

EUPHIDAS
– **EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHICAL**
DATABASES SYSTEMS

**Creating an EUropean PHilosophical DATabases System
for research and training**

Viorel Guliciuc & Emilia Guliciuc

Resumé. Pas toutes les chaires de philosophie des universités européennes sont assez appropriées préparés pour l'environnement électronique du travail de la société de l'information. En ces conditions, leur intégration dans les cadres de la société de l'information sera difficile et embarrassante. Cependant, elles peuvent transformer leurs avantages (national) en équipements et en logiciels en avantages du contenu électronique en déployant rapidement et efficacement des programmes concentrés sur les topiques électroniques de la philosophique. C'est une manière de transformer la recherche d'information en la trouve d'information appropriée. Puisque les bases européennes des données philosophiques ne sont pas toujours mises à jour, chacun de nous doit déployer son propre méthodologie de recherche de l'information philosophique en ligne et doit dépenser beaucoup de temps pour la trouver. Dans ces conditions, la qualité de nos programmes philosophiques de recherche et de formation électronique diminuera nettement, dans les nouveaux cadres de la société de l'information. Les grandes universités des Etats Unis ont telles bases de données philosophiques, contenant non seulement des informations générales mais très spécialisées, aussi. Nous devons suivre ces exemples et interposer entre l'utilisateur (chercheur, professeur et/ou étudiant) et la communauté électronique (Internet, bases de données générales etc.) un système (philosophique) de recherche et de bases de données scolaires, de guides et publications scientifiques en ligne, avec accès

ouvert. Puisque l'Internet se compose presque d'information non structurée nous avons besoin de logiciel capable rechercher, classer, évaluer et retenir seulement l'information qui nous intéresse. C'est pourquoi la recherche et la valorisation de l'information appropriée ne peuvent pas être simplement syntactiques, mais sémantiques: en fait nous ne sommes pas intéressés en termes, mais en catégories, en idées. Dans un environnement multilingue, les outils traditionnels de recherche de l'information (les bases de données) et les prétendus chercheurs "à texte intégral" sont insuffisants. En philosophie, nous avons besoin d'une solution qui peut maximiser l'utilisation des technologies "enchaînement orientées" dans le contexte des défis réels de gestion de la connaissance. Pour réaliser un tel but (base de données orientées), il est essentiel d'employer le logiciel approprié et d'établir un système intégré d'information philosophiquement convenable.

1. GROUNDS

1.1. European universities face to challenges of the information society

The philosophy departments of the European universities are not all enough appropriate prepared for the *e*working environments of information society: a) Theirs' policies concerning the *e*working environment are not clearly précised. Medium programmes, under the goals of the *e*society, are not satisfactory. b) Theirs' equipments are often moral used already and non-efficiently utilised. c) The licensed software is still insufficient or composed by old versions. d) Theirs' staff is still working exclusively in a classical paper based environment, almost. The literacy of new researching / learning technologies is doubtful.

In these conditions, the integration of the philosophical research and tertiary level of education units in the frames of the information society will be embarrassing.

1.2 The universities' consortium situation for the EUPHIDAS project

However, our departments have, each, good national levels of the eEurope and eEurope + Programmes and Action Plans' indicators. That is our philosophy departments are more prepared for the implementation of the new working frames of the information society.

That is why we can rapidly and efficiently deploy a pilot programme focused on the philosophical topics, in a new research and learning environment.

2. NECESSITY

In the next years, the difference between the tertiary and the primary and secondary education will be given only by their research and educational econtent.

In these new conditions, the universities must transform their (national) hardware and software advantages into econtent advantages.

2.1 General frames

The ICT literacy is not satisfactory in our philosophy departments: not all our students and members of the academic staff know how to find the *online* information they need, for academic or research interests. So, we are spending and WASTING

EUPHIDAS
– EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHICAL DATABASES SYSTEMS

much precious time in the search of relevant information. That is why the bandwidth used in our universities is more and more larger (and expensive).

But can we continue to spend precious time and money in the search of relevant information, even the Internet bandwidth is inefficiently used ? It is obvious we need a clear new strategy of finding, using and sharing the relevant philosophical research and academic information.

We must transform the searching of information into the finding of relevant information.

2.2. Particular frames - for humanities (philosophy, social sciences and sciences of education)

In the technical fields of research / education, finding the relevant information on the Net, is simple.

In the humanities, the situation is different, because the natural language is polysemantic. The European information about new philosophical books, scientific journals, events etc. is not enough structured. The existing philosophical databases are incomplete and not well updated. Each of us must deploy his own searching “methodology” and spend a lot of time for finding it.

