The German Library System: structure and new developments

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Introduction

The Federal Republic of Germany is situated in the centre of Europe. The Republic has sixteen Federal States. Germany's capital is Berlin. Altogether, there are more than 16,200 communities, including villages, counties, towns and cities, with more than 12,000 public libraries and about 2,000 general research and special libraries.

Germany has existed in its present form only since the unification of West Germany and East Germany in 1990. The two very different states had two very different political systems, one being embedded in the Western bloc with the United States and the other within the Eastern bloc with the Soviet Union. This had a great impact on the library system in each part of the country, evident in different classification systems, different types of libraries and library methods. During the last 12 years this has changed significantly, and the differences between East and West have been diminishing, even though they may not yet have disappeared altogether.

Basic Principles

Only three years after the reunification the publication *Bibliotheken '93* was edited by a group of the BDB (Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Bibliotheksverbände, the National Federation of Library and Librarians' Associations), founded in West Germany in 1989 by four different associations as their head-association.

In this document, the BDB acknowledges the ten major principles of library politics:

1. a library must be run in a professional manner by professional staff
2. financing and staffing should correspond to the library's responsibilities
3. the library's financing should be based on long-term planning
4. it should be possible to collect fees, especially overdue-fees
5. the building and any allocation of space should correspond to the library's tasks, some libraries have very special needs
6. cooperation amongst different libraries and with other institutions of culture and education should be possible
7. good organization and management is an important part of library planning
8. libraries should be able to work and decide professionally and independently, without being subject to political or cultural influence
9. a library should have a public relations department to provide information about the library as such, its cultural activities and exhibitions

Figure 1. Germany's sixteen Federal States are responsible for culture and education.

10. the library must be able to offer education to its readers, explaining the use of library services, catalogue and technical equipment.

In German libraries, these principles are not yet realized in full, but it is important to bear these standards in mind when discussing library developments with political and administrative bodies.

Levels of Service Provision

German libraries are working on four different levels to meet the public's information and literature needs:

Level 1: the basic need should be met by small and middle-sized public libraries, i.e. by public libraries in villages or small towns, branch-libraries or mobile libraries.

Level 2: represents a greater need for literature, to be met by city libraries, especially by their central library.

Level 3: the need for specialized information and literature will be met cooperatively by some metropolitan libraries, special libraries, regional and university libraries.

Level 4: refers to highly specialized needs, that can only be met in cooperation on the part of some special libraries, university libraries with their special collections, the three central specialized libraries, and, last but not least, the national libraries.

At the basic level, small and medium-sized libraries have a good mixture of different books and media on offer. In serving people on the basic level, the library is a turning point of information and a market for everybody. Libraries at this level are financed by local communities on various levels. Quite a number of them are financed by the Christian churches, which share a concept of public library services based on their own cultural traditions, often with a special focus on children.

The library's tasks at levels 1 and 2 include meeting the citizens' information needs, facilitating orientation in the multifarious world of books and non-books, including the Internet, supporting the use of new technologies, reading, and cultural work within their community, inspiring people to spend their leisure time creatively, motivating learning, helping to integrate different user groups such as people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds.

According to *Bibliotheken '93*, libraries at level 2 have to meet the following standards:

- two books or non-books per resident
- a stock of current periodicals
- 20 percent of the collection should be non-books (CD, video, DVD etc.)
- minimum opening hours of at least 35 hours a week
- participation in union cataloguing and inter-library lending systems
- 5 percent of the collection should be current reference books to provide extensive information
- should present consumer information – information about products and prices, and about tested technical products
- libraries at levels 1 and 2 should offer access to some databases.

The traditional organizational system of a public library is still in existence: there is a central library either with district and branch libraries, or just some branch libraries. Some public libraries have special music libraries providing music scores, books on music and Compact Discs (CD).

Figure 2. A girl happy to borrow talking books.

Figure 3. The Public Library of Gladbeck, a city of 78,000 inhabitants in the former mining industry district with a high rate of unemployment.

A special home delivery service for handicapped people delivers books and non-books. The mobile library stops at schools and at places outside the city centre where there are no branch libraries. One mobile library can serve approximately 25,000 inhabitants. During the last years, many public libraries have played an important role in reforming the administration at community level. Due to their clear statistical basis they have been participating in new forms of budgeting and accounting.

Libraries at level 3 serve people with special interests with all kinds of literature. Most of the libraries at level 3 are financed by one of the sixteen German federal states (like provinces). These libraries are university libraries, regional or state libraries (federal state), special libraries, and, at times, metropolitan libraries. At level 3, specialized literature and information requirements are being met, covering the following areas:

- scientific research and teaching
- professional education
- lifelong learning
- recreation.

