

Tags: archives bibliothèque, international,

CERN's Scientific Information Service: fostering collaboration in scientific research

CERN is an international laboratory doing fundamental research and the place «where the Web was born». What is the role of an Information Service in such a context?

CERN's [Scientific Information Service](#) includes four sections: the Library, Archive, Open Science and INSPIRE.

The CERN Library ensures access to a wealth of scientific information relevant to the CERN and high energy physics researchers' community at large: books, conference proceedings, journals, articles, reports, technical standards, theses among others. To meet the needs of our community, that is scattered all over the planet and needs constant access to up-to-date information, a growing amount of documents (articles, reports, journals and books) is available online 24/7 on the [CERN Document Server](#).

Moreover, the Library preserves and showcases CERN's rich and diverse scientific research output, by indexing in a [yearly listing](#) all articles, books and reports authored by members of CERN personnel.

The Library is institutional member of Bibliosuisse and of AILIS, the Association of International Librarians and Information Specialists. It is also member of the Consortium of Swiss Academic Libraries.

In coordination with the Open Science section of the Scientific Information Service, the Library participates in the efforts to make all publications by CERN authors open access and to facilitate the transition to a new model of scholarly communication, where the cost of publishing and that of online access are negotiated and covered by a single agreement between knowledge producers and publishers. The Open Science section plays a catalysing and coordinating role within a worldwide Sponsoring Consortium for Open Access Publishing in Particle Physics, [SCOAP3](#) and has launched several initiatives in the domain of Open Data analysis and preservation.

Finally, the Library cooperates with the INSPIRE team in the development of [INSPIRE](#), the one-stop information platform for the High Energy Physics community. The beta version of the new INSPIRE is [here](#).

The communication strategy of the Library focuses essentially on the promotion of electronic resources offered to the community and on the information for authors concerning options available for Open Access publishing. As a library of a European research organization, the stakes for the Library are high: we aim at complying with the principles of the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), in spite of our condition of independence from host and member states' legislation.

The CERN Archive is a repository for historical records about all aspects of CERN's activities, from its creation until the present day. It contains letters, memos, reports, notes and other documents created or received in the course of CERN's work and selected for their long-term historical value. It also houses a collection of correspondence, manuscripts, books, reprints and photographs of Wolfgang Pauli (Nobel Laureate, 1945).

Our mission is to select and obtain records of long-term historical interest; to keep the records safe (protecting their 'physical and moral integrity' by respecting archival principles and good practice); and to make the records available. We deal primarily with paper-based documents, and carry out targeted digitisation projects as resources allow. Archiving of CERN's public web pages is done in partnership with the Internet Archive.

Users come from within and outside the organization, and comprise members of the public with a casual or one-off interest (perhaps researching family history) as well as experienced specialists. The latter include academic and freelance researchers, historians of science and engineers needing information to help maintain CERN's scientific infrastructure, since old equipment is often recycled into new. We also collaborate with [Arts@CERN](#), working regularly with CERN's artists-in-residence. CERN's Library and Archive work closely together (assisting with enquiries, contributing historical items for the Library's Facebook page, etc.), and are part of the organization's Scientific Information Service in the Research and Computing Sector. The CERN Archive is represented on CERN's Heritage Committee, which oversees preservation and communication of CERN's historical assets, and the Pauli Committee, which advises on matters related to the Wolfgang Pauli Archive. We collaborate with other archives and national and international archival networks as far as resources allow.

Being part of an international centre for scientific research brings advantages and challenges. There is a strong sense of mission and a commitment to the principle of open access to information. The CERN Convention (1953) states: «The Organization shall have no concern with work for military requirements and the results of its experimental and theoretical work shall be published or otherwise made generally available.» However, the prevailing culture can be challenging from the viewpoint of good information and records management. This is exacerbated by CERN's legal status regarding the laws of its two host countries, Switzerland and France. Furthermore, scientists often focus on publication of results and underestimate the importance of their unpublished material. The modesty of one Nobel Prize-winner led him to regret he had no letters from Heisenberg, despite having met him, but not to believe his own letters and jottings could interest researchers in the future!

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Résumé**English**

CERN's *Scientific Information Service* (SIS) is serving a multinational community of researchers. The article describes the context in which the SIS operates and the challenges that the SIS is facing, in the context of the evolution of scholarly communication in particle physics.

Français

Le Service d'information scientifique du CERN (*Scientific Information Service*, SIS) sert une communauté multinationale de chercheurs. L'article décrit le contexte dans lequel le SIS opère et les défis auxquels le SIS est confronté, dans le contexte de l'évolution de la communication savante en physique des particules.

Deutsch

Der *Scientific Information Service* des CERN (SIS) steht im Dienst einer multinationalen Forschergemeinschaft. Der Artikel thematisiert den Kontext, in dem der Informationsdienst tätig ist, und beschreibt die Herausforderungen, denen sich das SIS im Kontext der Entwicklung der wissenschaftlichen Kommunikation in der Teilchenphysik gegenüber sieht.