Press release

ZBW goes live with FOLIO – International engagement for Open Source in the library world

ZBW is one of the first libraries in Germany to implement the FOLIO system

Kiel/Hamburg, 18 June 2020: The ZBW – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics now uses FOLIO to manage its electronic holdings. FOLIO is an Open Source platform developed cooperatively by an international community of libraries, associations and companies. The ZBW is a member of this worldwide group of developers and goes live as the first pilot library in the GBV Common Library Network.

Libraries have been managing budgets, licences, loans, acquisitions or metadata with computers since the 1980s. The software for these systems was designed for printed materials. Since 2012, cloud-based library management system have been playing an ever more important role. Their advantage: they integrate different kinds of media such as printed matter, electronic publications or databases. Their disadvantage: the proprietary systems of the market leaders restrict working openly.

However, being able to work openly is important for libraries. Academic libraries want to work with systems that can be adapted to individual requirements and developments and enable agile extensions. In the age of Open Science, libraries also want to optimise their own software, and to make it available to others for re-use.

In 2016, the new Open Source library system FOLIO joined the field. FOLIO is short for “The Future of Libraries is Open”. FOLIO started in the USA and now involves developers and library experts from America, Europe and Asia in a worldwide project. The Head Office of the GBV Common Library Network has been a partner in the development from the very beginning. As a member of the GBV, the ZBW has been part of this worldwide developer community since 2017. The ZBW cooperates closely with the team at the Head Office as a pilot library in the FOLIO working group “Electronic Resource Management”.

Felix Hemme, expert for electronic resource management at the ZBW, says: “Good open software can only be developed through collaboration and the contribution of diverse perspectives and experiences.”

Thorsten Meyer, chief librarian of the ZBW – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics adds: “The future of libraries is connected. Connectivity dominates social change and the transformation of libraries. FOLIO is an excellent example for networked thinking and working and for the successful collaboration across disciplinary boundaries and national borders.”
After several years of development, the ZBW now goes live with the ERM module of FOLIO as one of the first libraries in Germany and worldwide. It uses the FOLIO hosting service for this which is provided by the GBV Head Office for all libraries in the network. Thus a system is realised that is customised for the individual needs and developments of the ZBW. It can also be re-used by other libraries and it can be developed further independent of commercial interests.

In the coming months the ZBW and the GBV Head Office will work intensively to integrate FOLIO into the network’s services and other systems already existing in Germany. This includes the development of interfaces for importing data into and exporting data from the union catalogue K10plus, and the linkage with the licence management system LAS:eR. LAS:eR will be used for the national cooperative management of licence agreements.

**About the ZBW – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics**
The ZBW – Leibniz Information Centre for Economics is the world’s largest information centre for economic literature. The institution holds more than 4 million media items and enables access to millions of online documents in economics. In 2019 alone, more than 9 million digital full-texts were downloaded. In addition, the ZBW provides a fast-growing collection of Open Access documents. The repository EconStor currently gives free access to more than 190,000 articles and working papers. EconBiz, the portal for international economic information, allows students and researchers to search among 11 million datasets. The ZBW edits two journals in economic policy, Wirtschaftsdienst and Intereconomics in Gold Open Access. The ZBW is a research-based academic library. Professors in computer science and an international group of PhD candidates carry out transdisciplinary research on the digitisation of the science system. Research at the ZBW is connected to international networks. The main co-operation partners are engaged in projects funded by the EU, the German Research Foundation (DFG) and the Federal Ministry for Education and Research, and in the Leibniz Research Alliance Open Science. The ZBW is a member of the Leibniz Association and a foundation under public law. The ZBW has been honoured repeatedly for its innovative library work with the international LIBER Award for Library Innovation.

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