Regional Libraries

Each of the sixteen federal states has at least one regional library. Some may have more due to historical reasons, as is the case with former independent regions or small kingdoms. Some regional libraries are combined with city libraries, many of them with university libraries. Regional Libraries or State Libraries (called 'Landesbibliotheken') provide literature and media for loan as research libraries, preserve traditional collections of the region, have the right of a regional legal deposit, and compile a regional bib-

liography. Over the last years, many regional bibliographies have not only been structured according to a similar classification system, but have also been published on the web as a combined regional bibliography of most of the sixteen federal states.

Special Libraries

Usually, special libraries have library functions associated with level 3. They are often part of an institution such as a research institute or an administrative body. Their field of acquisition is fairly restricted; they specialize in tasks relevant to their institution, and collect specialized material related to their special interest. This includes technical instructions and other grey literature, literature from other institutions, some scripts not yet published, and, increasingly, digital material. Special libraries often engage in more intensive classification work than other libraries, creating content information, if applicable, and providing special services to the staff of the institution. Special libraries serve their institutions first, which, at times, implies restrictions for the public, who, for example, may not be able to check out any media items.

Nevertheless, special libraries play an important role in the library system of the Federal Republic of Germany. There are special libraries at research institutes, such as the Max-Planck-Institutes or Fraunhofer Institutes, serving basic research programmes; and special libraries connected to museums and archives, government administrations and parliaments, associations and political parties, research institutes and business companies. Besides the Association of Special Libraries, which is a section of the Ger-

Figure 4. A library for young adults with a special social programme in the branch Rostock-Dierkow.

man Library Association, medical and law libraries, parliamentary libraries and museum libraries are associated in terms of discussion and co-operation. During the last five years, a reduction of staff changed the role of many special libraries, and one-person-libraries became a new topic in Germany. The Central Subject Libraries such as the National Library of Medicine, are an important category of special library in Germany, operating at level 4.

University Libraries

In German universities there are different tasks for the central university library and the departmental libraries or branches. The central university library – which is open to everybody – is the main lending library with a large open access area and centrally located stacks. It is usually involved in building up a digital library with a professional information centre drawing upon national and international databases and reference books. As the centre of acquisition and cataloguing, it supplies bibliographic data related to its holdings to the regional union catalogue database. The central library usually has a textbook collection with multiple copies for students. In some cases, the library is part of a system of special collections, which provides services at level 4.

According to ideas dating back to 1993, the departmental or branch libraries should only collect material relevant to the faculty's actual needs; the branch should not hold more than 10,000 volumes and have no stacks. Older material should be sent to the central university library. Instructors compile class reading lists based on material in the departmental library. This, however, is not the case in many universi-

ties where faculty libraries are much bigger, and there is currently a discussion about the independence of departmental libraries as to their staff and acquisition funding. This independence partly contradicts their status as part of a central university library. The discussion revolves around the question of whether a university should form a one-level system (i.e. departmental libraries are fully managed by the central library) or a two-level system (i.e. the central library and the departmental library are both fully independent). For over 100 years, this has been an ongoing discussion rooted in a tradition of German universities which placed subject faculties and departments on various different sites. Many old university institutes are scattered in and around the city. Sometimes the university library is in one place but many of the institutes are not close to it. This gives arguments to those who want to have their own departmental library near their institute. This is why, in old universities, many institute libraries exist which are sometimes not directly connected to the university library but are under the management of the professor of the university institute. In addition, some faculty members like to spend departmental library funds at their own discretion.

Libraries of polytechnic universities are far more oriented towards providing study-material and practical material for different studies and professions. They are not very big and have a high rate of duplication in the collection to serve the need of their students.

Level 4 Libraries

Libraries at level 4 provide the customer with highly specialized literature. This service can be provided thanks to the special subject collections system of the German Research Society (DFG), whereby the DFG takes over about 50 percent of the cost of foreign literature. Good examples of this system are the psychology collection at Trier University Library, the East-Asian literature collection at Berlin's State Library, and the collection of English literature at the University Library of Göttingen. The libraries participating in this system have to commit themselves to send this material to every other library via the interlending library system, as and when required. The special material may be searched by subject or region using the website WEBIS.

Even more important to the provision of highly specialized literature are Germany's three large

Figure 5. Listening to music in the music library of the Central and Regional Library of Berlin.

central special libraries. They function as national libraries for

- science and technology at the Technical Information Library in Hanover
- medicine and biology at the German National Library of Medicine in Cologne
- economy at the German National Library of Economics in Kiel.

These three libraries cover the provision of highly specialized literature in their respective fields. They collect preprints, reports, and other grey literature, endeavour to buy everything asked for within their special discipline, and serve customers directly. These Central Special Libraries, especially the one in Hanover, offer a well-known and fast service of sending copies of journal articles by fax or by e-mail. They also provide translations, for example, of a Japanese technological invention.

