



**ReIReS**

Research Infrastructure  
on Religious Studies

Grant 730895, ReIReS

Public Report/ORDP

## D6.4 User interface evaluation report

**Name of the data providing institution:** KU Leuven

**Contact:** michiel.declerck@kuleuven.be

**Task:** 6.5

**Task leader:** BREPOLS

**Type of data:** Overview of user interface design

**Purpose of data generation:** Report on user interface evaluation

**Data's audience:** Public

**License:** You are free to share the document in any medium, but you are not allowed to make changes in the file. While sharing, you must give credits to ReIReS and the EU Horizon 2020 Programme.

**Open Research Data Pilot** No

**Reusability duration:** Data remains reusable throughout the duration of the project.

**Tags:** [to be filled in by partner and to be placed by WP8 in the CMS of ReIReS' website]

**Other, if applicable:** Date of the first training given [XX/XX/XXXX]  
by the training institution:

Name of the first training given [..]  
by the training institution:



This project has received funding  
from the European Union's Horizon 2020  
research and innovation programme  
under grant agreement No 730895.



Grant 730895, ReIReS

Public Report/ORDP

## D6.4 User interface evaluation report

**Document reference:** REIRES-WP6-D6.4-KUL

**Version number:** 01.00

**Status:** FINAL

**Last revision date:** 31/08/2020      **by:** MichielDC

**Verification date:** DD/MM/YYYY      **by:** [Verifier Name]

**Approval date:** DD/MM/YYYY      **by:** DG RESEARCH

**Subject:** Grant 730895, ReIReS  
Public Report/ORDP  
D6.4 User interface evaluation report

**Filename:** ReIReS\_WP6\_D6.4\_UserInterfaceEvaluationReport\_01.0  
0\_FINAL





# ReIReS

Research Infrastructure  
on Religious Studies

Grant 730895, ReIReS

D6.4 User interface evaluation report

Status: FINAL

Version: 01.00



This project has received funding  
from the European Union's Horizon 2020  
research and innovation programme  
under grant agreement No 730895.



## Change History

Version Number	Date	Status	Summary of main or important changes
00.01	27/07/2020	WORKING	Working version
00.02	11/08/2020	WORKING	Working version
00.03	13/08/2020	WORKING	Working version
01.00	31/08/2020	FINAL	Final version

## Distribution List

Name	Company	Role
WP6 Roxanne Wyns	KU Leuven/LIBIS	Task Leader
WP6 Michiel De Clerck	KU Leuven/LIBIS	
WP6 Jan Driesen	Brepols	
WP6 Paul De Jong	Brepols	





## Contents

<b>1. Introduction .....</b>	<b>6</b>
<b>2. Design process.....</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>3. Partner feedback and workshops.....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>4. Improvements after user feedback.....</b>	<b>10</b>
4.1. Functionality.....	10
4.2. Contents .....	10
4.3. Design .....	11
<b>5. Conclusion.....</b>	<b>12</b>





## 1. Introduction

This deliverable consists of a report on relevant aspects, views, and results of user experience and lessons learned by project partners involved in the testing of the user interface of the ReIReS unified discovery environment, referred to as ReIReSearch, as well as views on future extensions and exploitation opportunities.





## 2. Design process

The first steps in designing the ReIReSearch UI were taken during the work that resulted in *D6.1 Requirements Overview and Use Case Models*. Some of the use cases and requirements collected from potential users involved needs related to the user interface. Part of defining the requirements also meant studying the user interfaces of the online catalogues of partner libraries and data publishers in the domain of religious studies, which helped inform the design process.

The user interface used by partners in ReIReS, such as Brepols' Index Religiosus and Limo of the KU Leuven Libraries, and of platforms outside of the consortium, such as IxTheo, were examined, among others. This helped in determining the basic features necessary for a discovery environment. Most features are not specific to the field of religious studies. Some aspects are more specific to the field, however. For example, the planned inclusion of a virtual keyboard to accommodate searching for records composed in different scripts (e.g. Hebrew) is a feature geared more towards the field of religious studies. In addition, the choice of filters and sorting options is influenced by the research domain.

