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Národní knihovna
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Digitisation projects of the Czech National Library will archive hundreds of thousands of books and magazines

Czech National Library will digitise half a million of books with the help of EU operational programme and Google.

The Czech National Library launches two major book digitisation projects that will help to preserve Czech and European cultural heritage of many past centuries. The library will digitise 300,000 volumes of mainly Czech books of the 19th to 21st centuries by 2019 with the help of subsidies provided by the EU and the Czech Government.

The Czech National Library is the 12th European library and 4th National library in Europe with which Google will cooperate to digitise 200,000 out-of-copyright works of the Historical and Slavic collections of the library, i.e. prints from the 16th to the end of the 18th century.

I. The National Digital Library

In June 2010, the Czech National Library has received financial support for the development of the National Digital Library (NDK).

The project is being co-financed from EU's Integrated Operational Programme by an amount of CZK 255 million and from Ministry of Culture's budget by 45 million (*The 85 per cent contribution of ERDF amounts to CZK 254,946,300 and is complemented by 15 per cent co-financing from the government budget amounting to CZK 44,990,700. The total public cost amounts to CZK 299,937,000*).

The NDK project is one of the cornerstones of the eCulture programme by which the culture sector significantly contributes to the Smart Administration efforts (Efficient public administration and user-friendly public service).

The project has been developed by the Czech National Library (the project author) in partnership with Moravian Land Library (partner). Due to the Right of obligatory copy, both libraries contain most of the monographs, journals and other documents printed in the country (narrowly defined Bohemica prints), as well as many documents related to Czech Republic and published abroad (Bohemica generally) while managing extensive historical collections. Since 2000, the two libraries have partnered on the monitoring and storage of Czech web content. Therefore they have vast and unique material of great cultural and factional (as far as Smart Administration is concerned) value.

The National Digital Library has three main objectives:

1. **Digitisation of most of the Czech printed production of the 19th to 21st centuries,** i.e. books published in the Czech Republic, written in Czech or in relation to Czech Republic. In total, 50 million pages will be digitised — 300,000 volumes — by 2019. The project is not limited by the scope of its duration (end 2014) or the period of its obligatory sustainability (end 2019) but it will continue with great intensity in future years.

2. **Long-term secure storage of documents in a reliable digital storage facility**. The facility will provide space for reliable storage of digitised documents and digital documents created or obtained from other projects.

3. **Accessibility of digital document**s in a single, unified and user-friendly interface allowing customisation. Digitised documents and online databases of the library (with a charge) will be accessible from one place.

II. Digitisation of historical collections by Google

The cooperation of Google and the National Library is the second project within the annual program "Google for Czech Culture 2011"(google.cz/proceskoukulturu). The Czech National Library is the 12th European library which will have its collections digitised by Google and, subsequently, made accessible in Google Books (google.cz/knihy). Works in question come from the Historical Archives of the Library, managed by the Department of Historical and Musical Archives of the Czech National Library and the Slavic Library. It contains around 200,000 historical out-of-copyright books which can be made accessible to public free of charge.

"Digitalization of the historical collections from the Czech National Library is next significant cultural project in our annual program *Google for Czech Culture 2011* focusing on preserving, accessibility and sharing Czech culture and art," said Tania le Moigne, Country Manager Google Czech Republic.

In the Historical and Musical Archives of the Czech National Library, focus will be on the printed production of the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, which have been insufficiently digitised so far. The importance of the old prints (printed by 1800) goes well beyond Europe. In its scope and content, the collection is comparable with the best European libraries and it includes authors such as the Czech reformer Jan Hus and the theologists Johann Amos Comenius, Erasmus of Rotterdam and Martin Luther.

The selected titles of the Slavic Library include, beside Czech books, large collections in Russian, Polish and South-Slavic languages. In the countries of their origin, these prints are often inaccessible. The Czech authors include for example Josef Dobrovský, a founder of Czech Slavistik and many other representatives of Czech National Revival in 19th century.

The digitisation of books and their online accessibility opens a way for researchers, students and the general public to precious prints which would have remained inaccessible for them otherwise. Both digitisation efforts of the Czech National Library will contribute to a long-term preservation of the literal cultural heritage.

About the program "Google for Czech culture 2011"

The "Google for Czech culture 2011" (google.cz/proceskoukulturu) program encompasses several cultural projects that will be announced during 2011. The goal of this program is to use new technologies to support Czech talents, make Czech culture and works of art broadly accessible and allow for its further dissemination. The general public can look forward to several interesting cultural projects that Google will announce during 2011 in cooperation with several partners.

The program was launched following the announcement of its first part - the Art Project - which is a cooperation of Google and 17 of the world's most acclaimed art museums which have provided their art collections to create a worldwide virtual art gallery. Art Project uses several Google technologies, such as Street View, YouTube or photo editing and publishing tool Picasa. Digitization of the collections of the National library of the Czech Republic is the second part of program.

Find out more at google.cz/proceskoukulturu.

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