The National Libraries

For historical reasons, there are three libraries in Germany functioning as National Libraries at level 4:

- the German Library in Frankfurt and Leipzig
- the Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage
- the Bavarian State Library in Munich.

The German Library, founded as Deutsche Bücherei in 1912 by publishers in Leipzig, and, again, as Deutsche Bibliothek after the Second World War, in 1945, in Frankfurt (West-Germany), later creating a music archive in West-Berlin, stands for the national legal deposit,

collecting two copies of each of the 90,000 items published in Germany every year. According to the collection policy of German language literature the library also receives materials from Austria and the German-speaking part of Switzerland. The DDB (Die Deutsche Bibliothek), as it has been called since the unification of East and West, also collects all German language publications worldwide. For several years and in cooperation with some publishers, the DDB has been collecting electronic publications from the Internet. The German Library compiles various national bibliographic products, such as the *German National Bibliography*, both electronic and still in print, and sells them to other libraries. These services may be ordered via the homepage of the German Library.

The Berlin State Library of Prussian Cultural Heritage and the Bavarian State Library were originally royal libraries and developed their collections on the legal deposits of that era. Over the centuries, they have built up a very rich collection of important literature from European countries and from outside Europe. Within the German library system, these libraries have the task of collecting high-level national and international research literature. Maintaining their high standard of collection, Munich focuses on historical subjects and Berlin, among others, on special collections on East Asia, Eastern Europe and foreign law. These priorities are supported by the system of special collections of the Ger-

Figure 6. Special regional collections of precious books in the library of the Cistercian convent Waldsassen, Bavaria.

Figure 7. A library in a church – the economic departmental library of the Catholic University of Eichstätt in Ingolstadt.

man Research Society. Both libraries owe their reputation to their precious manuscripts, early imprints and incunables like the Gutenberg Bible or original, hand-written musical scores by Bach, Beethoven and Mozart. The Bavarian State Library, with its digital library, shows wonderful paintings from old manuscripts and incunables in digital format on the Internet. The agency of the International Standard Book Number (ISBN) is located at the Berlin State Library. The three biggest libraries of Germany, as mentioned above, are taking part in numerous important projects.

German Librarians – Associations and Education

Cooperation is at the heart of the National Federation of Library and Librarians' Association (BDB). This association unites the German Library Association (Deutscher Bibliotheksverband, DBV), representative of 1,700 libraries and library institutions, with two librarians' associations; the BIB (Berufsverband Information und Bibliothek) and the VDB (Verein Deutscher Bibliothekare), representatives of library staff, together representing about 9,000 members. Other members of the BDB are the EKZ bibliotheksservice (a library supplier), the Goethe Institute, which has more than 70 libraries and information centres worldwide, and the Bertelsmann Foundation, which carries out library projects.

The German Library Association, as an association of institutions, has eight sections; section 1, for example, links big city libraries, section 7, librarian training institutes. In one of the two librarians' associations, library staff or students may join on a voluntary basis, in the other, only academic librarians can become members. Members pay less for their training and obtain professional journals at reduced prices. Once a year, the librarians' convention – a one-week conference – is organized by the two associations BIB and VDB; every three years this is combined with the annual business meeting of the German Library Association DBV under the name of the BDB. In August 2003, the BDB will organize the 69th IFLA General Conference and Council in Berlin – for the first time called 'World Library and Information Congress'.

Training and professional education of library staff in Germany takes place on three different levels, based on the German dual system of professional training, with a combination of practical training and theoretical learning.

Grade 1 is a three-year-training to become a specialized employee for media and information services. You must have finished grade 10 at middle school level to be eligible for this training. According to the dual system the training takes place for, say 10 weeks at school followed by 10 weeks at a library and so on for a period of three years. A very modern training course focusing on databases and new media, it will provide the libraries with well-qualified young staff able to carry out various tasks like simple cataloguing using the union catalogue, the lending desk, or the periodicals centre, managing the stacks, working at the reference desk – quite often they do a combination of these jobs.

Grade 2, a librarian certification or library diploma, requires a secondary school diploma achieved at completion of the 12th or 13th grade. The training programme takes four years and is offered at a polytechnic university. An extensive period of practical training including a special programme in a library is compulsory. To pass the certification examination, the candidates are asked to write a small thesis on a library-relevant topic. Staff completing this degree are involved in high level cataloguing, deal with difficult acquisitions, work as reference librarians, select the literature to be bought – this applies at least to staff in public libraries and special libraries, where they will frequently gain management positions. Over the last years, this training pro-

Figure 8. Searching databases at the University Library of Frankfurt/Oder.

gramme has undergone major changes and closely resembles information management courses.

