

Scholars face the Internet: a workshop in Oxford

The Internet is considered by some scholars to be a new information paradigm. The increasing growing of the net in only a decade, from the invention of the World Wide Web in 1989 to our days, is so impressive that no other medium, except probably for the printing press, has made such a revolution in knowledge transmission.

That was the main subject of the workshop organised in the University of Oxford by the Basque Studies Society, through the Basque Visiting Fellowship of the academica year 1998-1999, on 13 and 14 May: "Transmission of Knowledge in the Digital Environment" was the title of the two-days shared experiences held at the Department of Continuing Education.

The structure of the workshop was built upon four basis, which were considered the most relevant ones in today's academic world: higher education, publishing, libraries and legal problems related to these issues. In order to share some ideas and to exchange



Andoni Alonso, Javier Díaz Noci, Isabel Hernando, Matxalen Garmendia, a participant at cours, Pilar Diez.

scholarly information about the different experiences –and experiments– developed about the Internet in Oxford and the Basque Country, some scholars, one from the Basque Studies Society and from the University of Oxford, were invited to the seminar.

Dr Andoni Alonso, currently teaching in the University of Cáceres and member of Eusko Ikaskuntza, traced a general approach to the importance of the Internet in the academic world. Thaddeus Lippinski, head of the ILEJ project in the Bodleian Library (which offers most part of the eighteenth and nineteenth century English newspapers on the Net), talked about virtual libraries and specially about journal collections. Continuing that travel from paper to bits, Stuart Lee, also from the Bodleian, explained his experiences on putting modern documents on the Internet. Another important issue was higher education: Jonathan Darby, relevant member of the Department of Continuing Education in Oxford University and avant-garde of the experiences on the Internet showed us the courses offered through the Internet. On the other hand, Pilar Diez Arregi, secretary of the Intercative Master about Environmental Law (MIDA), showed the pioneer experiences developed by Eusko Ikaskuntza. That master, the first one of a growing series created by the Basque Studies Society, was thought in Oxford, during the stay of the first Basque Visiting Fellow, professor Demetrio Loperena. All the participants of the workshop followed with special attention the talks about legal issues on intellectual property, so interesting if referred to the virtual and transnational world and so different saw from the different perspectives of the Common Law systems and the Civil Law (Continental Law) system. Jonathan Anelay and Carolyn McKee, solicitors of the University of Oxford, and Isabel Hernando (University of the Basque Country) explained the different point of views, specially mentioning some practical cases. The chairman of the workshop, Dr Javier Díaz Noci, finished the event with a talk about electronic books, newspapers and journals, showing some examples from the Mediateka (virtual library) of Eusko Ikaskuntza. All talks were recorded and are kept in the Basque Studies Society.

The workshop was not the only thing organised by the Basque Visiting Fellow. During Hilary Term, Dr Javier Díaz Noci co-organised with Dr Ilaria Favretto (British Council Visiting Fellow in Modern Italian Studies) a seminar on “Southern Europe, with special reference to the question of national identity”, held at the European Study Centre of St Antony’s College, to which all Basque Visiting Fellows are linked. Dr Díaz Noci himself gave a talk on 15 February, 1999, entitled “Reflections on Basque identity”, and chaired the talk given by Dr Mikel Urquijo (University of the Basque Country and member of the section of History, Basque Studies Society) on 8 february on “The unsuccessful construction of Spanish national identity and the birth of regional identities, 1808-1998”.

Amongst some other things, during his stay in Oxford Dr Díaz Noci carried out research into the Internet and intellectual property matters, translated the first literary works about journalism (the masquerade *News from the New World discover'd in the Moon* and the comedy *The Staple of News*, 1620 and 1626, both by Shakespeare’s contemporary Ben Jonson), and delivered a couple of papers to the IV Symposium on Libraries held in Bidebarrieta Library (Bilbao) and to the First Days about Online Journalism (Jornadas de Periodismo Digital) in Valencia, 12 May 1999.

Javier Díaz Noci