

Library Planning in Germany

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THE POSITION OF LIBRARIES IN THE POLITICAL PROCESS

The position and the efficiency of German libraries are rather ambivalent. On the one hand the infrastructure is quite well developed: 2000 public library systems with full time personnel, 275 million books issued, 75 million Euro for acquisitions; 280 scientific general libraries, 60 million books issued, 1300 million Euro for acquisitions. [1] Nevertheless there are a lot of problems, which arise from the administrative structure and the political position of libraries.

Most scientific libraries are maintained by the states, and only very few by the federation. This means that library policy is the responsibility of the states. The federation has no competence for scientific libraries. Although there are some coordinating institutions, concepts for a nationwide library planning are rare. Public libraries are maintained by autonomous local government. There are no specific library laws, and political concepts in this field are rare as well. In the political process libraries are of rather little importance. This is also more and more the case with university libraries. University laws deal less and less with libraries. The state administration is losing its influence and coordinating power.

Nevertheless, libraries are influenced by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (Bundesministerium für Bildung und Forschung, BMBF) and by the National Science Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, DFG), the main bodies that finance projects and cooperative plans. Both institutions are in fact involved in library planning.

The main problems are:

- How to get adequate finance for libraries?
- How to promote innovation either by advanced training of personnel, by exploitation of international best practice models, or by cooperation in new models of library service?
- How to find the new role for libraries in a digital world?

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A specific feature of German libraries is intensive cooperation:

- A system of distributed acquisition of all relevant scientific books financed by the DFG (Sondersammelgebietsplan: WEBIS).
- There is an extensive interlibrary loan and document delivery system (Subito)
- Cooperative cataloguing is used in all scientific libraries. Around the union catalogues service centres developed, assisting libraries in administration of local library systems, organizing central library services, and providing information for their libraries and in some cases even organizing regional consortia (Arbeitsgemeinschaft, 2003)
- In the last decade a lot of commissions on the national level existed and there was a central institute: German Libraries Institute (Deutsches Bibliotheksinstitut, DBI). This institute, however, was dissolved in 1998 due to an evaluation it couldn't stand and due to political problems in cooperative federalism. This liquidation caused great problems. The library associations (DBV, VDB, BIB, BDB) were not able to prevent this.

NEW ORGANIZATION FOR COOPERATIVE WORK

After the dissolution of the German Libraries Institute (DBI) there were many discussions to find ways to get out of this disastrous situation. Three different methods were attempted to re-establish library planning:

1. Finding new ways of professional cooperation.
2. Introducing a new planning process organised by the library organisations and the Bertelsmann Foundation.
3. Using a combination of recommendations of independent institutions and projects to establish new services in the field of digital libraries.

The German Library Association (Deutscher Bibliotheksverband, DBV) is a centre of professional work. Commissions and expert groups always played an important role in German librarianship. The honorary work of experts distributed in libraries is part of the decentralized library system in Germany. Some librarians think this non-professional work is unprofessional, but experiences with professionals in central institutions show that the work of commissions and expert groups is indispensable. This work was organised by the German Libraries Institute (BDI) for a long time. It was part of its legal mandate. All librarians agreed that this work should continue. There was some discussion whether the association of the institutions or those of the professions (VDB and BIB) should organise this. It was decided that the association of the institutions (DBV) should assume this task. Three commissions were established for core activities of libraries:

- Commission on Management of Libraries

- Commission of Library Services
- Commission of Legal questions

These commissions are responsible for all groups of libraries. Expert groups on the other hand deal with problems relevant only for one or several groups of libraries, i.e. sections of the association, such as problems in acquisition for scientific libraries, school libraries, public libraries etc.

After the decision to dissolve the Deutsches Bibliotheksinstitut an intense and long struggle to set up a new institution began. I won't describe this discussion here in detail. Only the underlying goals are relevant, and not the problems which arose about financing such an institution.