Grade 3 is the scientific or academic librarian with a two-year course of training, the prerequisite for which is a university diploma. Many applicants have studied German language and literature or German history, but there is still a lack of candidates holding masters' degrees in science and computer studies, mainly because students in these fields will earn more money outside the library. Academic librarians are responsible for collection development and active in management positions like directors of university libraries and big public libraries. Each year, about 40 scientific or academic librarians are being trained in Germany. This training course is currently undergoing major changes: Up to this year, it included a one-year internship in a library, followed by a one-year instruction period at a special library school. These days, new concepts for alternating between practical training at a library and theoretical training at school during the two year period are being implemented and courses in information science are being added.

In addition to the three levels of professional training mentioned, a university degree in library science is offered at the Humboldt University in Berlin (master's and doctoral degrees) as well as a distance learning course to qualify as an academic librarian. The latter corresponds in principle to a level 3 training.

New Developments

New developments within the German library system are based largely on cooperation among all library sectors, especially in the following areas:

- acquisition
- union catalogues
- interlibrary loan
- reading and media competence
- digitalization and digital publishing
- virtual libraries.

Cooperation in Acquisition

The Collection of German Imprints

The German cultural heritage in print has been collected in the German Library in Leipzig only since 1913. The German history of multiple small kingdoms was never able to create a unified collection of all printed materials produced during the last 500 years in Germany that could compare to other large national libraries in Europe. Therefore, some libraries are working together in the project of collecting German prints. Each of them is responsible for collecting all the material printed in Germany during a certain period of time, a period which is already well represented within the respective library. These prints may be in various languages such as Latin, French, or Italian. The Bavarian State Library, for instance, houses a multitude of first prints (incunables), given that collections from Bavarian monasteries were shipped to the library during the 19th century. The following libraries participate in this project of collecting German imprints:

Figure 9. Die Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig, the first national biographical centre of Germany founded in 1912.

Figure 10. A digitized manuscript of Beethoven's ninth symphony at the Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage.

- 1450–1600 Bavarian State Library, Munich
- 1601–1700 Herzog-August Library Wolfenbüttel
- 1701–1800 State- and University Library Göttingen
- 1801–1870 City and University Library of Frankfurt
- 1871–1912 State Library of Berlin
- 1913– German Library, Frankfurt, Leipzig, Berlin.

The libraries collecting German imprints are buying all the early printed works they can get from antiquarian booksellers or as copies from libraries. Step by step, and relying on this collaboration, a new cooperative National Library will be created collecting all German imprints since the early days of Gutenberg's printing press. In 1999, the year of the project's 10th anniversary, 53,000 titles had been acquired from antiquarian booksellers, and more than 35,000 items in microform from other libraries.

Supra-Regional Literature Supply

This is a joint project of numerous scientific libraries throughout Germany, and the acquisition of foreign scientific and research literature is the main goal of this cooperation. Due to the lack of a big national library after the Second World War, libraries in West Germany built up this cooperative acquisition system with the help of the German Research Society. In East Germany, there was a comparable system, based on grants of foreign currency offered to some libraries. After the reunification of East and West, some libraries in East Germany were assigned to special subjects and integrated in the system of the German Research Society. The website WEBIS provides information concerning the German system of supra-regional literature supply. In combination with the German Library and the Collection of German Imprints, this system of supra-regional literature supply can be seen as a complement to a national library, from the perspective of an overall literature supply also in the area of international research literature. All in all, there are 121 special subject collections found in more than 40 libraries of all kinds throughout Germany. The websites of these special subject collections, and those of the libraries in charge offer information about the services available, including addresses, contacts, links to catalogues, document delivery services, and related Internet sources.

The Lektoratskooperation

In cooperation with the German Library Association (DBV), the BIB and the EKZ, more than 300 persons are taking part in the Lektoratskooperation, a cooperation to select the most important publications recently published in Germany, write an abstract about them, and make suggestions regarding the respective target groups of readers in public libraries. Public libraries throughout Germany request this service in print or online, making use of it for their own selections. Alternatively, they may place a standing order for these customized services with the EKZ. Every year, this service covers a total of about 13,000 titles with their abstracts, including non-fiction and fiction, books and non-books.

Licensing Consortia

Over the last years, the creation of consortia is a new kind of cooperation in the field of licensing. The lack of funding available to university libraries to buy high-priced international scientific journals has added a lot of pressure to their situation. For some university libraries, this has lead to the decision to cancel subscriptions of highly priced journals; others are working together as a consortium, to get licence agreements from international publishers of scientific online journals, who are often insisting on print forms to be on offer in at least one of the consortium libraries. These consortia exist in various federal states. From time to time new discussions about the pros and cons of national licences for some online material emerge. Some research projects about the usage of these scientific journals in German universities and research organizations are also under way.

Figure 11. The professional training of librarians is based on the dual system and focuses on long internships.

Figure 12. 'Wings of Desire' – the reading room of the Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage; well known from the film of Billy Wilder.