Besides user needs and existing standards, the contents of ReIReSearch is another important factor in designing the user interface. More and more collections relevant for religious studies are being digitized. This means that, besides the metadata, users often wish for direct access to the digital representation in the environment. However, it was decided to limit to a thumbnail preview in the results page and record view. This is due to the storage cost that hosting digital copies would bring. In the future, viewer embedding is considered; especially for IIIF compliant resources where the quality of the viewer and consultation speed is guaranteed. In the meantime, the result page features a thumbnail of the cover of a digitized source when available and records contain a direct link to the digitised copy on the provider's side.

Record metadata remains the most important aspect in a discovery environment for researchers as it helps users find and retrieve relevant material for their research. To further aid them in this, adding facets to filter out certain search results or to refine their search also needed to be included. Including both a Simple Search and Advanced Search option was equally important. These functions can be considered basic necessities and can be expanded and improved further along in the design process.

Based on community best practices, use cases and user requirements, the basic functionalities for a discovery environment for religious studies were determined. This process resulted in a mock-up for the user interface which was created using [Balsamiq](#), a wireframing tool. A website wireframe is a visual guide that represents the skeletal framework of a website. This allowed WP6 to determine the layout of all the necessary pages, how they relate to one another and how the different aspects function. The user interface mock-up served as a starting point for the actual design of the user interface. During the actual design, certain aspects were changed to be more practical or functional than originally drawn up.





### 3. Partner feedback and workshops

Once a first version of the user interface was operable, it went through internal testing by WP6 to resolve the most obvious issues and track down commonly occurring errors. Although users from the ReIReS consortium would perform the most important testing phase, this helped to ensure that users would not have to report issues that were easy to recognize by non-researchers as well.

The first live presentation of the user interface to partners happened at a ReIReS Paris meeting in January 2020. The following week the URL was sent out to two internal ReIReS mailing lists with some background information on the discovery environment and a request to test it and report any issues (broken links, incomplete information and all other test results/feedback) as well as make suggestions for improvements. To ensure that issues could be resolved as thoroughly as possible, testers were asked to include the following information in their e-mail:

- A description of the issue or suggestion
- A print screen when relevant
- The browser they are testing with
- When it concerns an issue with a record, to include the persistent link
- 1 ticket per issue (similar issues could be grouped)

It was pointed out that errors were to be expected because the UI design was still a work in progress. They could report all issues because all feedback was relevant.

The data of one partner, Brepols, is made accessible on ReIReSearch via federated search. This data, from the Index Religiosus, is not imported in the back-end but retrieved via API. Because Index Religiosus is a paid subscription database, users were also informed about how they could access this data via ReIReSearch. At the time of testing (now resolved), there were still some speed issues related to the federated search of which testers were also informed.

Another important step was consulting with the partners who had contributed datasets to the first version of the UI to determine whether they approved of the way their data was presented on the platform. These partners reported some small issues related to the presentation of their data. This also offered a fresh perspective on the UI by people not directly involved in WP6. They also came across some technical errors and more general visualization issues.

In February 2020, ReIReS organized a school on the use and study of special documents at KU Leuven and WP6 used the presence of several international researchers in religious studies in Leuven to hold a testing and evaluation session on the ReIReSearch platform. During this session, the user interface was briefly presented to participants after which they were given the time to test it and give live feedback. This proved very useful in getting a better insight into the impressions of users and suggestions for improvements than through the reporting through e-mail only.

Another testing session was planned during a ReIReS DH course at KU Leuven in June 2020. The course, and therefore the testing session, has been postponed to December 2020 due to COVID-19. The





feedback of this session will also be taken into account as well for the final update round of the platform before the end of the project.

Some of the feedback by e-mail was a collection of remarks of several people at an institution, collected and sent by one person at that institution. Therefore, it is difficult to give more than an estimate of the number of people who gave feedback. Around ten e-mails were sent containing the feedback of between eleven and fifteen people. They provided thirty-two remarks, issues and errors.

No attendance numbers were kept for the live testing session nor was a record kept of who gave which remark. Approximately fifteen people attended the live testing session and about fifteen items were mentioned and discussed.

