

NEEO Annual Report

01 September 2007 – 31 August 2008

Executive summary

The Network of European Economists Online project (NEEO) aims to create a networked service providing open or free access to recent economics publications from 20 leading European economics research institutes and the full text publications of well over 500 leading researchers. Based on the content of the Institutional Repositories (IRs) of the partners, the project takes an international, subject-oriented approach which sets standards, guarantees the quality of information, and provides strong branding which can act as a model for others to follow.

NEEO is funded by the European Commission and has 16 partners, soon to be increased to 20, from eleven European countries. These are generally speaking the libraries of the top economics research universities. Work is divided into 8 individual work packages.

Key results for Year 1:

- a user requirements survey comprising of an online survey and 4 focus groups, which led to content acquisition, dissemination and service specifications
- a collection of economics content from 12 partners so far, incorporating 33,116 bibliographic references, 11,232 full text records (of which 2,569 are recent), consisting of journal articles, working papers, books and book chapters, conference papers, theses and research data
- an IPR toolkit, supplemented by a NEEO IPR workshop
- the first version of the Economists Online portal, enabling access to the distributed content of institutional archives supported by 5 platforms, with 6 IRs currently interoperable
- the translation into three European languages of the online survey, IPR toolkit and the JEL (Journal of Economic Literature) Classification System, and the planned automated translation of queries and the multilingual search system
- a detailed communication plan, publicity materials, a public website, presentations at 8 external events and the publication of an article, in order to raise awareness of NEEO amongst the publishing, library and information management communities
- aggregation of download statistics for NEEO material from partners who have the facilities to do so.

Findings from the user requirement survey show that there is demand for an open access repository such as Economists Online (EO). Researchers make extensive use of electronic resources, and there is a commitment to make research outputs freely available, including datasets. Researchers seem to find e-access to chapters and conference proceedings difficult. Concerns exist on issues of copyright, and researchers expressed preferences in relation to prospective EO features either confirming plans or suggesting new additions. These have already been partly addressed in the design of the NEEO portal. 2 further user surveys are planned although feedback is sought continuously.

NEEO partners directly serve ca. 2,500 economics researchers and teachers, and ca. 33,000 students who specialise in economics. By the end of NEEO's first year, 834 researchers and authors were collaborating in NEEO by providing CVs or publication lists and publications to partners. This is over 30 per cent of the total number of economics researchers and teachers. The total volume of materials accessible through the portal is expected to be in excess of 50,000 items and at least 15,000 full text publication documents including some 160 datasets.

6 core partners have collected many of their resources in Year 1, with other partners to follow suit in Year 2. 6 of the other 10 partners have in fact begun ahead of time. Partners are also focussing on retrieving the current content (present and last year's output) of all of the economists of their institutions. Datasets will also be made publicly available and 2 institutions were involved in a national dataset enhanced publication pilot project.



NEEO has opted for an *infrastructure and gateway* based on a Service Oriented Architecture (SOA) model. The various building blocks are interlinked using current open standards technology, such as OAI-PMH and SRU. Every participating IR needs to develop the necessary software in order to comply with the NEEO application profile. A technical workshop was held in March 2008 in order to explain the technical guidelines and choices and, so far, crosswalks have been written for the DSpace, EPrints, ARNO, and other homemade IR software platforms. In addition, NEEO has opted for a suite of software tools around the Apache Lucene search engine, known as Meresco.

NEEO has developed a first version of the *Economists Online portal*, including a metadata search service and a possibility to browse through the electronic publication lists of registered EO authors. Automated electronic publication lists are viewable online and downloadable in HTML for the EO authors of the 6 core partners; making them accessible in multiple formats will occur in 2009, i.e. HTML, PDF and RTF. Future activities in Year 2 include the harvesting of all partners' IRs and other web accessible sources in economics, the seamless forwarding of information to RePEc services and other Internet search engines like Google Scholar, and end-user services such as full text searching, and alerting based on RSS. NEEO will also develop an automatic metadata enrichment process and provide the necessary infrastructure that permits the aggregation and presentation of usage metadata of publications.

NEEO aims to facilitate and improve open access to European economics research and thereby increase the visibility of high quality academic results internationally. NEEO will offer end-users a series of advantages in comparison to RePEc and SSRN. It will supply currently scarce material not covered by them, such as book (chapters), conference proceedings and datasets. It will promote and stimulate the production of freely-accessible full texts and access for all, and it will provide high quality metadata and state-of-the-art services ensuring that searches produce active and useful results. The complete publication lists of leading European names in economics, with many links to full text documents will be made available through NEEO. NEEO will also provide a full text search service, which neither SSRN nor RePEc services currently offer. In addition, NEEO will complement US-dominated sites and become a showcase for, and increase access to, European academic research. While the multilingual search system, to be available in 2009, will enhance the visibility of non-English material. However, NEEO will also further disseminate its content to other search engines and services that are important to the economist, for example, by developing a RePEc archive to increase access to quality European research worldwide.

NEEO partners are currently in the process of developing a business and sustainability plan which will include the total costs and scenarios involved in the continuation and further development of the project's results. The project will also explore the feasibility of alternative sources of income to guarantee the long-term financial sustainability and expansion of the service.

NEEO partners are as of September 2008: The London School of Economics, University of Oxford, Tilburg University, UCL (University College London), Erasmus University Rotterdam, The University of Warwick, Université Toulouse 1 Sciences Sociales, Maastricht University, Charles University CERGE-EI, Université Libre de Bruxelles, Université Paris-Dauphine, Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Universidad Carlos III de Madrid, Sciences Po, the German National Library of Economics and University College Dublin.

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