Cataloguing

Cooperative cataloguing has a longstanding tradition in Germany. There is one cooperative cataloguing project in Germany that has existed for nearly 100 years and is still going on: the project of cataloguing the incunables of the world, i.e. all books printed since the times of Johannes Gutenberg from Mainz between 1450 and 1501; it has been located at the Berlin State Library since 1904. In the same library the department of manuscripts is responsible for compiling a union information system of manuscripts and letters in German libraries, called Kalliope, which has made good progress. More than 470,000 online data on letters, which are in the collections of 150 institutions in Germany, and biographical information about 200,000 European personalities, are supplied by this database. One of the most successful union catalogues based on cooperative work in Germany is the database of serial titles (journals and newspapers), the Zeitschriftendatenbank (ZDB) with more than one million titles of all kinds of journals, in all languages, with holdings in more than 6,000 libraries and in more than 5.7 million locations. More than 4,300 institutions take part in this project, jointly organized by the Berlin State Library, which started the project based on old union card catalogues for serials, and the German Library in Frankfurt.

In Germany, the existence of the old union catalogues in the federal states of the West and of the East has always been a basis for interlibrary loans across the country. The old regional union catalogues hardly exist any more in their old form. Not every card catalogue in German libraries has been typed into the new library systems or can be searched as an image catalogue on the Internet. But the focus has already changed to cooperative electronic union catalogues. Nearly all university libraries, many special and public libraries in the sixteen federal states take part in one of the six regional electronic union catalogues; most of them have integrated systems with libraries of other federal states combining data from research libraries and public libraries. The six regional union catalogues are:

- Bibliotheksverbund Bayern
- Gemeinsamer Bibliotheksverbund
- Hessisches Bibliotheks-Informationssystem
- Kooperativer Bibliotheksverbund Berlin-Brandenburg
- Nordrhein-westfälischer Bibliotheksverbund
- Südwestdeutscher Bibliotheksverbund.

All these catalogues, together with databases at national level, are integrated in one virtual catalogue, the Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog (KVK), and can be accessed with one request only. This catalogue is a wonderful invention. The inclusion of nearly all online catalogues from Germany, Switzerland and Austria makes it the best German language online catalogue resource. Now expanded to include online catalogues from France, Britain, Italy, Spain, Norway, etc., one can search over 75 million books and serials from catalogues of libraries and even booksellers in Europe.

For many years, cataloguing has no longer been a hot topic in Germany. This has changed completely since last year, when a discussion was started about a possible change from the German Cataloguing Format MAB (Maschinenlesbares Austauschformat für Bibliotheken) to MARC

Figure 13. Searching electronic journals at the university library Würzburg.

Format (MAchine Readable Cataloguing), and from the cataloguing rules RAK (*Regeln für die Alpabetische Katalogisierung*) to AACR2 (*Anglo-American-Cataloguing Rules*). Discussions at conferences and in discussion lists are ongoing, presenting arguments for each side supported by both facts and emotions. Topics like the quality of cataloguing – for example, concerning whether or not there is a hierarchical structure with counted volumes; the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) – where MAB-lovers prefer to be more close to it than AACR2; the exchange of data and the costs of change affecting all libraries and library systems in Germany are at the centre of this debate. First results of a project about this subject will be presented in summer 2003.

Interlibrary Loan

The direct interlibrary loan or direct loan now replaces the old German interlibrary loan system which was built upon cooperation between all libraries in West- and East-Germany during the last 50 years, and sometimes even beyond these borders. The interlibrary loan system had been established as a cooperation between the Federal States in the West and between special research levels in the East, whereby libraries sent books or articles from their region to other libraries free of charge. In West Germany, there used to be a two-level system, i.e. the regional and the national levels of interlibrary loan, each with a special hierarchy. With the existence of the electronic union catalogues in the 1980s, the integration of the big East German university libraries in the 1990s, and the development of the Internet, library holdings can now be checked more easily, and orders can be placed directly. Today, librarians and their customers carry out searches in electronic union catalogues like the virtual catalogue of Karlsruhe KVK (Karlsruher Virtueller Katalog). Titles may be ordered electronically by completing a loan request form, or in writing by using the conventional red forms.

The direct document delivery system SUBITO has been developed with the help of national funds with the aim of installing a quick document delivery system at a high standard. SUBITO is a library document delivery service for articles and books, developed for researchers and students, and can be accessed in many libraries these days. Copies of journal articles can be easily obtained from those libraries. The Internet can be used by everybody to search and order documents. Deliveries are made promptly and directly to the desired address. The fees range from about EUR 4.00 to EUR 11.00 for the electronic delivery of articles up to 20 pages; fax or printed copies are the more expensive delivery services. This service is now requested by more and more users, so that further direct document delivery systems have come into existence.

