Editorial

by TRIX BAKKER

Are you planning to renovate your library or build a new one in the near future? Well, this issue will give you much impetus to start as soon as possible. The articles are the result of the seminar of the LIBER Architecture Group 'The Renaissance of the Library - adaptable library buildings' which took place in Bozen/Bolzano from 17-19 March 2004. Because pictures are very essential to the papers, links to the presentations can be found at: http://www.zhbluzern.ch/LIBER-LAG/lageps.htm#bozen as well as abstracts and CVs of the speakers. The LIBER Architecture Group is an expert committee of the LIBER Division of Library Management and Administration. The seminar was organised in cooperation with the University Library of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano, the European Academy of Bozen-Bolzano (EURAC), and Ca' Foscari University Library, Venice.

The common denominator of the papers is multifunctionality and flexibility. 'Today's library has to correspond not only to informational, communicational but also to cultural, leisure, aesthetical and other community needs, to provide not only traditional library services but to organise non-traditional - cultural and social - activity.' (Jakovlevas-Mateckis a.o.). Multifunctionality and flexibility apply not only to the building, but also the network technology (LAN or wireless LAN), and furnishing. Another concept is 'openness': not only meaning 'open stacks', but also open spaces, open floors, glass walls, movable walls, rolling bookcases to create larger spaces if needed etc.

The so-called 'hybrid library building' where students find all they need 'under one roof' (Kempf) changed university libraries in 'learning centres'. The library as a place of learning and study offers students besides traditional library services, study space varieties - such as quiet private areas ('carrels' or 'studies') and busy social areas, 'collaboratories' or group study rooms with ICT and presentation facilities, and facilities for training of users in large classes, small groups and individually. The library is also changing in a 'teaching library', because information literacy - the student's knowledge of and the skills to use electronic library and information services – is expected to be the responsibility of the library (Haugen).

Editing this articles created in my head the following picture: the library as a spacious, clearly structured building, with an inviting lobby with a book return station, a free-access area with a cafeteria 'with soft seating, specialty drinks like mocha lattes and fruit smoothies, and wireless access' (Thomas), a newspaper corner, lockers equipped with power sockets to recharge laptops, a bookshop, and a nice exhibition on the side ... On the first floor some OPAC-terminals, the current journal issues from A-Z, recent acquisitions arranged in subject groups in rolling bookcases, in between tables with wireless LAN laptop plug-in facilities etc. etc. This is just one picture, while many are possible reading the articles in this issue.

I'll end with Sarah Thomas, keynote speaker at the seminar:

'Libraries are enjoying a renaissance as a font of creativity and inspiration. Through their placement at the very center of the university, they serve as intellectual and social crossroads. Modern libraries are beacons that attract the academic community and act as centers for facilitated knowledge discovery. The buildings, like the organizations that occupy them, are designed to be flexible and collaborative. Far from being deserted and abandoned, they teem with life and excitement.'

The next issue will cover the 33rd LIBER Annual General Conference *Integrating Europe! New Partnerships Across Old Borders* which took place at the National Library of Russia in St. Petersburg, from 29 June to 2 July.

WEB SITES REFERRED TO IN THE TEXT

Ca' Foscari University Library. http://www.unive.it/

EURAC - European Academy of Bozen/Bolzano. http://www.eurac.edu/

LIBER Architecture Group. http://www.zhbluzern.ch/LIBER-LAG/default.htm

LIBER Division of Library Management and Administration. http://www.kb.dk/guests/intl/liber//division/manag/

University Library of the Free University of Bozen-Bolzano. http://www.unibz.it/library