

Summary



More Than a Conference for Librarians / Background to the Petition »Update the Name for the Bibliothekartag« (Nik Baumann, Claudia Frick, Jan Jäger, Sabrina Ramünke)
(pp. 604 – 607)

The German library world has experienced fundamental changes over the past decades. No longer is print media its sole concern, it now encompasses video games, e-media and much more. Additionally, it now includes numerous new programmes such as makerspaces, e-learning and intercultural activities. There have also been changes regarding the people involved. Along with librarians and library assistants, libraries employ specialists for media and information services (in German: »FaMIs«), pedagogues, IT experts and much more. From our point of view, it is therefore time that the name of the arguably most important event for people in and around libraries be changed. For this reason, on 23 June 2021, we four and 15 others associated with libraries and related fields, started a petition to rename the »Deutscher Bibliothekartag«.

Interactions which take place at a Bibliothekartag, Germany's annual library conference, now involve a large spectrum of people and professions. Each year people from library institutions and related fields of work meet to discuss current developments in their places of work and to present their projects. People with widely different backgrounds – not only those with library degrees, or library-based career paths and professional duties – meet and interact with those who work or want to work in libraries or similar fields. In this context the name »Bibliothekartag« is no longer up to date. Naturally the generic masculine of the conference name was also a reason for starting this petition, but by no means the only one. The period for signing the petition ended on 22 September 2021 with 1,912 signatures.

Interlude / The New Venues of the Munich Public Library (Isabella Kratzer, Mareike Post, Melanie Ratjen)
(pp. 616 – 619)

In 1984, the building complex on Rosenheimer Straße in Munich named Gasteig first opened its doors and gradually it became the largest cultural centre in Europa. The public library was present in Gasteig from the very beginning, providing Munich residents with reading matter and, for nearly four decades, a place to learn, relax and make all kinds of discoveries. After 37 years the Gasteig was closed in order to undergo a complete overhaul. During this period of renovation, Munich's library users can take pleasure in more than just two new interim locations. In the moving boxes which the staff packed, there are also fresh ideas, modern events, and creative ways to get the public involved – in other words, lots of surprises and experiments.

Both the interim library venues are so-called »open libraries«. Their opening hours have been expanded so that the public can make use of the libraries to work and relax in, even outside the regular hours of service. When the libraries are open, media can be borrowed using the self-checkout stations. Lending and security functions employ RFID, a technology which the Munich Public Library has been using for over ten years. Visitors can use the library from early morning to late evening as a meeting place to learn, read, work, interact and browse. As open libraries, the Munich City Library has noticeably increased the time frame for borrowing and returning media and adapted to the visitors' visiting hours.

Library for Everyone? / LBGTQIA+ Users and Public Libraries in Norway (Kira M. Del Mar)
(pp. 620 – 623)

The results of a Norwegian study show significant differences with regard to the experiences of LBGTQIA+ and heterosexual users of public libraries.

Public libraries all around the world share the common mission of making information and literature accessible to everyone. Norway's Public Library Law has established that libraries should make books and other media freely accessible to its residents and that quality, diversity and thematic relevance should be given priority in collection development. Nonetheless, there have been no published empirical studies which could document that libraries are fulfilling their mission with regard to the LBGTQIA+ population – that amounts to at least seven percent of the country's population.

Previous international studies have shown that libraries are important venues for LBGTQIA+ individuals and have often played an important role in helping them find information about and come to terms with their own identity. Professional library literature has shown, however, that there are also deficiencies in what libraries offer their queer users. These deficits range from a lack of materials in the collection to difficulties in finding relevant material in catalogues or on the shelves, to physical barriers that are often related to heteronormative guidelines and the ignorance or discomfort of some staff members when dealing with LBGTQIA+ individuals.

Due to the dearth of studies on this topic in the Norwegian context, Kira M. Del Mar decided to conduct a broad initial survey in order to record the experiences of LBGTQIA+ users with and in public libraries and to identify gaps in research.

Translated by Martha Baker