In Germany, the current discussion about document delivery systems does not concern aspects of technology, services or fees. It is first of all to do with copyright. Publishers tried to legally prevent document delivery of electronic material, and the result was an agreement between libraries and publishers about a small refund to be paid, provided document delivery is practised according to certain regulations. It is organized according to a German tradition, as a consequence of which the Federal States have to pay a fee for the right of lending books and other material in public libraries on the basis of the library lending statistics. The fees are collected by rights clearance organizations, which in turn refund publishers and authors. A further issue of discussion is the question of publishers no longer wanting the rights clearance organizations to be involved.

Reading Programmes and New Media Competency

There is an urgent need for more reading programmes and new media competency training in

Figure 14. 'Happy reading' at the children's library of Stuttgart Public Library.

Figure 15. The Media Library – a branch of Stuttgart Public Library.

the poets' and philosophers' country. Germany is known as the country of poets (Dichter) and thinkers (Denker), from Goethe to Kant, to name but a few of the many outstanding cultural heroes. But over the last decade, problems in the context of reading have not only been a topic of serious discussion for teachers and pedagogues, but also for library staff.

Schools in Germany have reading competitions for students aged twelve (6th grade). The students choose a book they like and read out a passage from it for about 5 to 10 minutes. The competition starts at their schools, and the winners from among all the schools in a city participate in another reading competition on the level of city or district, and then on the level of federal state. In 2002, 700,000 children from 8,000 schools took part in this. Sixteen winners are invited to Frankfurt in June 2003, where the final winner of the competition will be chosen. Many libraries and librarians contribute to the organization of this reading competition, which takes part in cooperation with the Foundation of Reading (Stiftung Lesen), a wonderful partner of libraries in many fields.

Starting from the weak results of German students documented in the international education study 'PISA' (Programme of International Student Assessment) in the year 2000, new activities in reading and cooperation between schools and libraries have gained more public support than in previous years. The Berlin Reading Summer (Berliner Lesesommer) for children, a project of Berlin's public libraries, sponsored by the Family Foundation (Familienstiftung), will be one of the actions taking place during this year's summer holidays. Reading in the Park, another cooperative activity among different literature organiza-

tions and libraries, will take place during the same week as the IFLA Conference 2003 in Berlin. The outcomes of the PISA study have shifted the focus in many small towns and cities increasingly towards reading activities, which had already been part of the libraries' standard programmes.

Apart from promoting reading, German libraries also strive to enhance new media competencies in the area of electronic products and computer skills. The multimedia section has become a very important part of the services in public libraries. For children, multimedia learning software plays a major role. High quality computer games from German publishers are suited to develop their feelings and emotions as well as their social and technical competencies.

As recently as five years ago, the use of the Internet in German libraries could not be taken for granted, neither by staff nor by the general public. This has changed a great deal, but has not, as yet, been fully accomplished. More and more university and public libraries offer their customers Internet access, and have started to install wireless laptop connections. A big leap forward was the project of media competency centres for public libraries, organized by the German Library Association in the year 2000 and funded by the Ministry of Education and Deutsche Telekom. This highly successful project was realized in only a few months, involving the installation of Internet connections (no less than five computers per media competency centre) in over 1,300 public libraries, and the relevant training for staff. Since then, most German libraries have been connected to the Internet, even though, at times, some obstacles to free and easy use do emerge.

Figure 16. A digitised version of the Gutenberg Bible of Göttingen – a Memory of the World – can be accessed via the Internet.

In order to raise the media competency of the general public, the public libraries have started to offer courses in how to use the online catalogue, the Internet, and databases. Many university libraries have done the same with students during the last ten years, and the demand for this kind of training remains high. Issues of recent discussions include research projects on the level of media and information competency at German universities, and the question of how to integrate information competency training, as provided by libraries to their customers, into the curriculum of schools and universities. German librarians fear that the German educational system will be noticeably lacking unless students and the public are trained on a regular basis in how to use libraries and library catalogues, how to retrieve information from databases, and how to judge the quality of information on the web. Today, Germany has fewer school libraries compared to the 1970s, but PISA has revived the discussion about this type of library and raised an awareness for the need to engage in lobbying activities, and, simultaneously, start putting things into practice on a local level.

Digitization

The development of digitization in Germany as an improvement of access to library collections has two major aspects: catalogues and full texts.

The idea of digitizing catalogues emerged from the situation in East Germany. Big card catalogues and a scarcity of computers did not prepare East German libraries very well for entry into an electronic age after 1990. In addition to the method of retro-cataloguing old card catalogues by typing everything in, the idea of scanning the cards and arranging them for scrolling came up. This method turned out to be far cheaper, and once Internet access was available in the libraries, it was easy to put the image catalogue on the web. It is a good enough method for searching, even where it cannot be connected to the library's lending system. Many old catalogues – big or small – are now turned into image catalogues.