The first step was the examination which tasks were indispensable on the national level. There was an agreement between the states and the federation about these tasks in 1999. The next step was a concept, a statute and a plan how to finance an Innovation Centre for Libraries (Innovationszentrum für Bibliotheken, IZB). This Institute was supposed to be set up by the Foundation of Prussian Heritage in Berlin. The main goal of it would be to encourage innovation in libraries. A minor goal would be to take over several services for libraries, especially German library statistics (Deutsche Bibliotheksstatistik, DBS). Although there was a common agreement between the federation and all ministries of culture and enough money was provided, the concept failed in the end. The reason was a general discussion about such institutions of cooperative federalism. At the moment there is a tendency to separate tasks of federation and states.

Instead of such a central institution the German Library Association (DBV) proposed a decentralised competence network for libraries (Kompetenznetzwerk für Bibliotheken). We realized that this would be the only way to save the goals of the innovation centre (IZB). Partners in this competence network will be:

- the 6 regional union catalogues,
- 5 libraries of national relevance (DDB, SBB, BSB, TIB, SUB Göttingen),
- German Library Association (DBV),
- Central institutions for public libraries (Fachstellenkonferenz),
- ekz bibliotheksservice GmbH .

The network will bring together the competence of institutions already active in this field. There will be synergetic effects between the tasks of these institutions and new tasks. The mains goals will be:

- to collect information for planning and decisions for federal policy and for the states,
- to identify strategic priorities,

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- to strengthen the role of German libraries on the international level and to encourage international contacts.

The next step in making the concept was to identify the tasks, which should be fulfilled by the network. An agreement was reached about this. About 22 additional positions for personnel will be necessary.

The main problem now is financing such new tasks. Extra funding is very difficult to get in Germany today. It is decided that such a competence network will be established starting 1.1.2004. Only parts of the program can be financed at the moment. It will be necessary to look for projects to get the program started with money for a limited time and by means of the participating institutions.

BIBLIOTHEK 2007 - A STRATEGIC PLANNING MODEL FOR LIBRARY DEVELOPMENT

National library plans were made several times before. In the seventies planning was widespread in all parts of administration. A typical product was the Library Plan 1973 (Bibliothekspan 73). It was influenced by regional planning and created paradigms for types of libraries which should build up a system of libraries. This influenced political decisions in Germany for a long time. 'Bibliotheken 93' was a document of the next generation. Planning methods hadn't been successful. In 'Bibliotheken 93' the discussion was summed up and a collection of documents relevant for political decision was offered. In which way can a library plan work today? It will have to be made up in a different way than before. The problems in German librarianship are mostly those of getting plans realised, not of missing concepts. The main problem is the lack of political power, because politicians see little relevance in library problems. Therefore such a library plan has to be a kind of a political plan.

Due to this it was decided that the library associations together with the Bertelsmann Foundation should develop a new plan, Bibliothek 2007. The Bertelsmann Foundation provides financing of the project, and the Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Bibliotheksverbände (BDB) – an umbrella organisation of DBV, VDB, BIB, ekz, Bertelsmann Foundation and the libraries of the Goethe Institute - provides advice.

A few words about the Bertelsmann Foundation. The foundation is the largest owner of the publishing house Bertelsmann Verlag. It is an operative foundation; this means it doesn't simply provide money, but works on its projects. Bertelsmann Foundation is in fact a very important think tank in the field of culture, education and libraries. The foundation is active in a lot of projects in libraries, especially public libraries, but nowadays in scientific libraries as well. Some current projects are: Deutsche Internetbibliothek, a digital library for public libraries, BIX, a system of measurement of

efficiency and a ranking of libraries; it is one of the partners maintaining the City Library of Gütersloh etc.

Bibliothek 2007 can be seen as a strategic planning model to influence the discussions of librarians, the public and politics about further development of library infrastructure and library services in a knowledge society. The model also deals with the optimal use of money, but the aim is not rationalization or saving money. The political process following the publication of the study is an important part of this project. Yet this part of the project is not defined at the moment. The year 2007 refers to the projected success of the discussion. The project started in 2002 and will be finished in 2003. The applied methods are:

- Qualitative interviews with representatives from different relevant groups. This was complemented by an analysis of opinion surveys in different types of libraries. Infas, an institute of public opinion, did this.
- Surveys of international best practice models (Denmark, Finland, Singapore, UK, USA). The international surveys will show the political situation, the reasons of success for the library systems in the respective countries. This part is done by a management consultant (Booz Allen Hamilton).

