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May we introduce...?

The article introduces a new section in KrimOJ that which will regularly present innovations relating to the bibliographical database “KrimDok” and the services offered by the Criminological Information Service (FID Kriminologie).

Keywords: Criminological Information Service Criminology (FID Kriminologie), Criminological Infrastructure in Germany, Database, KrimDok, Literature, Service

Dürfen wir vorstellen...?

Der Beitrag stellt die neu eingerichtete Rubrik des KrimOJ vor, in der zukünftig regelmäßig Neuerungen an der bibliographischen Datenbank „KrimDok“ sowie die Angebote und Entwicklungen des FID Kriminologie vorgestellt werden.

Schlagwörter: Datenbank, FID Kriminologie, Infrastruktur in der Kriminologie, KrimDok, Literaturversorgung, Service

The Criminological Information Service (in German: FID Kriminologie) is very pleased to be able to provide regular news about KrimDok and the services of the FID Criminology here in future. After all, the bibliographic database “KrimDok” has grown considerably in recent years and decades and is increasingly being used – and by no means only in German-speaking countries. In January 2025, KrimDok was visited more than 2 000 times a week or around 9 400 times a month. The majority of visits to the database come from Germany, about 70 %. Most of the other database visits come from English-speaking countries, primarily from the USA (around 14 % of visits), followed by the UK (around 5 %). The remaining 11 % of visits are spread across a total of 56 other countries, from which only isolated accesses are recorded. It is striking that visits from Spanish-speaking countries have increased significantly over the past five years. The FID Criminology would like to promote this development and has therefore had the KrimDok interface and search facets translated into Spanish. In 2025 and 2026, the KrimDok database will also be deliberately promoted not only in the English-speaking criminological community but also increasingly in Spain and in Central and South America by writing to criminological societies and research institutes as well as relevant master's degree programmes or the associated chairs at universities to draw their attention to the free service. It remains to be seen to what extent this will impact visitor numbers and whether this approach will lead to an expansion of the content of KrimDok or to new collaborations between the FID Criminology and foreign institutions.

1. Historical and current development of KrimDok

But let's take a step back first. For younger readers of *Kriminologie – Das Online-Journal* | *Criminology – The Online Journal* and those not yet familiar with the structures of the FID Criminology and the development of KrimDok, a brief chronological introduction should provide more clarity. KrimDok was created back in the late 1960s as a collection of references to criminological literature, at that time still in the form of a card index box. The origin of KrimDok, which has always been compiled and maintained in close cooperation between the Institute of Criminology (in German: Institut für Kriminologie, IfK) Tübingen and the present IfK Heidelberg, is easily explained by the fact that the first empirically working Institute of Criminology in Germany was founded at the University of Tübingen in 1962, preceded by the first Chair of Criminology in Heidelberg in 1959.¹

The establishment of these two institutions created the need for a collection of criminological literature. The interdisciplinary nature of the subject also made it necessary to bring together the published knowledge for reasons of research economy: As empirical research itself is very complex and time-consuming, without a bibliographical reference collection such as KrimDok, researchers would have to spend a lot of time reviewing the literature. For a criminological topic, such as youth imprisonment or femicide, researchers would have to review not only the genuine criminological literature but also the sociological, psychological, legal and educational literature and, if necessary, the political, historical or cultural studies monographs, anthologies and journal articles. As a result, KrimDok adopted a function supporting the research process at an early stage but naturally did not yet find widespread use in the form of a physical card index.

However, Tübingen established itself as the 'Mecca of criminological literature' in Germany, as a so-called 'collection focus' was set up in 1969 in cooperation between the IfK and the Tübingen University Library, which was financially supported by the German Research Foundation (in German: Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG for short). This involved the establishment of a specialised library for the subject of criminology, which was (and still is) available not only to researchers in Tübingen, but also to other locations via interlibrary loan. This collection focus was operated until 2011 and then upgraded to a 'special collection area' with extended financial possibilities. The collection focus and the special collection area both had the declared aim of collecting and making available the full range of literature relevant to criminology (Kümmel & Reinhardt, n.d., p. 3). This explains why the holdings in Tübingen, with around 150 000 monographs and anthologies and a reference collection of 234 criminologically relevant journals, are still very extensive today and stand out internationally. Not only was the entire collection of anthologies and journal titles referenced on KrimDok, but the publications were also analysed at the article level and indexed with keywords to ensure that all (and only) criminologically relevant literature can be found at a low threshold. With increasing digitisation, the card index first developed into a database on CD-ROM, which was updated once a year, and with the increasing spread of the internet into a freely accessible virtual database, which is continuously updated and currently contains around 375 000 records.

¹ At times, other institutions were also involved in the further development of KrimDok, such as the Villingen-Schwenningen Police University under Prof Dr Thomas Feltes from 1992 to 1998.