Digitization of library collections was first of all applied to materials with high value, such as the Gutenberg Bible at the Göttingen State and University Library, or the beautiful illustrated manuscripts and prints at the Bavarian State Library. These two libraries were established as digitization centres. Now further libraries have started to digitize their collections, not only for making them available on the web, but also for the purpose of use and conservation. Many digitization projects related to library collections are financed by the German Research Society (DFG), and there are more projects to come. The Central and Regional Library Berlin (Zentral- und Landesbibliothek Berlin) has just completed the digitalization of the old Berlin address book, which covers more than 250 years, and has made it available on the web for international research.

The development of the digital library in Germany goes far beyond these projects. Many libraries have established digital libraries to preserve and to present electronic material. Public and research libraries have started to collect electronic materials of various description such as electronic books and full texts, electronic journals and newspapers. Publications from professors and university lecturers, including classroom materials and conference papers, are being collected and electronically archived on the servers of university libraries. Doctoral theses are now being accepted as electronic documents by university libraries, and the German Library,

Figure 17. Dortmund's new public library – modern architecture by Botta.

Figure 18. The public library of Münster is an attraction for tourists.

which has just introduced an identifier for these electronic theses, receives digital publications from some German publishers on a voluntary basis.

A digital library brings with it many technical problems for the library to solve. Therefore, some university libraries are cooperating with the computer centres of their respective universities. The German Initiative for Network Information (DINI) is actively supporting the development of publication servers making digital open resource material available in universities. The EZB, the Electronic Journal Library, a cooperation of more than 170 libraries, is a service facilitating the use of scholarly journals via the Internet. It offers a fast, well-structured and unified interface to access full-text articles online. Journals are grouped into three categories: those with freely available full-text articles, others with full-text restricted to a certain kind of users, and others still where full-text articles are not accessible.

There are further initiatives from German libraries to offer a multitude of different information sources via a single interface to access library catalogues and collections as well as other resources on the web. One of these is the Digital Library of North-Rhine-Westfalia (DIGIBIB). Many libraries in Germany have built up sophisticated web link collections on their websites. In this field, a very new and successful cooperation of 70 public libraries is the German Internet Library (Die Deutsche Internetbibliothek), a project of the German Library Association and the Bertelsmann Foundation. Free and open to the public and combined with a shared electronic information desk answering e-mails from the general public, this collection of websites is much appreciated. The availability of online databases

and CD-ROM in information centres and in public libraries, the access to more fact-based information, the participation in online union catalogues as well as online databases have brought about changes bridging the gap between public and research libraries and strengthening the cooperation between them.

Financing

In general, libraries in Germany are financed at different political levels and by the organizations to which they are affiliated. Germany has a federal political structure with less responsibility of the national state for education and culture. The communities and the sixteen federal states are playing a major part in this respect. But since the economic situation is getting increasingly more difficult, and cities and states have less money than in previous years, budget cuts are the order of the day. The closing down of the German Library Institute, which provided a multitude of services for libraries in Germany, for instance the national library statistics, progress work on classifications systems, project work for school libraries, development of SUBITO, etc. which will come into effect this year, is a major setback for the coordination of library developments in Germany considering the different levels of resources.

Hidden behind the concept of 'budgeting', the financial restrictions go even further, making cuts easier whilst, at the same time, giving more freedom of decision-making to the library. 'Budgeting' in German means that the library receives a certain amount of money without any regulation on how much of it is to be allocated for staff or for other expenses. As a consequence, some public libraries have changed into other

Figure 19. Waiting to check out – the heavily used Central and Regional Library of Berlin.

kinds of organization such as foundations or public utilities. If a university receives this so-called global budget, there is no further regulation on how much of it the university library should get. Previously, the university library's budget was allocated by the ministry of each federal state. These days, it has become more difficult for university libraries to obtain the money they require, especially if they have to compete for it among all the other university departments.

The poor economic situation in Germany has an impact on all libraries, especially the public libraries. There are very serious financial and personal restrictions, and in many cities it may no longer be possible to run all branch libraries with sufficient staff and media. Over the last three years many branch libraries have closed down, a process still ongoing. Cities provide ever less money for acquisitions, and are asking the libraries to make money from their customers, trying to find sponsors for special activities. Friends of the Library and supporting foundations provide newly developed sources of small income.

The concepts of accountability and best practice are topics of interest discussed in both public and research libraries, not least in connection with library funding. The German Library Association (DBV) in cooperation with the Foundation of the weekly newspaper *Zeit* has installed the Library of the Year (Bibliothek des Jahres), to demonstrate best practice in German libraries. In 2002 the Göttingen State and University Library won the prize. The performance of libraries is measured by the BIX (Bibliotheksindex), which is a cooperative venture of the German

Library Association DBV and the Bertelsmann Foundation. Using a few central indicators, the performance of public libraries is measured and the annual results published. In 2003 the BIX for research libraries will start.

