

The ERES Digital Library: Online Access to Proceedings

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Abstract

This contribution presents the initial steps in the creation of a Digital Library consisting of previous ERES proceedings. The series of ERES conferences started in 1993, but their visibility has predominantly been limited to the ERES website. Sixteen conferences related to Real Estate resulted in an interesting output of over two thousands papers and it makes sense to offer them to a broader audience in an easily accessible way. Nowadays, average “annual paper production” amounts to approx. 200 entries and the use of this growing amount of information requires guidance. This includes the option to search for entries of a certain author (within a certain time span), as well a possibility to retrieve records on a specific topic related to Real Estate. First results on the gathering of initial content will be presented. At the time of writing over 1,500 entries are recorded. In the framework of this contribution, ideas on future developments related to the ERES Digital Library will also be presented.

1 Introduction

The *European Real Estate Society* has a long-standing Annual Conference tradition. Since 1993, hundreds of papers have been prepared and presented at the meetings. However, a local conference organisation is mainly interested in publishing the proceedings of the year they are in charge of. The need for archiving goes beyond a certain year and would support the possibility to access a kind of collective memory. In other words, both presenters and (future) audiences would be able to trace what was happening at any given point in time in a certain real-estate related area.

Ideally, this would include not only abstracts and full papers, but also the presentation sheets (e.g. Powerpoint) and, preferably, the references and literature citations in a separate database on the Digital Library portal. Sometimes it is assumed, that the online availability of materials would lead to a reduced audience.

Though this is hard to verify, some delay can be built in and the level of available chunks of information can be controlled when recoding entries in a Digital Library.

2 Setup of the Digital Library

As a non-profit organisation, the ERES-Society is not driven by plainly commercial motives. The creation and setup of the ERES Digital Library also abides by this principle and leaves the revenues in the hands of the society itself. Moreover, a higher degree of visibility and possible enhancement of impact would support prosperous development. Enormous progress has been made in the area of web-based technologies. The user interface of the ERES Digital Library (eres.scix.net) was created in the framework of an EU-IST project called SciX (“Open Scientific Exchange of Information”) [1]. The necessity of handling and maintaining it on a shoestring budget must be borne in mind. Another crucial point is the initial filling of the library with (rich) content.

2.1 Gathering and Recording of Data

It does not surprise that the acquisition of material stemming from recent conferences is easier to manage than that from the early days. The persons in charge may have changed and/or shifted their interests. Furthermore, activities usually cease once the conference is settled and the proceedings are printed. A couple of years ago proceedings started to be published on CD-Rom, but all these materials are likely to be stored in the cupboards and computers of individual attendees (with limited “access”).

A	B	C	D	E
1	id	authors	title	session source
2	eres2008_100	Alexandriopoulou, Ioanna	LAND PLANNING THROUGH PUBLIC PRIVATE PARTNERSHIPS	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
3	eres2008_101	Allmendinger, Phil; Michael Hall; Cat	HOUSING SUPPLY AND PLANNING DELAY IN THE SOUTH D5	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
4	eres2008_102	Andolfatto, David; Martin Gervais; Ga	MOBILITY AND TENURE CHOICE	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
5	eres2008_103	Anghelu, Ion; Vasile Nobu; Mihaiela Ne	ALLOCATION OF VALUE AND PARTIAL INTEREST VALUATION	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
6	eres2008_104	Barbu, Daniela; Ana Maria Grămcescu	VALUATION METHODOLOGY FOR THE HISTORICAL MONU B5	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
7	eres2008_105	Baroni, Michel; Fabrice Barthélémy; Pa	A REPEAT SALES INDEX ROBUST TO SMALL TRANSACTION G5	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
8	eres2008_106	Baum, Andrew	UNLISTED PROPERTY FUNDS: SUPPLYING CAPITAL TO D1	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
9	eres2008_107	Biasini, Nassimo	REGULATORY AND MARKET CONSTRAINTS' EFFECTS ON B2	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
10	eres2008_108	Bierwert, Sven	ETHICAL ASPECTS OF DISCOUNTING – WHAT CAN READ D6	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
11	eres2008_109	Bond, Shaun; Ben Gardiner; Peter Tyle	AN INVESTIGATION OF THE INCIDENCE OF NATIONAL H1	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
12	eres2008_110	Bormann, Daniel	RECOOA – PROCESS INNOVATION IN REAL ESTATE DE 12	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
13	eres2008_111	Bourassa, Steven C.; Eva Cantoni; Mar	PREDICTING HOUSE PRICES WITH SPATIAL DEFENDEN G5	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
14	eres2008_112	Bravari, M.; B. Giaccaria; A. Talarico	HOUSING AFFORDABILITY AND TENURE CHOICES: AN F5	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
15	eres2008_113	Brown, M.; Gordon; Bart Stok	THE ROLE OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT IN REAL ESTATE D04	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
16	eres2008_114	Brown, M.; Gordon; Tijlboek; Teunstra	EXAMINING INVESTOR PERCEPTIONS OF OBSOLESCENCE D6	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
17	eres2008_115	Brown, Louise; Stanley McRea; Alastair	BIDDING BEHAVIOUR IN THE RESIDENTIAL REAL EST F5	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
18	eres2008_116	Brunnauer, Wolfgang A.; Peter Wechselba	GEODADDITIVE HEDONIC REGRESSION MODEL FOR RENT G5	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
19	eres2008_117	Buitelaar, Edwin	PROPERTY RIGHTS AND URBAN REGENERATION IN THE F6	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
20	eres2008_118	Busse, Daniela; Thomas Lützkendorf	KEY ACTORS, THEIR ROLES AND MEANS TO IMPLEMENT H6	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
21	eres2008_119	Byrne, Peter; Stephen Lee	SPATIAL CONCENTRATION IN INSTITUTIONAL INVEST A4	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in
22	eres2008_120	Cao, J. Albert	PREPARING BEIJING FOR THE OLYMPICS: BUILDING H2	Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Book of Abstracts: 15th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in

