

(RE)CONSTITUTING THE ANCHORAGE FOR INTERNATIONAL LAW RESEARCH AT THE PEACE PALACE LIBRARY WITH SOCIAL MEDIA

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In order to fully understand the phrasing “(re)constituting” it is necessary to address the early history and historical development of the Peace Palace Library culminating on the one hand typologically in the next generation of law libraries and legal information centers and on the other hand demonstrating the growing importance of free access of international law resources.

The Peace Palace Library has three main target groups. 1] international courts, 2] The Hague Academy of international Law, 3] the world at large.

The most important amongst the international courts to be served is the International Court of Justice (ICJ), one of the six Principal Organs of the United Nations.

The second court is the Permanent Court of Arbitration (PCA), the oldest, for which the Peace Palace Library has been the ‘Standard Library of International Law (in Andrew Carnegie’s words at the time the American-Scottish industrialist and philanthropist donated the money to construct the Temple of Peace, afterwards named the Peace Palace Library).

Thirdly it is the group of international criminal courts (general or special, even domestic); the International Criminal Court (ICC, established with the 1998 Rome Statute), the International criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia (ICTY), the Special Court for Sierra Leone (case against Charles Taylor), the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (trying the accused for the killing of Rafiq Hariri), the Dutch Supreme Court (in particular for comparative legal research), Dutch District Courts (in The Hague: International Criminal Law in Domestic Courts-Chamber; in Rotterdam: Law of the Sea, Maritime Law, Criminal Acts at Sea, Piracy-Chamber). The Hague Conference on Private International Law is also to be counted amidst the principal institutional endusers.

The second visible and tangible target group consists of the Hague Academy of International Law, a well-established summer school existing since 1923, for which the Peace Palace Library, as a sister-organization, deploys activities, e.g. a dedicated digital library, an e-learning facility; this secondary closed class of endusers is defined and known.

The third category is to be characterized as undefined endusers: professors, scholars, students This group, real and virtual, is geographically worldwide

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distributed, but of increasing interest, due to globalization and due to The Hague as Legal Capital of the World. The chief inconvenience is that this cluster or body is not clearly outlined and difficult to recognize and even more complex to approach. The main challenge is how to get the shapeless community on board and to keep the real or virtual walk-in user on board.

For rendering services to all these categories the Peace Palace Library has been building collection on International Law, Comparative Law, and the international and diplomatic history of conflict areas for the sketch of the context in which controversies occur since 1913.

The so-called Printed Catalogue of the Peace Palace Library acted as the cornerstone for International Law documentation and activities worldwide, up to the Second World War. Thereafter the Peace Palace Library went through a recession, a depression and a downswing for several decades. Unmistakeably this development parallels the lesser importance of, or belief in, or compliance with International Law in the epoque of the polarity of East-West/Soviet-USA/Cold War.

Still, notwithstanding the doldrums and stagnation, from this legal and library history and scope and purpose description it is obvious though that the Peace Palace Library has ever been obliged to maintain, continue and follow a Just-In-Case policy, anticipating any future issue that may arise. Hence a sophisticated classification and keyword effort, aiming at fast and adequate retrieval.

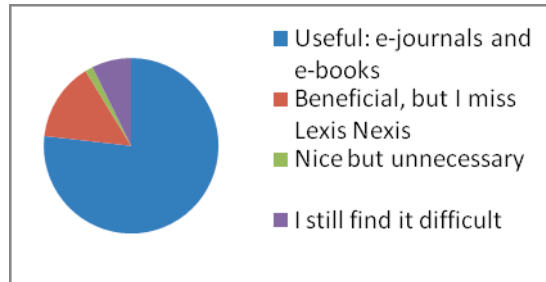
However, since the 1990s, the United Nations' Decade of International Law and The Hague becoming the Legal Capital of the World, the Peace Palace Library enjoys again an even growing importance. Materializing library automation therefore and establishing the digital library since 2000 were taken up professionally.

Now it is the time to find and offer vanguard services to new communities. Thus bringing ourselves once again to the fore as the inevitable and inescapable pillar containing International Law information, like in the days of the Printed Catalogue. Therefore the Peace Palace Library has embarked upon the creation of the same paradigm, albeit in modern surroundings, by offering a website for practioners and scholars that is almost mandatory and necessary for any proper International Law research.