Despite the financial restrictions for German libraries, it is important to maintain free access to information and multimedia. German libraries want to bridge the gap between the information poor and the information rich in their country, between East and West, and are trying to initiate special activities in this field to this effect. Libraries buy licences from publishers and pay for databases and video films, whilst the customer can use these for only a small fee or even free of charge.

New Library Buildings

Even though the financial burden following the reunification of Germany remains quite high, there are nevertheless exceptional developments as to library buildings. As part of a programme of university development in East Germany, the university library in Frankfurt/Oder close to the Polish border, for instance, had a wonderful new reading room integrated in a courtyard of the old building, and attractive open access areas added just beneath the roof. The method of integrating old and new parts of buildings for the purpose of creating an attractive library is popular: in Bremen, the city library will have its big future domicile in the former police-station. The Sächsische Landesbibliothek – Staats- und Universitätsbibliothek in Dresden has only just opened the doors to its latest building with its attractive reading room, integrating some of its libraries, which were previously scattered on the campus and throughout the city of Dresden.

Although the financial situation is not always encouraging, many small towns and some big cities in the East and in the West have invested in public libraries. Some have employed well-known architects and created remarkable buildings, as is the case in Dortmund or the city of Münster. The latter presents its public library in such an attractive building that even tourists consider a visit worthwhile.

German librarians have always been very much involved in the planning of library buildings and have worked hard for regulations for library construction. They managed to successfully integrate their ideas into a German Standard for the construction of libraries, taking into account

the standards of modern technology. On the other hand, librarians have newly started to develop visions for the future of library buildings. The public library in Stuttgart is waiting to start its new project, a new library building with an excellent philosophy behind the construction plans worked out by the staff of the library and designed by an architect from Korea.

Those who attend the IFLA 2003 conference can join a most interesting tour to visit libraries in and around Berlin. Due to the federal government's transfer from Bonn to Berlin, ministries like that of Foreign Affairs have moved into brand new buildings which incorporated new special libraries. For the last ten years, Berlin has been the biggest construction site in Europe. Now, some parts have been completed, but there is still a lot of construction work going on, for example at the library of the German Parliament (Deutscher Bundestag), the new library of the Technical University combined with the library of the Art University and the new library for the department of philology at the Free University. Only the new departmental science library of the Humboldt University has already opened its doors. And the vision of the Central and Regional Library of Berlin to partly transfer to the Schlossplatz, where the old castle is to be reconstructed just in the very centre of Berlin, is shown only on paper in a planning document by an architect appointed by the ministries of construction of the German Federal Government and the Berlin State Government.

Nice To Have – New Services for Customers and the Future of Libraries in Germany

Regular services for library readers are being realized in all German libraries. Some libraries, however, go even further to serve their customers.

Konstanz is the first German university library to offer a 24-hour service from the beginning of April 2001. If she or he so wishes, a reader may stay all night in the library. A security service looks after their safety, and if they are hungry, they can even order a pizza. The university library in Trier is one of the few German libraries which are open on Sunday. Trier was the first library in Germany with a chat reference system. The public library of the city of Cologne offers the public an excellent programme of computer training at all levels. The university library of Freiburg has successfully established a sophisticated system of training students in using dif-

ferent databases. As for Berlin, the customer can order books or media online in public libraries and get them delivered home by post. The special library of the Max-Planck Institute of Educational Research in Berlin has established an Information Clearing House, which is necessary to meet the needs of internationally oriented basic research in various fields of the social and behavioural sciences. The city library of Dresden provides media@age, a media centre for young adults on the top floor of a department store. There are a lot more of these nice-to-have services in German libraries, and a better future of the libraries will be based on the quality of the services for their customers.

One Step to the Future

Library 2007 (Bibliothek 2007) is a joint project of BDB and the Bertelsmann Foundation on the development of German libraries in the near future. The project will analyse the current situation of German libraries and try to find answers to the following questions:

- What are the future potentials of the libraries in our country?
- How will libraries take part in the infrastructure of education and culture in Germany?
- What changes are needed and how can the performance of libraries be optimized?

The financial and organizational situation of libraries in Germany will be analysed. The project discovered a lack in library planning and in library policy at the responsible levels. By exploring the situation in Germany, the project will focus on international best practice and will work on a model as a basis for future discussions and developments in Germany. The aim of this project is first of all to initiate a process of library strategy at the three political levels in the Federal Republic of Germany.

During the last ten years, libraries in Germany have completed a process of unification and have made progress in modern technology. IFLA 2003 in Berlin, the World Library and Information Congress, under the patronage of German Federal President Johannes Rau, is an important event for libraries in Germany. But the real changes will come after this conference, when best practice of the international library world will be installed by the project Library 2007 and changes towards new and better library services will convince not only librarians but also all political levels of our society.

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Figure 16 Göttingen State- and University Library

Figure 10 Berlin State Library – Prussian Cultural Heritage

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