Fig. 1 Example of extracted metadata (to be imported at eres.scix.net)

It seemed relatively easy to deal with the time-span from 2003 onward. Grateful mention must be made of the support provided by previous conference chairs in the form of making the data available, as well as their support by extracting bits and

pieces which had to be consolidated in a chart with metadata (Fig. 1). The collected sets of structured metadata allowed for an import into the ERES Digital Library. Ideally, not only authors and titles of the presentation are to be recorded, but also the abstracts and the sessions, in which the papers were presented. The largest number of papers stems from the Annual Conference itself (approx. 1,500 items), but also the contributions to the “Education Seminar” (with nearly 100 entries) were recorded.

The screenshot shows a search results page titled "Search Results". The search term "Taltavull" is entered in the search bar. Below the search bar, there are instructions: "Tip: Type 'New York' car to search for 'New York' or 'car'." and "More info and help advanced search". The results list 21 hits. The columns include: #, details, full text, citation, and check to select. The citation column contains links to various academic papers by Paloma Taltavull de la Paz, such as "GERMAN RETIREES LIVING IN ALICANTE: THE REVIVAL SURVEY", "Are Valuations Representative of Housing Prices in the Market? Evidence from the Spanish Market", and "HOUSING SUPPLY AND PRICES EQUILIBRIUM. A CASE STUDY ON THE SPANISH HOUSING MARKET".

Fig. 2 Recorded entries, displaying the results of a search for “Taltavull”

The screenshot shows a detailed view of an entry titled "Paper eres2006_311: HOUSING SUPPLY AND PRICES EQUILIBRIUM. A CASE STUDY ON THE SPANISH HOUSING MARKET". The entry includes fields for id (eres2006_311), authors (Taltavull de La Paz, Paloma), year (2006), title (HOUSING SUPPLY AND PRICES EQUILIBRIUM. A CASE STUDY ON THE SPANISH HOUSING MARKET), source (Book of Abstracts: 13th Annual European Real Estate Society Conference in Weimar, Germany), summary (a detailed description of the research findings), keywords (housing supply; elasticity; housing market; Spain), series (ERES conference), type (normal paper), discussion (No discussions. Post discussion...), ratings (good(3)), and session (3-D).

Fig. 3 Example of the recorded information for an individual entry

2.2 Developmental Steps

It has to be noted that there is currently a body of initial content operational at eres.scix.net. Extending it with further entries from forthcoming conferences should have a high priority, as these materials are the most recent ones and therefore of utmost interest. In a next stage, the addition of the corresponding full papers could be considered.

The question as to whether it makes sense to record missing entries from the period 1993–2002 is hard to answer. It would result in another 1,000 entries. Not all the material may still be available in a digital format and digitalization may be required. However, the investment would make sense in order to provide an overview of progress made in the field since 1993 [2]. Again, with the support of previous conference organizers, a full retrospective recording could be envisioned.

The level of precision (clarity of metadata) in a Digital Library may differ substantially from a “classical library”. Mistakes can occur as the gathered metadata is collected by non-librarians and occasionally the syntax is slightly ignored. On the other hand, the speedy and uncomplicated access to ERES-material will enhance the level of attention and therefore make participation in future conferences even more interesting. The searchability of gathered data is to be regarded as an important asset (implementation of a “google-like” interface). For complex retrievals, however, the use of the advanced search feature is advised (Fig. 4).

The screenshot shows the 'Advanced Search' page of the ERES Digital Library. At the top, there is a search bar labeled 'Search for:' with a 'Search' button. Below it, a section titled 'Paint found words: ' contains a note: 'They are applied on records satisfying the list of words.' A table for 'Additional search criteria' is shown with two rows. The first row has columns for 'authors', 'contains', and 'title*' with values 'tieto', 'contains', and '2007'. The second row is partially visible. Below this is a checkbox 'satisfy all of the above: '. Further down, there are fields for 'Max size of data in days:', 'Sorting: by number of matches', 'Formatting: default short format', 'Frames: no frames', and 'Results per page: 20'. At the bottom, a section 'Where applicable print the following fields:' lists various fields with checkboxes: '_id', 'keywords', 'ratings', 'id', 'series', 'session', 'authors', 'type', 'refs', 'year', 'email', 'from', 'title', 'more', 'at', 'source', 'content', 'summary', 'discussion'. Most checkboxes are checked. At the very bottom are 'Search' and 'Save form as:' buttons.

Fig. 4 The advanced search features

3 Outlook

There is no doubt that part of the importance of a conference is to provide a setting where participants can enjoy fruitful exchanges. A Digital Library would, however, allow for a comprehensive overview beyond the scope of a single meeting and enable further exchanges “in between” the conferences. It is crucial for the success of eres.scix.net to assure handling and maintenance on a shoestring budget. The additional workload for conference chairs ought to be manageable, and the pay-off for their contribution is enhanced visibility. To ensure sustainable achievement, forthcoming conferences should be added periodically.

ERES-members are able to “use” the recorded entries on their personal homepages. The author presented in Fig. 2 could, for instance, use the following static link:

<http://eres.scix.net/cgi-bin/works/Search?search=authors%3Ataltavull>

or if needed, also the link of an individual entry as presented in Fig. 3:

http://eres.scix.net/cgi-bin/works>Show?id=eres2006_311

This could especially be of use for the conference programme and allow to (pre-) publish the papers shortly before the conference.

In this context, the harvesting of metadata defines a possible further “use” of eres.scix.net. Also applications related to the Semantic Web are gaining interest as the number of entries is growing substantially.

References

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