A working group of experts of all groups of libraries and the Foundation will have to work out the master plan.

PLANNING OF DIGITAL LIBRARIES

A result of Bibliothek 2007 is that libraries are acknowledged as an important place of social interaction. Libraries therefore shouldn't be mere virtual realities. Nevertheless, digital libraries are the most important problem in the near future. Digital libraries have the potential to improve and accelerate information for the user dramatically. On the other hand the role of all partners in the information chain (authors, publishers, book trade, libraries and users) have to be examined. There is a huge potential of development and a lot of work to do. Therefore planning is especially relevant for digital libraries.

The main themes of planning are:

- The strategic concept for the developments in libraries.
- The structure of the new services: will the digital library be national, regional or local? Some people think the problems are too big for the average scientific library. Digital documents can be stored on a central server. The average library should concentrate on its physical documents and offer access to a national digital library. On the other hand most libraries think they should offer a portal to all information.

This portal should offer material necessary for local users. As licenses have to be paid locally a local portal is the consequence.

- The problem of financing digital publications, especially e-journals.

The strategic concepts were dealt with in several recommendations by institutions established in the administration of education and science. The best paper is *Empfehlungen zur digitalen Informationsversorgung durch Hochschulbibliotheken* (Recommendations for digital information in university libraries, 2001) by the Council for Science. It deals with all problems from the users' point of view. Another large-scale planning process was organised by the Federal Ministry of Education and Science. Several parallel groups worked on this field. A management consultant Arthur D. Little worked out the most ambitious recommendation (Zukunft, 2002). But the result was very poor and the statement of the Ministry was rather vague.

I mention here the recommendations of Conference of University Rectors (Hochschulrektoren Konferenz, HRK) in the paper *Zur Neuausrichtung des Informations- und Publikationssystems der deutschen Hochschulen/Hochschulrektorenkonferenz* (2002), because these are very relevant for questions of library planning and correspond with the recommendations of the Conference of Ministries of Culture. The Conference of University Rectors recommended widespread consortia for electronic journals. There were some problems in using online information identified:

- scientists are sceptical about electronic media (this is different according to different disciplines),
- publishers rely on print editions,
- problems of long term archiving and accessibility are not solved,
- the possibility that electronic publication are not used enough.

In this situation pay per view isn't the right option, because this will impede usage and the advantages of electronic publications will get lost. Therefore site licences for a great amount of publications are recommended, at least for some years. In the meantime detailed statistics of usage should show which journals are used. Upon these statistics new pricing models should be developed. To finance such a licensing policy a special programme financed by the federation should be implemented. The tax on digital publications should be the same as the tax on printed publications.

The situation in German libraries is as follows: consortia for all-inclusive licenses are widespread. For example the University Library of Regensburg has about 9200 print journals and licenses and access to free journals for about 9800 titles. A lot of these titles were added by cross-access e.g. 960 Elsevier titles in electronic form where we formerly had 220 Elsevier titles in print. A great number of these electronic titles are not used at all. We have a platform independent from publishers websites, the Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek (EZB) and a good usage of these titles. The problem at the

moment is that due to the financial crisis in Germany our budgets are cut down for 10%. We don't know how publishers will react to this.

The second recommendation of the Conference of University Rectors is the establishment of electronic publications by the universities themselves. These servers should comprise all scientific publications of members of the university and e-learning material. A system of peer reviewing should be added. University-owned publishing houses should be installed at least in some cases. New models of cooperation between such servers and publishers should be developed. Nobody objects to these recommendations. The problem is how to realize this and how to change the minds of the authors.

The Conference of Ministries of Culture, the ministries responsible for financing universities, recommended that the federation should pay for electronic publications. On the other hand the ministries expect that more money will strengthen publishers who are able to raise prices more and more. Therefore new pricing models should be discussed. So, there are two opposite points of view: libraries need more money to get broad access; on the other hand the finance has to be reduced to save money and to resist to the unfair praxis of some publishers. I'm afraid that this discussion will be decided by the Ministries of Finance, which cut down our budgets.

