

Summary



Room, Kitchen, Bath, Office / Remote Work Will Still Be With Us after the Pandemic – With Wide-ranging Consequences for the World of Work (Boris Häfner)

(pp. 680 – 682)

During the Covid-19 pandemic working remotely has become commonplace for many people who did not actively choose it. From one day to the next, employers had to send their employees home. According to various surveys, approximately half of the German workforce worked at least some of the time from their homes during critical periods of the pandemic.

The German Minister of Labour, Hubertus Heil, even wanted to pass a law to cover this labour model. In the Netherlands employees have had the right to work at home since 2015, if, for example, they have family members in need of care. Experts now agree that models for remote work will continue to be used even when the pandemic has faded away. »At present we are experiencing a paradigm shift in our working world,« according to Maria Zesch, Chief Commercial Officer (CCO) for Business & Digitalisation at Magenta Telekom. The world of work is definitely changing – with far-reaching consequences.

Those who have worked from home during the pandemic appear to be satisfied. But this was not something to be taken for granted: Due to the crisis many companies needed to introduce the new model nearly overnight. And it was clearly successful in many cases. A study by the Fraunhofer Institute for Industrial Engineering (Fraunhofer IAO) and the German Association for Human Resource Management (DGFP) showed that 89 percent of those surveyed were able to work from home without it having a negative impact for the company. Moreover, two-thirds had the impression that in recent months managers have lowered their reservations regarding this model. Further surveys revealed that many people particularly appreciate spending fewer hours of the month in cars or trains in order to commute to work.

German Unification On a Small Scale / Why maintaining two locations was an important signal and why the digital revolution is an even stronger reason than the peaceful revolution of 1989 to re-examine librarians' self-conception (Thoughts by Wolfgang Schäuble, President of the German Bundestag)

(pp. 700 – 702)

On 5 April 1990 the first freely elected Volkskammer, the parliament of the German Democratic Republic (GDR), held its inaugural session. In the elections held 18 days earlier, an overwhelming majority of East German citizens had voted for a speedy realisation of German unification. In the Federal Republic of Germany plans had also already begun for a reunification. I was convinced that this could only be successful if the GDR joined the Federal Republic, preferably on the basis of a treaty. How such a treaty should be drawn up was still open at that time, especially since German unification was subject to approval of the four Allied Powers. In the spring of 1990 there were also some who could not imagine unification taking place.

Klaus-Dieter Lehmann and Helmut Rötzsch were not among them. On that same April 5th, the general directors of the Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt am Main and the Deutsche Bücherei in Leipzig drafted a paper envisioning the joint future of their two institutions. Their declaration spoke cautiously of a »library union«, thereby setting down elements of German unification on a small scale. Both houses would continue to exist, brought together under one roof, each bearing their share of the library's future work. It was a solution that – according to their joint statement – »is neither patronising nor restorative nor utopian, but simply reasonable«.

Retrieved? / Report Findings of an RFID-UHF Pilot Project for Locating Library Holdings (Michael Schaarwächter)

(pp. 705 – 713)

In its future new library building, the University of Dortmund Library is planning to present its print media in a more flexible and dynamic manner, whereby holdings have no pre-defined location. Seeking a suitable method by which individual items could be found within a room, we commissioned a feasibility study. The method which was found to be most suitable involved equipping items with Ultra-High FID tags (UHF-RFID) and allowing a robot to roam the shelves. With the help of localisation and statistical methods it will attempt to determine the precise location of an item. It was found that MetraLabs, a Germany company based in Ilmenau, already markets such a solution, a robot named »Tory«.

We collected a number of wooden and metal shelving units along with 5540 ready-for-discard books and set up a test library in a backroom of the university's central library. We examined the data both for exactness of localisation and for completeness. It was found that for localisation, in particular, there is still room for improvement. As the completeness of measurement rose, the exactness of localisation dropped, and vice versa. Over a period of three months Tory completed 500 runs, covering a total of 230 kilometres. The precision of Tory's location coordinates did not come close enough to our target of 20 centimetres per coordinate, remaining constant at about 50 centimetres.

We hope that in the next few years the localisation function will become sufficiently precise with the help of improved hardware and software, so that it will be possible to send the user directly to a book. Then it will finally be possible for the idea of a fluid library at the University of Dortmund Library to become reality.

Translated by Martha Baker