

Hiperkitap: A Turkish E-book Database

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Abstract: *The purpose of this paper is to describe Hiperkitap, the first and only Turkish e-book database in Turkey. The paper starts with a brief overview of the developmental stages of the e-book database under the local market conditions in Turkey. This developmental period includes the establishment of relationships with publishers, authors, the publishers' association of Turkey, computer companies, information designers and librarians. Content provision under Turkish and E.U. copyright laws is a much debated issue in Turkey. Some 7500 books in Turkish from 220 Turkish publishing houses make this database attractive for local customers and also for foreign competitors. Rich content and up-to-date technology are long term strategic targets for this database. Mobile applications, mostly smart telephone applications, are determining the development policy of Hiperkitap today. This paper aims to be useful for understanding the social history of digital publishing and the e-book market in Turkey.*

Keywords: *Hiperkitap; ebooks; Turkish e-book database.*

Introduction

Sales people in Europe and the USA started to visit the academic market to present a new product, CD-ROMs, in the mid-1980s. At that time, CD-ROMs contained abstracts of journal articles. In the mid-1990s CDs contained encyclopedias, dictionaries and full-text journal articles. Librarians and academic staff found themselves split between the print resource lovers and electronic resource lovers. Sales people, and some librarians, had to overcome the resistance of academic staff to e-resources.

The academic Internet infrastructure in Turkey was nearing completion by the Turkish Academic Network and Information Center (ULAKBIM) at the end of the 1990s (ULAKBIM, 2010). This was a very big chance for e-resource companies. There was a highway but no cars on it. They used this chance. Turkish university libraries were targeted by the foreign database aggregators or single companies. They started to organize seminars, personal visits and on-site training for librarians. It was the introduction and promotion period. They were creating the database market and, furthermore, identifying and attracting potential users. There was one interesting issue, though: all databases were in English whereas the medium of instruction is Turkish at most of the universities in Turkey. Exception to this was "Index 95", the first Turkish popular journal database with scanned full-text articles released in 1995 in Istanbul, although it did not last very long and disappeared from the market. Alt Kitap Online (www.altkitap.com) was the first online publisher in Turkey; it is still active but with a low profile.

Consortium

As we know, the increasing number of databases on the world market brings a new type of organization for university libraries. This is the University Libraries Consortium. The appearance of academic databases in the Turkish market and the sharply increasing number of state and foundation universities in Turkey were good reasons to establish a consortium. The Anatolian University Libraries Consortium (ANKOS) was established in 2000 as the first consortium in Turkey with 12 member libraries and three database subscriptions. Faculty members and students at universities all over Turkey as well as the staff of some research institutions now have access to bibliographic and full-text databases. ANKOS holds annual meetings attended by all ANKOS librarians and database companies. The former chair of the Steering Committee of ANKOS and a colleague suggested a supplementary mission for the consortium: "In the light of the successes of the

first 10 years of ANKOS, we believe that it should continue to develop its role in providing professional training and developing skills, in addition to acquiring electronic resources” (Erdogan & Karasozen, 2009).

ULAKBIM, on the other hand, created Electronic Resources National Academic License (EKUAL), signed agreements with database companies and then opened these databases to libraries free of charge. It has offered 20 full-text and bibliographic academic databases since March 2008. EKUAL pays for national site licenses. The significance of EKUAL lies in its structure. It is not a consortium but an independent state organization. ULAKBIM had started to design and produce national databases in various scientific fields in the 1990s. These were the Turkish Medical Database, Turkish Life Sciences Database, Turkish Social Sciences Database, Turkish Engineering and Basic Sciences Database. These databases contained articles published in different languages in Turkish scholarly journals.

Associations

The Turkish Librarians’ Association was founded in 1949 and the University and Research Libraries Association (UNAK) was established in 1991. Every year the last week of March is observed as library week in Turkey. ANKOS, ULAKBIM and the library associations are active leaders in the librarianship and information area.

The rapid growth of the database market together with ANKOS, EKUAL and association activities, events, professional training seminars and conferences have developed the skills and attitudes of librarians and academic staff. As a result, this social transformation has created an e-resource culture among these professional and academic groups.

On another front, the wide use of databases brings academic success. ANKOS made a large contribution to increasing the scientific publication rate by Turkish scientists at the international level (Karasozen, 2008).

Digital Culture

The highly accepted e-resource culture, and the predominance of databases in the English language were important factors in creating demand for a Turkish e-book database.

Social, academic and professional demands for a Turkish database were heard at library conferences, in library visits and among librarians. Local vendors and publishing companies were being pressured for a Turkish e-book database by these potential users. This was wind of social change for the market

Electronic publishing was also a very hot topic for the publishers in Turkey. The Turkish Publishers Association’s 4th Conference was held on 6-7 May 2010. The conference theme was “Legal and Financial Aspects of Digital Publishing”. The final announcement emphasized that the E.U. Information Society criteria should be followed for digital publishing. They suggested that those very clear articles should be included in the Intellectual Property Law. They recommended that the Ministry of National Education be the organizer and supporter for digital publishing (Turkish Publishers Association, 2011).