Projects are financed on the national and on the regional/ local level. As the federation has more money to spend national projects are highly relevant. The most relevant national projects are brought together in Vascoda, a portal that will be released on IFLA in Berlin, on August 8th, 2003. This portal includes 4 'Informationsverbünde' (information networks) - networks connecting special libraries and information centres. The main business model is pay per view. These institutions are financed by the Federal Ministry for Education and Research (BMBF). On the other hand there are a lot of virtual special libraries (Virtuelle Fachbibliotheken). These collect free electronic material and build up union catalogues for special fields. These institutions are financed by the National Science Foundation (DFG). A special type of partner is EZB, which is a voluntary informal organisation run by one library. The aim is to integrate all these projects and to offer not only a general national portal but also national portals for all scientific disciplines. On the other hand there are a lot of local or regional projects. In all regions with union catalogues portals are already developed or under construction. For our theme is relevant the project Distributed journals server (Verteilter Zeitschriftenserver, VZS). It is planned to store e-journals on servers of the union catalogues. Thus the availability of journals already acquired can be ensured. The aim for the next year will be to combine all relevant projects under one roof and to harmonize the different solutions. This has to be done under the roof of Vascoda, which will develop as a national digital library.

To conclude: the situation in Germany is rather difficult due to problems in administration. Nevertheless libraries made substantial progress in the last years.

NOTES

1. Library statistics (Deutsche Bibliotheksstatistik, **DBS**) was provided by the Deutsches Bibliotheksinstitut up to 2001. In the future data will be collected by Hochschulbibliothekszentrum des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen (**HBZ**). A brief introduction to German libraries is: Jürgen Seefeldt and Ludger Syr : *Portals to the Past and to the Future. Libraries in Germany*. Hildesheim : Olms, 2003.

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3. *Zukunft der wissenschaftlichen und technischen Information in Deutschland*. Schlussbericht. September 2002. <http://www.dl-forum.de/Foren/Strategiekonzept/Schlussbericht.pdf>
4. *Zur Neuausrichtung des Informations- und Publikationssystems der deutschen Hochschulen*. Hochschulrektorenkonferenz. Empfehlung des 198. Plenums vom 5. November 2002. http://www.hrk.de/downloads/Empfehlung_Bibliothek.pdf

WEB SITES REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

Die Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Verbundsysteme: <http://www.ag-verbund.de>

BDB - Bundesvereinigung Deutscher Bibliotheksverb nde. <http://www.bdb-dachverband.de/index2.html>

Bertelsmann Foundation. <http://www.bertelsmann-stiftung.de/index.cfm>

BIB - Berufsverband Information Bibliothek. <http://www.bdb-dachverband.de/englisch/index.html>

Bibliothek 2007. <http://www.bibliothek2007.de>

BMBF - Bundesministeriums f r Bildung und Forschung. <http://www.bmbf.de/>

DBS - Deutsche Bibliotheksstatistik. <http://www.bibliotheksstatistik.de/>

DBV - Deutscher Bibliotheksverband. <http://www.bibliotheksverband.de>

DFG - Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. <http://www.dfg.de/>

Ekz : Service für Bibliotheken. <http://www.ekz.de/>

EZB - Elektronische Zeitschriftenbibliothek. <http://rzblx1.uni-regensburg.de/ezeit/ezb.phtml>

Goethe-Institut. <http://www.goethe.de/>

HBZ - Hochschulbibliothekszentrum des Landes Nordrhein-Westfalen. <http://www.hbz-nrw.de/>

HRK - Hochschulrektorenkonferenz. <http://www.hrk.de/>

Infas TTR. <http://www.infas-ttr.de/>

Subito. <http://subito-doc.de>

Vascoda. <http://www.vascoda.de>

VDB - Verein Deutscher Bibliothekare (Association of German Librarians).
<http://www.vdb-online.org/>

WEBIS. <http://webis.sub.uni-hamburg.de>