NAPLE FORUM

NEWSLETTER

Spring 2009

Presentation of Vienna Declaration

Contents

Editorial

Dear friends,

Cooperation is the key of our work. We are working every day in order to facilitate the relationships between libraries from different regions with the main goal of offering quality library services. We are always thinking about which is the best way to improve libraries services, to make us closer to our users so as to integrate the library in the community.

For this reason it is very interesting to establish different ways to communicate us. Our annual Assembly is a special occasion to talk about the main matters in public libraries in Europe and to design the future action lines. The website and this Newsletter are other tools to facilitate our communication.

This year there is one common topic: the crisis and its influence in public libraries. Many professionals think that in crisis time public libraries are more used. Reports and statistics show figures and these figures tell us about an increasing use of library services, which give people the opportunity to reorient different aspects of their lives. We would like to launch some questions about this matter: Must we use this situation to show the wonderful services that we have to the citizens? Do we need to show to our politicians that public libraries are very special cultural institutions able to offer multiple choices of leisure time; life long learning; meeting people; etc?

To share experiences among us is a very important thing. Cooperation is good and cooperation is needed not only among public libraries but among different types of libraries, because of this we have had the joint conference with EBLIDA this year that has resulted in the Vienna Declaration. Both successes will allow us to set the first step in a new European library context.

María Antonia Carrato Mena
Head of Subdirectorate General for Library Coordination
Ministry of Culture, Spain

NAPLE, EBLIDA and the Vienna Declaration

NAPLE Annual Assembly, EBLIDA Annual Council and the Joint NAPLE-EBLIDA Conference were held last 7th, 8th and 9th of May in Vienna, in collaboration with BVOE, the Austrian Library Association and VOEB, the Austrian Association of Librarians.

During last NAPLE Assembly in Vilnius, Lithuania in October 2008, it was agreed to

Assembly of NAPLE Forum

hold a joint conference and both organisations have worked together to organise it.

On 7th May NAPLE Assembly took place. During the Assembly NAPLE's new website was presented. Spain had volunteered during last NAPLE Conference in Vilnius to take charge of it and right now the new website is a reality. The only thing that remains to be done is the transfer of the older website domain so that the URL does not change. The provisional URL is:

http://www.mcu.es/naple/index.html

On 8th June the joint conference *A Library policy for Europe* was celebrated at the Austrian Academy of Sciences. A representative of the Austrian Ministry of Education, Arts and Culture, the Chair of the Austrian Library Association, the Vice-President of the Austrian Association of Librarians, and the Chair of NAPLE, María Antonia Carrato, participated in the inauguration.

Opening Speech by the Chair of NAPLE Forum

Good morning. It is for me a pleasure to be here on behalf of NAPLE, in this splendid building, sharing this inauguration with the Austrian authorities from the government and the professional associations, taking part in our first meeting organized in collaboration with another institution since the Forum was created. This is the beginning of a progressive process to strengthen cooperative links as a way to sum efforts and to let all of you know the outcome of NAPLE work and the strategic vision and the role of public libraries in the knowledge society from NAPLE' s point of view.

First of all I would like to thank EBLIDA for the chance given to NAPLE to participate. *A Library Policy for Europe* is a suggestive title that will allow us jointly to speak about questions that we are all concerned with as information professionals, regardless of the features of our work environment.

Legislation, the role of libraries and libraries of the future are outstanding topics nowadays. There are broad matters such as open source software and its use in libraries; social networks and their applications in the different library services; lifelong learning and information literacy and the library role as an educative institution and, last but not least, all the questions relating to intercultural dialogue and the strong role that libraries can play, particularly public libraries, in order to improve the relations and the interchange of experiences between people from different countries.

Public libraries are the most used democratic institutions in the world and, as a result, they have an important task together with other types of libraries: to guarantee universal access to information and to collaborate in developing citizens' skills in the use of ICTs, formulating their knowledge with an analytical mindset and being a valuable resource for lifelong learning.

