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**Article**

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International Leads

*Suggested Citation:* Pianos, Tamara; Demirhan, Amed (2016) : International Cooperation Among Libraries, International Leads, ISSN 0892-4546, American Library Association, Chicago, Vol. 30, Iss. 1, pp. 6-7

This Version is available at:

<http://hdl.handle.net/11108/247>

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# International Cooperation Among Libraries

By Amed Demirhan and  
Tamara Pianos

The rapid development in Internet technologies and open access resources have created great opportunities for libraries to cooperate and collaborate locally, nationally, and internationally. The number of learning resources has been radically increasing. For example the [Directory of Open Access Journals](#) as of January 26, 2016 contains “11,087 Journals with 8,637 of which are searchable at Article level, from 136 Countries covering 2,169,211 Articles in total”.

This directory alone has more journals and articles than most academic institutions have in subscribed print journals, and it is free. A [study published by Madian Khabsa and C. Lee Giles](#) in May 2014 states: “Our estimates show that at least 114 million English-language scholarly documents are accessible on the web, of which Google Scholar has nearly 100 million. Of these, we estimate that at

least 27 million (24%) are freely available since they do not require a subscription or payment of any kind.” This includes many open access (free e-textbooks), directories, and reference resources. Therefore, the issue is no longer about how many resources one could have access to but rather is about the quality of those resources. These developments make the role of librarians and libraries more important than ever and can help foster collaborations among librarians.

The German National Library of Economics (ZBW) thrives to foster collaboration among likeminded libraries. The ZBW runs the subject portal EconBiz.de, one of the largest search-portals for economics and business studies and related subjects. [The international EconBiz partner network](#) initiated by the ZBW is a strategic partnership for improving

search experiences and various network activities. It enables research institutions and libraries to interact and find solutions for challenges that all or many partners face (e.g. access to information).

Networking has potentially huge benefits for all partners who are involved. [Small Business BC](#) lists the following five general benefits of networking: 1. Shared Knowledge, 2. Opportunities, 3. Connections, 4. Increased confidence, 5. Raising your profile. These general benefits of networking not only apply to businesses but also to networks that have no interest in economic gain.



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The subject portal EconBiz covers over 9 million title records. About one million of these records lead to open access full-text. The portal offers simple and advanced search options as well as faceted filtering. By including the research guide EconDesk into the portal, it offers personalized help in the search process via chat, mail or telephone. EconBiz-Apps for iPad, iPhone and Android smartphones are available, and the portal itself has been optimized for mobile use as well.

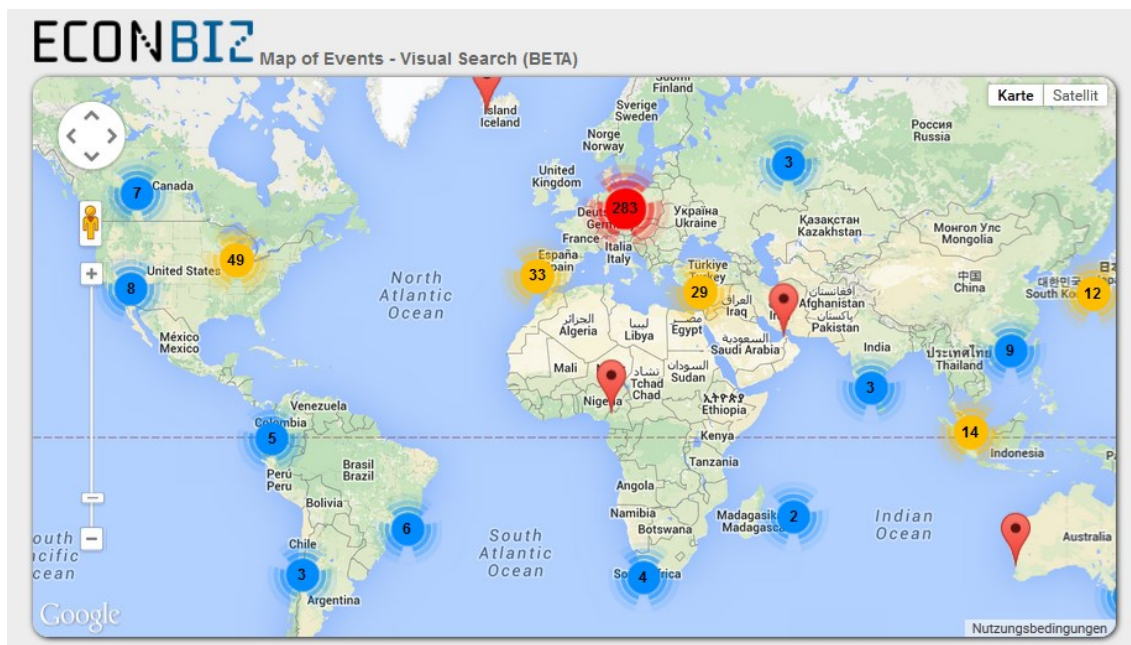


Image 1: EconBiz Visual Search for Events in Economics and Business Studies

The most prominent feature of the portal is the search for academic publications. EconBiz tries to show the best availability options for each result set. In order to do this, it provides links to open access PDFs wherever possible but also includes link resolving systems to show availability in libraries via WorldCat or German referencing and link resolving systems.

The EconBiz calendar of events covers conferences and summer schools in the area of economics and business studies from all over the world in cooperation with Resources for Economists (RFE) by the American Economic Association (AEA). A [visual search for events](#) that can easily be integrated into third party websites shows the current distribution of future events covered.

### The International EconBiz Partner Network

The international EconBiz partner network initiated by the ZBW is a strategic partnership for improving

search experiences and various network activities. It enables research institutions and libraries to interact and find solutions for common challenges such as access to information. Finding partners for potential projects is also an important role of the network.

Events hosted by partners are promoted through the EconBiz calendar of events. This ensures greater visibility for the events and enrichment of the calendar at the same time. The promotion of ZBW's library services and improved visibility of German research in the partner countries is a welcome effect for ZBW whereas the partners gain access to a wealth of quality publications. The partners and ZBW work together to develop the leading portal for subject information in economics and business studies.

The target groups for the network are university and other research institutes working in the fields of economics and business studies and related fields

as well as libraries that cover these subjects.

The annual partner-meetings give all partners the opportunity to exchange ideas and discuss current topics with likeminded institutions and give ZBW staff insights into the topics that are important for a culturally diverse community. The meetings as well as the annual student competition also provide ZBW with user feedback to improve their services.

One piece of feedback from the first partner meeting was that the partners wanted a Facebook group to exchange news etc. Thus, an [open Facebook group](#) was initiated.

We welcome new partners and new opportunities to work with our colleagues. Those interested in the partner network are welcome to contact Tamara Pianos: [t.pianos@zbw.eu](mailto:t.pianos@zbw.eu)