

Invitation to Participate

We invite all organisations preserving or making accessible cultural assets to join the BAM Portal. (In German, BAM stands for Bibliotheken, Archive und Museen – Libraries, Archives, and Museums.)

By crosslinking our services we make them more easily available to the public – in a variety of novel contexts. Participation is free of charge.

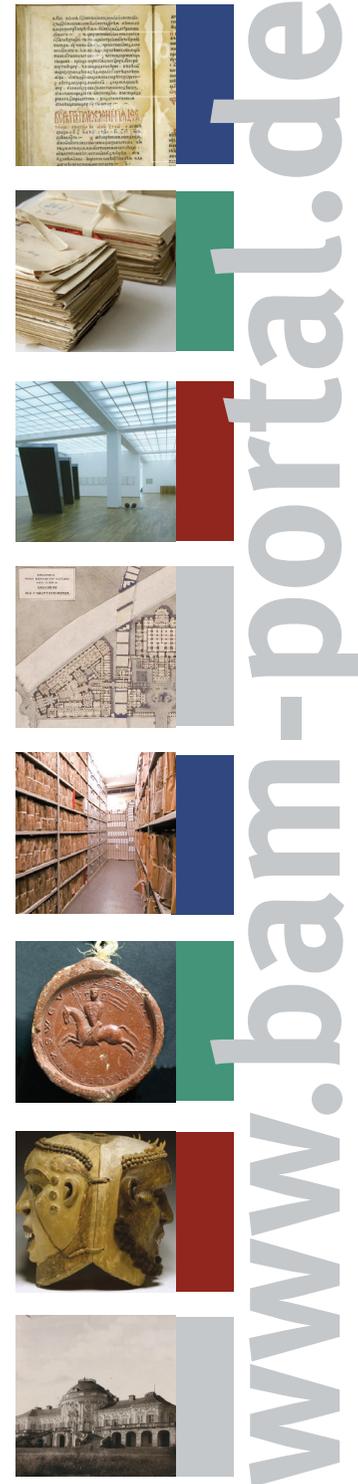
On our homepage you may find further information on the technology behind our portal, as well as terms and conditions of use. Please direct inquiries to the following contact persons:

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A Portal to
Libraries, Archives and Museums

The Portal

The abbreviation BAM (Bibliotheken, Archive or Museen – Libraries, Archives and Museums) stands for joint services on the internet provided by libraries, archives and museums in Germany. The BAM Portal gives scholarly users and other interested parties direct access to published works, archival records, and museum objects. The portal is not only a platform of those institutions, but it is also open to all organisations preserving cultural assets.

The aim of BAM is to centralise access to objects of cultural value.

A BAM Portal search yields results from German union catalogues, the online finding aids of the German Federal Archives, and the archives of many provinces, the object databases of museums, and museum associations, and the offerings of other organisations engaged in the conservation of cultural treasures. All participants, along with their collections, are introduced on the portal's website.

The results of each query in the BAM Portal are displayed in a short list with links to the original systems. Users have access to the full index description, presented in the context appropriate to each cultural institution. If available, users also get access to digital data sets of museum objects, archival records, and publication information.

The Partners and the Consortium

The BAM Portal began as a project of the German Research Foundation (DFG). During the third stage of the project, the BAM Portal has been expanded and now includes yet other partners in the Federal Republic of Germany. In addition to the State Archives of Baden-Württemberg, the Federal Archives of Germany, the State Archives of Hesse, and many other, especially municipal archives are the archival partners of the BAM-Portal. Several museums have joined the portal beside the original project partner, Stiftung Landesmuseum für Technik und Arbeit in Mannheim: the federal museums Deutsches Historisches Museum and Haus der Geschichte, many state and municipal museums, among the latter the Stadtgeschichtliches Museum Leipzig. The union catalogues of the Gemeinsamer Bibliotheksverbund (GBV) and the Südwestverbund (SWB) provide the cataloguing data.

Upon expiration of the German Research Foundation's funding in summer 2007, a consortium was formed, in order to maintain and develop the BAM portal. The founding members of the consortium are: Landesarchiv Baden-Württemberg, Stiftung Landesmuseum für Technik und Arbeit in Mannheim, Stiftung Preußischer Kulturbesitz/ Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, Bibliothekservice-Zentrum Baden-Württemberg. The latter is the managing institution of the consortium and the technical provider of the portal.

The Technology:

Since the end of 2005, searchable metadata pertaining to the inventories and collections of the participating institutions have been kept a central search index. Queries lead to a search of all files, producing a list of hits containing the most important elements (such as title and date of origin). These results serve as a jump label to more detailed information. The data exchange formats are derived from XML standards tailored to the specific needs of cultural organisations. In this way, the BAM Portal contributes to the further development and diffusion of interchange formats among cultural institutions.

The BAM Portal's search functions are actuated through open source software from Apache Lucene. This software allows the application of linguistic techniques to expand in a targeted fashion the quantity of hits. The inclusion of a structured controlled vocabulary (subject headings of the German National Library) allows the user to elaborate on a search of a particular term through inclusion of synonyms and narrower terms. The Portal offers a detailed search history including a my-list-function of items searched, as well as additional information concerning the participating institutions and collections. These services allow comfortable and individualised access to the information requested by the user.