Knowledge and exchange of information are the forces that we all need to innovate and be creative, especially these days when economic imperatives look to the future to find new areas of investment, instead of the housing market.

Information has been always there and changes that take place in the way that people have access to it is a milestone and changes societies. Nowadays the advances in technologies and communication strengthen a speedy rhythm that forces information professionals to adapt their work practices to new situations constantly. The users bring the latest technologies to bear and participate through social networks in the daily activity of libraries.

In this new scenario, access to information multiplies every day. It is fundamental to identify the added values that librarians can offer: quality, trust and efficiency.

During this conference we will have also the opportunity to debate and propose ways to strike the necessary balance between copyright and access to information and culture. A key question.

NAPLE Forum has had a close relationship with EBLIDA since it's' creation and our wish is to reinforce it in order to improve the position and visibility of libraries in the European context.

There are at least two important documents in the European context related to library policies: *Guidelines on Library Legislation and Policy in Europe*; and *i2010: Digital Libraries.*
The first document points out the need to have some essential content on library legislation in every European country in order to guarantee access to information taking into account collections, development planning; library services; technologies; professional training; funding approaches and bibliographic heritage protection. The second one sets out the rules regarding digital libraries in the present time and towards the future.

As we could see at the 4th NAPLE Conference held in Madrid in 2007 on Digital *resources in public libraries,* there are important projects going on in nearly all the European countries. Besides this, National Authorities on Public Libraries have an outstanding role to play in promoting, coordinating and normalizing this process of creating digital resources enabling public libraries to provide content to Europeana, and particularly to EuropeanaLocal.

The I + D framework programmes have supported a large number of library projects. At this moment it has more than 30 library projects on digital libraries; information retrieval and use; virtual heritage; scientific data; digital preservation; digitisation technologies and web archiving.

So, we have documents and projects on a kind of basis and it can be possible to develop together a common policy on libraries in Europe. It is time to go forward to harmonize important aspects on library legislation over the European countries.

They are pretty diverse and it is one of the reasons why we have our rich European culture. We also have different administrative organizations. The main goal is to create strong cooperative structures as well as collaborative networks at different levels: local, regional, national and continental ones working at the present time and thinking always about the future.

The European Parliament report on *i2010: Towards a European Digital Library* recommends that we increase experiences of interchange and best practices with other European institutions, with institutions from other continents such as the Library of Congress of USA, with international associations such as IFLA and with other private or public organizations such as OCLC. I endorse this recommendation and I even would add the need to collaborate with UNESCO not only in the case of specific collaborations but also in defining general strategic cooperation.

Of course our natural partners in European projects are the memory institutions: museums and archives. Europeana is a valuable example of this kind of cooperation. And regarding public libraries, it is enlightening to read the recently published IFLA report *Public Libraries, Archives and Museums: Cooperation and Collaboration Trends*, prepared by the Public Libraries' Section Committee.

This joint Conference EBLIDA/NAPLE opens up an important debate about *Library Policy in Europe* and I wish that in the future we can create a space where all the librarians, institutions and other agents involved in the development and improvement of library services can speak about with similar references.

I don't want to extend myself much more, I only wish you an exciting and fruitful conference experience where we consider together in the best way how to work on a common library policy for Europe. We will have to answer at least two questions: Whether a common library policy is needed and what we want to achieve with this policy.

Thank you very much

María Antonia Carrato Mena
Chair of NAPLE Forum

The Conference had a huge success of participation, with delegates from more than 30 different European countries. There were three thematic blocks: *Library Policy and Legislation, The Role of Libraries in a European Perspective and Libraries of the Future: creating access for Europe* and different members of NAPLE- including Barbro Wigell-Ryynänen, Jens Thorhauge and Breda Karun- participated in it. You can check presentations at http://www.conference.bvoe.at/presentations.html
The Conference resulted in the Vienna Declaration- agreed by NAPLE and EBLIDA- a call on the European Commission to make progress through four recommendations.

