Useful information about the NatHosting service

Researchers and academics require technically reliable and failure-free access to digital content. Although access to licenced digital content through specialist academic publishers is largely provided for, interruptions to access are possible from time to time. As a result, the DFG-supported project NatHosting (National Hosting of Electronic Resources), was set up in cooperation with several academic libraries. The aim of the project is to ensure the continuity of access to licenced digital publications from academic publishers in the case of a technical or organizational interruption.

Interruptions to normal services include, in particular, temporary server failure, the transfer of journal articles to other publishing platforms or the discontinuation of publishing services. In addition the cancellation of an electronic journal can lead to interruptions in services on sustained licences. Many providers are aware of these problems and provide precautionary access to their digital content through alternative back-up hosts, for example Portico (www.portico.org).

The aim of NatHosting is to ensure access in cases where host services such as Portico are unavailable or only partially available. NatHosting envisages the implementation and establishment of a nation-wide infrastructure consisting of several locally distributed and networked hosting-servers under a co-ordinating hosting agency (Private LOCKSS-Network, based on software for archiving and hosting electronic content developed by Stanford University, e.g. www.lockss.org).

This hosting infrastructure, which should only come into operation in the case of emergency interruptions, is based closely on the procedures used by Portico and works strictly in accordance with the contractual arrangements of the individual NatHosting participants to ensure continued access to licenced content. Close interaction and cooperation between publishers, participating libraries and the hosting agent are crucial.

The current phase of implementation involves establishing contact with publishers who provide online licenced content to German academic institutions which is not covered or only partially covered by Portico.

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