	Participants	Issues reported
Feedback by e-mail	10-15	32
Feedback during live testing	+/- 15	15





## 4. Improvements after user feedback

### 4.1. Functionality

The first major issue that was reported occurred in the search result page when scrolling down a long list of results. While scrolling down the page, the search bar was sometimes automatically emptied and an indication popped up with the notice “Please enter a search term”. When clicking “Ok”, it reappeared immediately and there was no way to either scroll up or down. The page needed to be closed and reopened again.

Several testers also pointed out that particular actions resulted in a "500 server error". One of which occurred when applying more than one search filters. Several people reported an issue where a search gave a certain amount of results, which were then infinitely repeated in an endless result list.

### 4.2. Contents

The metadata of the Index Religiosus database, an important database requiring subscription, is integrated into the ReIReSearch environment via federated search (live API calls). The metadata of this resource is more limited than the records from other providers. As ReIReSearch is in the first place a discovery platform pointing towards relevant resources in other databases and online catalogues, the metadata offered is sufficient for finding relevant data. However, some users indicated they would like to see more clearly why certain records appeared in the search results as this is not always entirely clear due to the limited metadata provided. This issue however does not have a technical background, the choice to provide limited metadata for visualisation on the ReIReSearch platform is influenced by economic and functional reasons.

Being a very large specialised online bibliography, Index Religiosus allows refined search strategies leading to precise search results. It is impossible to integrate this in full detail in ReIReSearch. The reasoning is that ReIReSearch points out interesting results, after which users can follow the provider's link to view the full record on the Brepolis platform and continue specific searches there. Finding the right balance in order to integrate commercial and public data was one of the technical, economic and functional challenges of WP6.

In the metadata provided by the University of Sofia, the number of pages for a record were not shown. This issue was reported by the contact person in their library who also provided the correct metadata field in their data to extract the information from.

Originally, a record page showed the collection which a record was a part of under “Data provider” but based on user feedback, this was changed to the name of the institution that provided the data. An additional category was later created to search on dataset or collection name as well as on provider.

During the live testing session, attendants mentioned that the metadata shown on the search result page, which is obviously more limited than the information provided on the record page, does not contain the year of publication. They pointed out that for a researcher in religious studies this information is too important not to show immediately because it is relevant to ascertain the value of a record.





Many other smaller things were reported and fixed during the 1<sup>st</sup> testing and evaluation round. Some suggestions for improvements were immediately implemented, other concerned personal preferences that weren't necessarily shared by others and therefore excluded.

### 4.3. Design

Based on user feedback, it was decided to provide more information on the home page about the discovery environment and what sort of material users can hope to find. An 'About' page was already included but now users have a clearer idea of the environment as soon as they land on it.

The "Save search" button on the result page was made more noticeable after users mentioned that they only noticed it after a while on the page. The left hand side of the same page also shows filters users can apply to refine their search but it wasn't clearly stated that these were search filters.

Some minor design flaws were easy to address but also easy to miss in internal testing. Clicking on a specific internal link, for example, led users to an informative page from where they could not navigate back to the rest of the user interface anymore.

Consulting the detailed page of a record opened a popup that needed to be closed to go back to the result page. Some users instinctively tried going back to the previous page using backspace rather than closing that window. Using backspace sent them back to the homepage instead of the result page. This was changed so that using backspace worked the same way as closing the popup window.

On smaller screens, the book cover image was too close to the record metadata text. The font colour of the text in the item description was also considered too light. Users have the option to e-mail a record to people. However, the contents of the e-mail was originally not clear enough on the fact that it was related to ReIReS.





## 5. Conclusion

By designing the user interface of ReIReSearch based on best practices as seen in similar search platforms, on user needs and requirements and on the nature of the data to be included, the result seemed very satisfactory for researchers in religious studies. Most of the feedback mentioned minor issues that were easily solved or pointed to recurring errors that needed to be remedied. The design of the user interface, back-end and contents of ReIReSearch is an ongoing process. This means that improvements, extensions and feedback by users are continuous. The next live testing session that was postponed to the end of the year due to COVID-19 will therefore also feature a more developed user interface with new features and new datasets, which will hopefully provide even more feedback to help improve the platform.

***(End of Document)***