Value Added Tax (VAT) is 8% for print books and 18% for e-software and hardware items in Turkey. In terms of VAT for e-books, there is no clear official decision whether it should be 8% or 18%. The Turkish Publishers Association has suggested to the Ministry of Culture that VAT for e-books should be the same as for print books: 8%.

The Turkish Publishers Association is very supportive of electronic publishing within the context of business ethics and the Intellectual Property Law.

Hiperlink

Hiperlink was established in 2006 in the social context described above. Hiperlink is a book and non-book materials supplier in Turkey. It establishes and designs libraries and collections acting as a kind of professional institute for librarianship.

It signed agreements with two global companies (LexisNexis and Knovel) in 2008, its first international dealing. The nature of the company was in transition; it is becoming global. Additionally, it had started to publish print books in 2007.

Hiperlink hired two staff members and a temporary working group which started to discuss and investigate the “Hiperkitap” concept as a project in 2007. The search for software and an e-book reader platform followed in 2008.

They started to visit publishers for content in 2009. This was a pessimistic period. The publishers were not ready to accept digital publishing. They were publishing print books only. Their copyright agreements with authors and agents contained only articles for print editions. A great deal of time was spent to persuade the publishers to complete agreements for online copies. These were “warm-up laps”.

They first signed agreements with 100 publishers for 3500 online editions of books. All these books were prepared digitally for the press. All of them were digital-born in a sense. Apart from the online editions, the publishers were still giving the print editions of books in large numbers to Hiperlink. This was another digitizing process. Maybe they were afraid of this transition period or they were not ready psychologically to be involved and take responsibility in the frame of the copyright law. So far, the copyright of all books translated into Turkish from other languages is only for the print edition.

Hiperkitap as a database was accepted and socially approved by the ANKOS administration in November of 2009. Under the ANKOS consortium 24 university libraries subscribed to Hiperkitap that year. This number has increased to 36 subscriptions by the end of 2010, 34 of them university libraries and the remaining two public libraries. One of the public libraries is strictly a digital library. It has only Hiperkitap as a digital collection, no other print or digital books (Esenler, 2010).

Nowadays all problems seem to have been solved or are about to be. Today, Hiperkitap has obtained 7500 books from 220 different local publishers (Table 1). The collection consists of academic and general culture subjects and is appropriate for university and public libraries in terms of content. As a result 55 university libraries, two public libraries and two other higher education institutes are subscribed to Hiperkitap in 2011 (Table 2).

Table 1. Publishers and books

Year	2009	2010	2011
Publishers	115	205	220
Books	3550	7000	7500

Table 2. Subscribers

Year	2010	2011
Universities	34	55
Public libraries	2	2
Other institutions	-	2
Total	36	59

System Technical Brief

The system consists of two physical dedicated servers (Windows Server 2003 x64 architecture) and separate IPs. The Apache web server redirects Java requests to eight load-balancing tomcat nodes residing on both servers. The project makes use of robust open source Java libraries such as log4j, lucene and struts, while a PHP based Content Management System is used for the front end; a critical business logic/layer is coded in J2EE. Thanks to caching mechanisms business objects such as

Book, Page or Reader are represented in memory. The scanning-indexing-searching process is completely flexible and scalable.

System Management Brief

A book tagging process allows the editors to choose books in order to offer clients/readers different book collections and avoid/filter undesired content. By using IP filters and client domain name definitions, client browsers are instantly recognized and offered only the appropriate content/search results.

Book pages are served as ordinary PDF files, thus allowing a huge range of browsers to access the book content without installing messy Java/Flash based plugins or readers. Simplicity of pages allow any mobile device with a pdf viewer to access the book content easily. Page navigation, value added services and related content on the WWW can also be embedded in books.

Functionality and Accessibility

The search engine offers basic and advanced options and a “smart” option as a beta. Keyword search within full text is functional. All browsers are compatible with the system. For the best performance, Microsoft Internet Explorer 6.0 and more recent editions and Adobe Reader 9.0 are recommended. My Shelf is available as a module.

MARC records are searchable in the OPACs of library automation systems. MARC records can be given to some aggregators’ search engines in advance (for instance, Discovery, AtoZ and Serial Solutions). Any user can access the database via a mobile or smart phone in the IP-based area. Hiperkitap staff supply extra technical assistance and permanent social support to the subscribers. Some 350,000 pages of e-books were viewed through Hiperkitap in 2010 and the figure is expected to increase considerably in 2011.

Table 3. Functionality and accessibility

Format of e-books	Access	Method of access	Citations
PDF	IP-based	Annual subscription	APA and MLA

Conclusions

This is the first time in Turkey that a Turkish e-book database has been created. Mobile applications, mostly smart telephone applications, are determining the development policy of Hiperkitap. The strategic aim is to provide access to up-to-date e-books using technology at the global level.

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