Developments in European political science journal and
electronic literature during 1997

JOHN COAKLEY¹ & JOHN DOYLE²
¹University College Dublin, Ireland; ²Business School, Dublin City University, Ireland

Abstract. This article continues the annual review of developments in European political science periodical literature. The review covers not just traditional print media but also electronic publishing, and therefore begins with an overview of a pilot project in integrated electronic publishing, the ‘SuperJournal’ project, which links a range of British-published political science journals in an electronic cluster that facilitates ease of access by individual users. We continue with a summary of developments in political science journal publishing in central and eastern Europe in the aftermath of the political upheavals after 1989. The article concludes with a listing of the contents of the 1997 issues of selected European political science journals from a range of European countries (normally, those published by national political science associations) and comments on their content.

Introduction

In this article, we continue with the selective overview of periodical literature in political science in Europe that was initiated three years ago in this journal. As before, the core of the article is its last section, which deals with a range of west European political science journals with a view to providing an insight into the preoccupations of the national political science communities to which they correspond. As we pointed out in earlier issues, the necessarily incomplete nature of this coverage compels us to pay attention also to developments outside the relatively narrow range of journals reviewed here. Our discussion of western Europe is thus preceded by some remarks on the spread of political science journal literature in central and eastern Europe, a significant development that took place in the wake of the political developments of the early 1990s. We begin, however, by revisiting an area where the pace of change has been the most rapid of all: that of electronic journal publishing.
European political science and the internet

In previous years we examined the extent to which European political science journals are available on the world wide web, and we looked at the phenomenon of electronic journals. Last year we added a discussion of two types of document that increasingly fill a role that was traditionally occupied by conventional printed periodical material: official government sources, and catalogues and indexes produced by private or semi-public bodies. While there have been significant developments in both of these areas in the year that has passed, these have not been sufficient to justify piece-meal updating. More up-to-date information in each of these areas may be located on the web itself. It is, however, worth examining a new development on the web, the phenomenon of integrated electronic publishing. As an example of this we use the SuperJournal project, a collaborative initiative of a consortium of publishers, the University of Manchester and Loughborough University.

The SuperJournal project is not the only one of its kind, and it is still at an experimental stage. Its long-term goals are ambitious. It aims to examine the feasibility of offering the academic community electronic access to clusters of journals in specific areas. In the current experimental stage, access is through conventional world wide web browsers. Users have access to four clusters of journals: in communication and cultural studies (12 journals), molecular genetics and proteins (12 journals), political science (18 journals) and materials chemistry (5 journals). In each case, recent issues of print journals are available on line. Each contains a set of searchable abstracts and key words. This allows the user to search a particular cluster for articles on a selected topic, to browse relevant titles and abstracts, and to download a copy of the article (for a description of the project, see Pullinger & Baldwin 1997).

The scale of the project is illustrated in Table 1, which lists the journals participating in the political science cluster. In the case of almost all of these journals, online content dates from the first issue of 1997, but in five cases the starting point is earlier. This means that already a very large volume of material is available. The user may either browse journals (by first clicking on a journal name from the list, then selecting an issue, then an abstract or an article in that issue) or search for a particular term or combination of terms (for example, the search can be based on the title, author’s name, abstract, keyword, or certain other fields, or it can be based on all of these). One of the three available search engines indeed allows the user to search articles

1 A list of journal web pages, a guide to government and other official pages and an overview of regional politics resource guides may be consulted through the University College Dublin politics department (http://www.ucd.ie/~politics/), where it is updated.

2 For official information on the project, see the projects home page: http://www.superjournal.ac.uk/sj/.