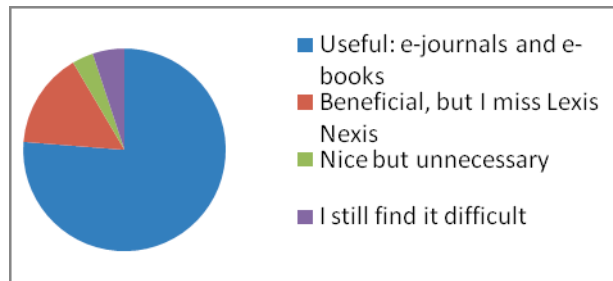
How to promote the website, how to make the website found and how to re-establish the virtuosity of the website? Half-a-century after the abandonment of the pre-war Printed Catalogue a nowadays' anchorage is imminent. Through statistical evidence, harvested in questionnaires and surveys, the Peace Palace Library could discern the new directions and innovative techniques to embrace.

How did the 2009 students and scholars appreciate the DIGITAL LIBRARY RESOURCES?

Public International Law Course 2009

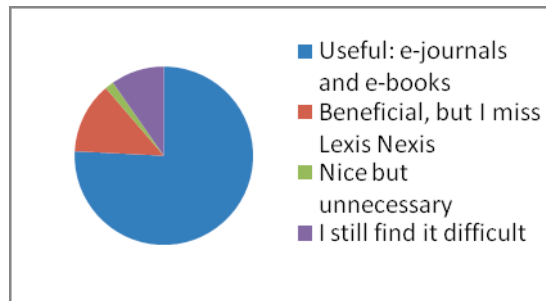


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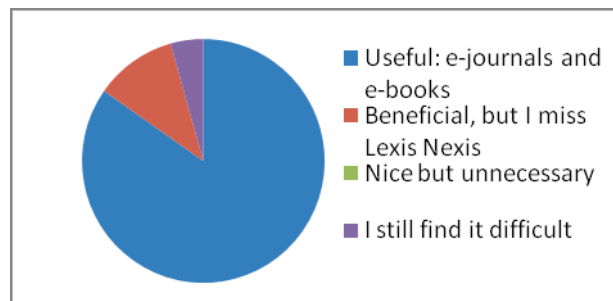


In 2009 more than 75% was satisfied, as in 2010.

Public International Law Course 2010

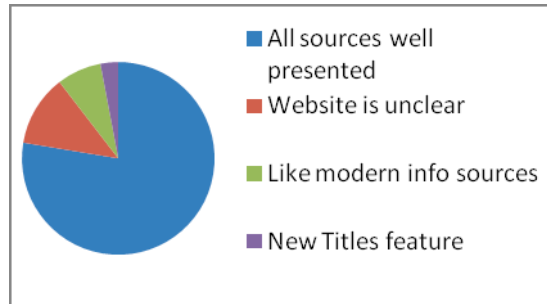


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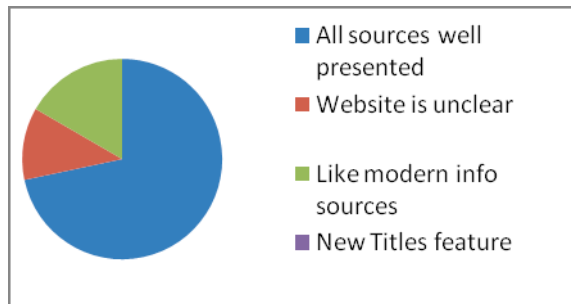


How did the 2009 students and scholars appreciate our WEBSITE?

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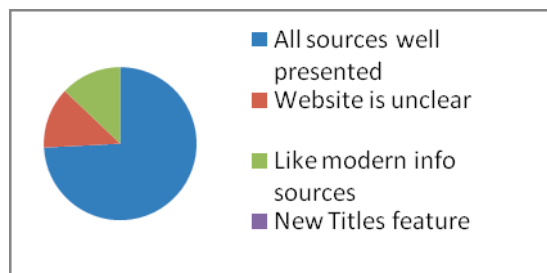


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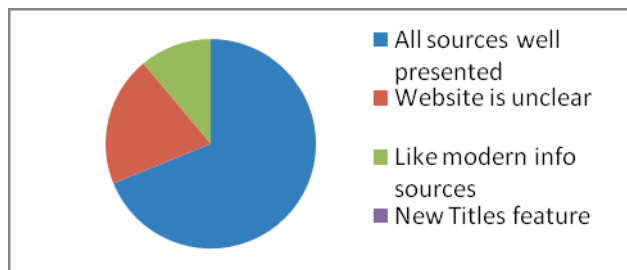