In these conditions, the quality of our philosophical researching and training programmes will dramatically decrease, in the new referentials of the information society.

3. GENERAL FRAMES OF IMPLEMENTATION

The major US universities have such philosophical specialised databases, containing not only general information but very specialised one, too. They are editing different epapers, eguides, scientific ejournals and ereviews etc. Also, in US, there

are commercial philosophical information searching databases, offering the possibility to be well informed.

We MUST follow those examples and interpose between user (researcher, teacher and/or student) and ecommunity (Internet, general databases etc.) a system of philosophically specialised research and academic databases, guides and scientific publications.

4. PARTICULAR FRAMES OF IMPLEMENTATION - *for* humanities

Because the Internet is composed almost by non-structured information we need software able to search, index, evaluate and retrieve only the information we are interested for. That is why the searching and finding of relevant information must not be simply a syntactic, but a semantic one: *in fact we are not interested in terms, but in categories, in ideas.*

In a multilingual environment, the traditional tools of information searching (the databases) and the so-called "full-text" searchers are unsatisfactory. In philosophy, we need a solution that can maximise the usage of "web-oriented" technologies in the context of the knowledge management challenges.

In order to realise such a purpose it is essentially to use the appropriate retrieving (database oriented) software solution.

5. THE EXAMPLE OF THE ROPHIE – ROMANIAN PHILOSOPHICAL INTERNET ENCYCLOPAEDIA

Created in 2000, at "Stefan cel Mare" University of Suceava, ROPHIE intend to be an eAgora of philosophical information, debates and news. At the moment of his creation it was a novelty, both, for the Romanian and European research and

EUPHIDAS
 – **EUROPEAN PHILOSOPHICAL DATABASES SYSTEMS**

academic philosophical networks. Now, we can confirm the intuition of its necessity: European funds are specifically allocated for the creation of *e*journals and *e*reviews.

ROPHIE is composed by an *e*Philosophical Guide, an *e*Philosophical Encyclopaedia and related with 3 philosophical *e*journals (www.rophie.usv.ro). The Guide component is already operational (even it is incomplete). The Encyclopaedia is still under construction. The *e*reviews have been realised.

For the Guide component we are utilising the demo of the DigOut4U. It is the search component of Arisem solutions (www.arisem.com) for watch and management of knowledge and it includes a general knowledge base named „Genus” (a powerful and multilingual reference system of ontology containing 20,000 concepts & 500,000 links in five languages, and a representational model of "information resources"). It is independent of a language, has powerful functionalities, adapted to automated collecting, classification, and distribution of unstructured information and can be fully customized and adapted to a specific domain of research or academic interests.

We have obtained very good results by using it, despite the fact it is only a demo product, because it is much more appropriate for the humanities fields than all other solutions we tried.

6. CONDITIONS OF EUPHIDAS PROJECT IMPLEMENTATION

Our national top levels *e*Europe and *e*Europe + Action Plan(s) indicators are major advantages, in order to realise the EUPHIDAS. The costs of new hardware for EUPHIDAS creation are acceptable. We will better utilise the existing servers / PCs and upgrade them.

The new personnel for the EUPHIDAS Project is very limited. We will better utilise the existing technical staff, by a better tasks and working time management.

On the other hand, our universities have large amounts of unused Internet bandwidth (almost 10 hours per day). We will utilise this free bandwidth, from the midnight (0.00) until 7.00 a.m., without supplementary significant costs. The bandwidth enlargement will be specific and limited.

The use of Arisem's *Watch or Knowledge* solutions, (suites of intelligent software modules, which offer the unique ability to create a specialised conceptual worlds for a specific scientific or academic domain) would be more appropriate, however. The costs of the *Arisem Watch or Knowledge* solutions, even significant, are fully justified.

We can conclude: there are no outstanding costs involved by such a project, because we will better utilise what we already have.

7. GENERAL ANTICIPATED RESULTS (FOR THE WHOLE PROJECT)

By realising a system of philosophically research and academic and databases, we will obtain, at no high costs, in the next 12-24 months, a massive amount of philosophically relevant information, for research and classrooms, easily accessible from our Intranets and from the Internet.

The databases will contain not only the links to the relevant Internet information, but the relevant pages retrieved, too. The updates of philosophical online information will be automatically, software realised.

The EUPHIDAS network will be integrated with other similar networks. It will be able to offer support, at European, regional, national or local level, for philosophical research and lifelong learning, the adult education, the philosophical elearning etc. EUPHIDAS will become the integrator for all philosophical European information and a key part of the information society.