

Summary



»The Times They Are A-Changin'« / Which Qualifications and Competencies Will Librarians Need in the Future? (Jan-Pieter Barbian, Cornelia Vonhof)

(pp. 462 – 469)

Libraries in Germany have undergone a remarkable course of modernization since the turn of the new millennium. Even if this general observation does not apply in equal measure to all institutions and there remain large differences between regions, all in all one can say that libraries have adapted to the »digital revolution« and the concomitant changes in media formats, sharpened their profile as centers for culture and education, and responded to decisive changes in society.

Yet the transformation that is taking place at all levels of life is not of a limited duration but rather the very sign of our times. The professional, political and societal challenges facing libraries, particularly those run by municipal governments or religious organizations and also facing the library professional itself, will continue unabated. Hence the question remains open as to how the professional profile of library employees needs to change in order to meet the expectations that policy makers and the general public hold regarding this modern cultural and educational institution which also see itself functioning as a „third space“ both now and in the future.

The authors examine contemporary and future challenges and place them in both an international and a national context.

An Ambitious Project in a Top Location / Dresden's New Central Library Has Opened (Roman Rabe)

(pp. 478 – 483)

After a four-year period of modernization Dresden's newly renovated Palace of Culture re-opened its doors for visitors on April 29, 2017. The largest institutional tenant is the Municipal Library System, whose central library has found a new place of residence there. First built in 1969 as a symbol and manifestation of socialist culture, the building is, from an architectural point of view, a prime example of post-war modernism and in its time strongly influenced European architecture across all political boundaries. Along with the library, the second major tenant is the Dresden Philharmonic, which has played in the Palace of Culture's concert hall since 1969.

The decentralized organization of Dresden's Municipal Library System – which consists of 19 branch libraries and various mobile services – has not been altered by the re-opening of the central library. No branches were closed, no personnel were transferred from the branches to the central library. The collection of the central library is not expected to expand dramatically. The library continues to follow its successful strategy of maintaining a modest but up-to-date collection. Altogether the collection currently offers 295,000 items, whereby the total shelving and storage capacity could hold up to 305,000 items.

Designing the library within the constraints of the existing interior architecture presented a particular challenge. The library system was forced to make a few compromises, above all in regard to the use of its floor space, which is relatively limited in terms of the goals it strives to reach. A notable increase in user workspaces could only be achieved at the price of more compactly placed blocks of shelving.

In Dresden visitors await a Palace of Culture in the literal sense of the word. The city's central library gives one the sense of being in a public living room where everyone is welcome. On the extended opening weekend 17,500 visitors accepted the invitation and came to enjoy the new quarters.

City – Country – Bus / Mobile and Flexible: Bookmobiles Fulfill Different Tasks in Urban and Rural Areas (Kirsten Lundgren, Katrin Totzke)

(pp. 484 – 489)

In Germany there are currently 89 bookmobile programs which use 102 vehicles. About one-third of them serve wide-ranging rural areas with small communities – many having less than 5,000 residents – which cannot support a local library. Bookmobiles in rural areas are generally operated independently, while urban bookmobiles are usually part of a larger library network. Common to all libraries-on-wheels is that they offer high-quality service, though with various kinds of specialization; yet the differences are often to be found merely in details and in level of funding.

Generally speaking it is the mission of rural bookmobiles to help minimize the urban-rural-gap in access to cultural resources. In contrast, bookmobiles in urbanized areas are similar to branch libraries and can often remain longer at any given stop. Although the great majority of bookmobiles offer a full spectrum of library stock for users of all ages and interests, some of them are actually dedicated entirely to providing literature to schools. In many schools and kindergartens the regular visit to a bookmobile is a fixed part of their school schedule.

A bookmobile can efficiently and directly respond to the needs of its respective user groups. In this way the bookmobile's unique format fulfills its mission at an optimal cost-benefit-ratio.

Translated by Martha Baker