2. Introduction of the FID Criminology

The DFG decided to discontinue the system of collection focuses and special subject collections at the end of 2013. Instead, the current ‘Specialised Information Services’ (in German: Fachinformationsdienste, FID for short) were introduced with a new objective. The original aim of providing the most comprehensive literature collection possible was abandoned in favour of providing the criminological community with literature, information and services in line with current needs. The supply of literature should now favour open-access formats and – where financially viable – be increasingly based on electronic literature. To this end, product licences are to be acquired for the entire German criminological community where appropriate. In addition, further services can be offered, such as the open text service offered by the FID Criminology, or measures that support community building (such as the cooperation with Qualiservice to determine the subject-specific characteristics of research data management in criminology). However, the core of the service remains the maintenance and continuous updating of KrimDok.

The transition from special subject collections to the FID-system in 2014 did not occur automatically but was carried out by the DFG based on an intensive review of proposals and, in some cases, a fusion of several special subject collections into one FID. As a result, only 41 FIDs emerged from the former 86 special subject collections, which can now submit their project proposals in a staggered procedure. The FID Criminology is one of the ‘first FIDs’ and has been funded since 2014. The FIDs are funded by the DFG on a project basis, with a funding period of three years. A maximum of four funding periods, i. e. a maximum of twelve years, can be applied for. The FID Criminology is currently in its fourth and final funding period.

The DFG is planning to set up the so-called ‘FIDplus’-system as follow-up funding. Only those FIDs that have already been funded for twelve years, have proven their worth, and continue to meet the needs of the relevant scientific community can, therefore, be included in this system. In contrast to the FID-system, the duration is five years and there is no maximum funding limit. The transition from the FID- to the FIDplus-system is also by no means guaranteed. This is again preceded by an intensive evaluation. Again, not all FIDs can be included. On the other hand, not all FIDs will apply for a transfer. For example, the University Library in Frankfurt a. M. recently announced that it only plans to submit a proposal to the DFG for inclusion in the FIDplus-system for two of its current six FIDs to date; four FIDs will be discontinued. This decision is currently being criticised in the scientific communities affected by the cuts (cf. Magel 2025, n. p.). The FID Criminology is firmly planning to submit an application and – in consultation with representatives of the German criminological community – sees a continuing need for Criminology to maintain and update KrimDok as well as for accompanying services for research and the (primarily freely accessible) publication and dissemination of results. Of course, we very much hope that the transition to the new FIDplus-system will be successful.

3. News from KrimDok

In the upcoming issues of *Kriminologie – Das Online-Journal* | *Criminology – The Online Journal*, information will be provided about individual services offered by the FID Criminology and KrimDok and recent developments will be presented briefly and concisely. Special

emphasis will be placed on the services that will play an important role in the 2024-26 project period and that are likely to be of particular interest to users. These include:

- the service to support research data management in Criminology and the establishment of an advice centre at Qualiservice;
- which products are licensed for the criminological community and how they can be accessed;²
- what the person search in KrimDok is all about and where you can request corrections or deletions if the information in the person search is incorrect or if you want less information to be displayed;³
- why and when a KrimDok account can be helpful;
- what other content can be found in KrimDok and its benefits for the criminological community (such as ‘Announcements & Dates’, ‘Tools & Media’⁴ or the ‘Classics of Criminology’);
- the aims of the open text service and
- why the search facets and specific searches (e.g. for statistics⁵ or research data⁶) are so practical.

If you don't want to wait that long and instead want to find out more about the numerous possibilities of KrimDok, you can follow the links in this article or watch the KrimDok video tutorials.⁷ We would also like to take this opportunity to point out that the FID Criminology will be holding a number of short workshops on individual aspects of research data management (also in cooperation with Qualiservice) in the summer of 2025. The exact dates will be announced via KrimDok and the FID Criminology's Mastodon account ⁸ as well as via other criminological community channels.⁹

From autumn 2025, concrete planning will begin for the proposal for inclusion in the FIDplus-system, which must be received by the DFG at the beginning of March 2026. We are very happy to receive ideas and suggestions on requirements from the criminological community and will review all incoming suggestions for feasibility and coordinate them with the advisory board.¹⁰ Titles that should be acquired by the FID Criminology and can then be borrowed via interlibrary loan can also be suggested at any time.¹¹ We hope that the FID Criminology's offerings and services are already providing good support to the criminological community in its research and teaching activities and in the dissemination of research findings, and that we will be able to maintain and further expand these services in the future.

² <https://krimdok.uni-tuebingen.de/Content/licenses?lng=en#content>

³ <https://krimdok.uni-tuebingen.de/Authority/Home>

⁴ <https://krimdok.uni-tuebingen.de/Content/tools#content> (mostly in German language)

⁵ <https://krimdok.uni-tuebingen.de/Content/spezialsuche/false#content>

⁶ <https://krimdok.uni-tuebingen.de/Content/spezialsuche/false#content>

⁷ <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLs76r5p4LoGzWTyvjo6MI2VLysyXuVUYn> (in German language)

⁸ <https://mastodon.social/@KrimDok>

⁹ The workshops will be held in German language.

¹⁰ Ideas and information on requirements can be sent to the following address: fidkrim@ifk.uni-tuebingen.de

¹¹ A form for suggesting titles can be found on the KrimDok interface or under the following link: <https://krimdok.uni-tuebingen.de/Feedback/Form/AcquisitionRequest>

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