not wish to fund digitization of this newspaper as it was not among their priorities, partly because of the publication period covered, and also because the newspaper content covered the whole of Switzerland and not specifically the canton in which it was published. Nonetheless, the library offered to provide their collection to complement the NL collections to ensure the best quality source material for digitization..

Because of its status as a unit of the federal government, the NL cannot request private funding from sponsors. Despite this, and the lack of public or private partners, the NL decided that the importance of the newspaper warranted its digitization if it could be put online without restrictions. The first step therefore was to negotiate and sign an agreement with the Migros Cooperative Association MGB which cleared the way for public online

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<sup>2</sup> see also: Historisches Lexikon der Schweiz, <http://www.hls-dhs-dss.ch/textes/d/D43038.php>

access to the digitized collections and clarified the organizational parts of the project which involved the MGB. The MGB quickly agreed to sign an agreement which allows the NL to digitize and publish the newspaper on [www.swisspressarchives.ch](http://www.swisspressarchives.ch). However, once again, due to other digitization priorities established by the MGB company archive, financial support was out of the question. Under the terms of the agreement, the MGB made its collection of newspapers available as long as those volumes need not be disbound for digitization.

After the rights had been cleared, specifications for the call for tender were prepared and sent to different Swiss digitization companies [again, the paper collections could not leave the country]. Part of the specifications allowed for the company to inspect the collections at the NL, the cantonal library and the MGB to compile a complete set. It quickly became clear that a major part of the collection would need to be disbound for digitization. Therefore, only a small part of the newspapers from the MGB could be used. For practical and logistical reasons, the NL provided the remaining volumes. Since these had to be disbound and this represents a significant strain on the newspapers, it was decided to produce microfilms for long-term preservation in addition to the digitized material. Since the NL does not engage in OAIS - compliant long-term preservation of digitized data for newspapers, if the data were to be lost, microfilms could be used for re-digitization. This preserves the originals and minimizes the costs of a possible re-digitization.

Following digitization, NL staff quality checked approximately 10% of the data. This meant a considerable effort which took several months in total. Several deliveries in which errors were detected in the first sample were rejected and had to be re-supplied by the digitization company. The delivery of data in several sets had to be monitored very carefully. It was hard to keep to schedules and some delays occurred. Initially planned for launch in Summer 2014, the platform is now planned for early 2015.

## **10 Comparing the two approaches**

Obviously, it is interesting to set up partnerships for newspaper digitization projects, especially for their financing. This type of document is characterized by its high number of pages, which can quickly lead to total project costs from CHF 100,000 upwards. For a single library, even for the NL, such costs can only be taken on alone in exceptional circumstances, especially because as explained above, the NL may not approach sponsors. Most of the projects could not be realized without financial support. If one of the partners cannot contribute financially it can also be assumed that no staff resources from that institution will be available for a project. For the NL, this means a huge effort is required in the areas of project organization, digitization processes, selection of service providers, site launch and promotion, and above all, in the area of quality control.

Then there is the issue of the newspaper collection to be prepared for digitization. The example of Die Tat has shown that, if the NL is taking the main responsibility for the project, partners owning similar collections are less willing to provide volumes from their own collections if these need to be disbound or risk even slight damage from the digitization process. This has two very adverse consequences for the NL: on the one hand the staff has to take on sole responsibility for preparing the collection of volumes to be digitized and on the other in accordance with conservation guidelines a microfilm (from digital) copy must also be produced for all originals that are provided by the NL for digitizing. This also increases the project cost considerably.

Finally, the contribution of partners in promoting the project and its outcome should never be underestimated. The project for Le Nouvelliste has shown that commercial partners have far better ways to reach the public directly than libraries, including the NL.

These significant disadvantages of stand-alone solutions are not offset by the slightly leaner project organization and the NL's greater independence at all stages, in particular the selection of the online platform. The NL's perspective is that this could be justified only in cases of newspapers with national coverage (i.e. with no clear connection to a region or Canton) and of outstanding importance for Swiss heritage.

### ***Lessons Learned***

We should not underestimate the time that is needed in a public-private partnership organization. The flow of information between the partners must be clearly defined from the outset. It is essential to ensure that all parties are equally informed and people have the relevant information they need. We recommend the nomination of a contact person on the project organization side who communicates with the service providers and forwards the information to the other members of the project group.

Our experience with these two projects has shown that the pragmatic approach to digitization in private-public partnership structures works well. Perhaps Switzerland's small size contributes to increased acceptance and therefore to a greater willingness of private and public organizations to work together in such projects. On the other hand, the effort to organize these partnerships, to find financial backers, to put together a complete collection for digitization and select and clarify the rights should not be underestimated.

The structure and models established in previous projects greatly facilitate work in today's projects. For example, the same association that was founded for Confédéré project could be used to seek and manage funding for the digitization of Le Nouvelliste. The specifications, contracts and agreements with the partners had to be slightly adjusted and these were also accepted by the publishers and rights holders reasonably easily. Regarding funding we also found that the private partners, i.e. the publishers, are in a prime position to find sponsors for funding, while the NL and the public partners have the most complete collections for digitization.

### ***Conclusion and looking to the future***

We can conclude that while PPP organization can be complicated, and that the associated administrative activities should not be underestimated under any circumstances, this structure nevertheless represents an excellent model for large press digitization projects. An overwhelming advantage of this approach is the possibility to clear rights management questions with publishers and provide access to very recent material without cost to the end user. This is in complete contrast to similar PPP in other countries. In the future, the NL will carry out digitization projects of this kind without a partner only in exceptional cases. A viable intermediate path that we can consider, could be partnerships with other public partners, such as libraries and archives. However, rights management questions and the participation or agreement of rights holders will remain the key to providing access to our recent cultural heritage not only in Switzerland but across the world.