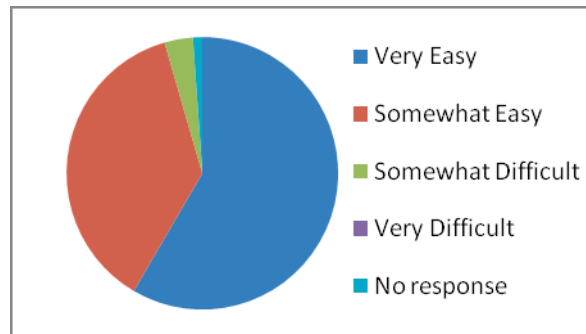
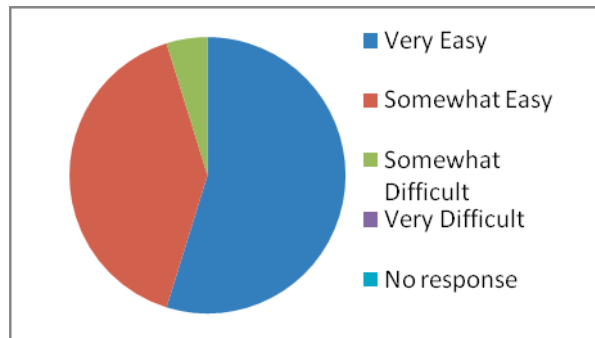
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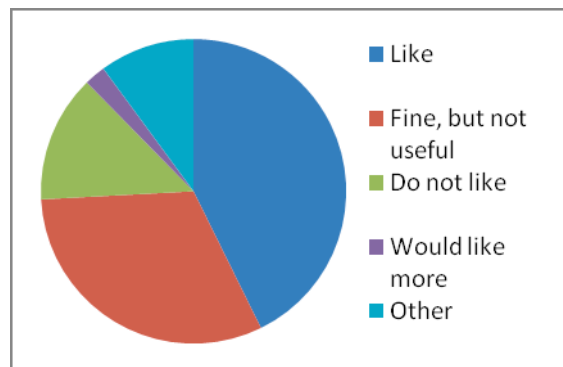


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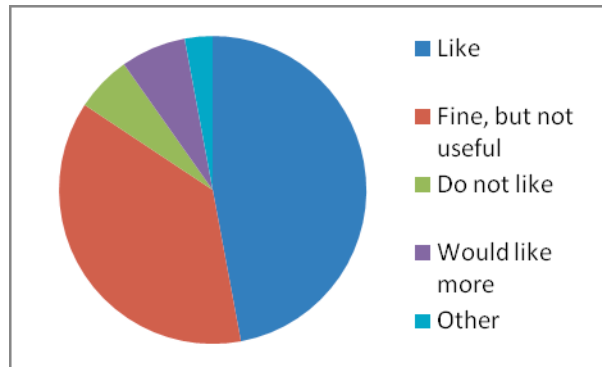


But what happened in 2011 with respect to the WEBSITE NAVIGATION?**Public International Law Course 2011****Private International Law Course 2011**

Clearly services were less appreciated. This was even more the case with the SOCIAL MEDIA as a library tool in 2011.

Public International Law Course 2011

Private International Law Course 2011



The solution to intervene was found in the adaption of the following operational approach in a new website:

- *Content optimization: employ the investment in classifications and subject headings applied since 1913, utilize the embodiment of knowledge in staff members, seek meaning and bring the quality and capacity of the collection into prominence*
- *Practical implementation: restructuring the website by using good keywords in titles and headings of chapters and paragraphs of the website, and by adding purposeful hyperlinks*
- *Frequent updates, renewal of significant matters, incessant upload of new content : blogs, international law news, new titles, library news*
- *Constant integration with social media: cross links (Facebook, Twitter, Delicious)*
- *Expand the Alert-Services (SDI), distribute a Newsletter containing pointers to website*
- *Choose another approach, turn your traditional way of presenting services 90 degrees: create TOPICAL RESEARCH GUIDES, prioritizing the content of the library, the ideas, the intellectual power, the subject matter sources immediately useful and applicable for legal practioners and scholars (instead of showing traditionally the available material in catalogues, bibliographies, databases, lists etc.)*
- *Do everything within the possible to not loose your website visitor.*

By doing so the Peace Palace Library architecturally 1] anticipates the endusers needs and 2] is geared toward Search Engine Indexing.

The successful result of the restructuring of the website of the Peace Palace Library is the increase of the third category of undefined endusers is growing. The newly constituted website has revitalized the international anchorage function of the Peace Palace Library.

	1-15 JAN 2011	1-15 JAN 2012	INCREASE
VISITS	4.416	11.303	+ 155%
UNIQUE VISITORS	2.317	8.551	+ 270%
PAGE PRESENTATIONS	8.169	23.455	+ 187%
PAGES PER VISITS	1,85	2,08	+ 12%
% NEW VISITS	35,33%	74,92%	+ 112%



BLUE: 1-15 JAN 2012

ORANGE: 1-15 JAN 2011