NAPLE/EBLIDA Conference "A Library Policy for Europe"

A Library Policy for Europe

VIENNA DECLARATION

At the joint conference of EBLIDA and NAPLE Forum, held in Vienna in May 2009, it was agreed to strengthen the role and potential of the library service throughout Europe in supporting the European Knowledge Society. Accordingly, EBLIDA and NAPLE Forum call on the European Commission to make progress through the following four recommendations:

1.   White paper "Public Libraries in the Knowledge Society":

EBLIDA and NAPLE Forum call on the European Commission to adopt a white paper that describes the new role of public libraries in the European Knowledge Society and recommends and encourages member states to act on behalf of their libraries. The white paper should be based, amongst other input, on the work of a high-level group of libraries established by the Commission.

2.   Knowledge Centre:

We further call on the European Commission to establish a European Knowledge Centre for public libraries that will provide coordinated, current and reliable information on the public library services in all European member states and the EEA and which will be based at EBLIDA.

3.   European funded projects:

Foster European funded projects that promote the development of libraries in a meaningful and sustainable way. Projects should target the development of a European library infrastructure that would complement the existing projects with high political visibility. In addition to these highly visible digital libraries development projects a common infrastructure for public libraries must be developed in order to accelerate the uptake of newly created online services and promote active European citizenship, as well as to provide wide learning opportunities.

4. Copyright:

Abolish barriers in the European Union that contradict the idea of the development of a Knowledge Society. A fair copyright policy is required, which considers the meaningful rights of the right-holders, but which at the same time establishes reasonable exceptions for the work of libraries.

Portal of Public Libraries in the Republic of Croatia

By Zdenka Sviben,
Zagreb City Libraries, Coordinator of the Project, Croatia

The draft of Strategy for Development of Public Libraries in the Republic of Croatia, accepted in 2005, proposed building a functional network of public libraries. Among the priorities of establishing such a network, and one that can be implemented in a shorter span of time, was the joint web portal of Croatian public libraries.

That year barely fifty public libraries had their own web sites. Among those which did not have one were several large county libraries. There were many reasons for that, the most common being insufficient funding - because according to the survey from 2001 the founders of public libraries did not provide special funds for creating web sites. Therefore, the quality of existing web sites, as well as their content, with the exception of a few major libraries that were able to secure financing, or had staff trained to develop web sites, was below the level that would satisfy.

At the end of 2006, the Section for Public Libraries of the Croatian Library Association launched the initiative of creating the portal for public libraries. The initiative had received support from the directors of county libraries, and from the Ministry of Culture. Coordination of the project was entrusted to the Zagreb City Libraries, the largest network of public libraries in the Republic of Croatia.

The portal was to meet a number of criteria, primarily the criteria of quality and richness of content. The plan was that the portal will have dynamic and static pages that will contain:

- map of Croatia with cities and municipalities that have public libraries,
- links to existing web sites of public libraries, organized by regions with special marks for e-catalogues,
- the database of events in which each of the libraries can write in events of interest to the local community, as well as those of importance for the entire society
- documents related to the work of public libraries
- international documents related to the work of public libraries
- links to national and international professional meetings
- presentations and reports of Croatian librarians from public libraries on professional conferences
- notice board and forum
- directory of public libraries (with the version for different types of printing)
- examples of good practice
- joint projects, actions, events and researches
- statistics

One of the most important tasks was the creation of an initial library web site for those that did not have it with the basic information (address, responsible person, working hours, a link to the e-catalogue, persistent and/or substantive activities, photographs on library building, general information on space, collections, general information about the history of the library, etc.). Shortened English, German, French and Italian versions were also planned so that the public libraries in Croatia would be recognizable abroad.

In 2006, many of the tasks were done: the editorial board of six members from different county libraries was formed, they defined the content and structure of the portal, developed design and other elements of visual identity (colours, navigation elements, etc.), made the CMS system.

During 2007 the domain was obtained and hosting services secured, data collected. The individual web sites of libraries that did not have them were made, as well as the directory

which is suitable for printing in different formats (HTML, XML, CSV (Excel).

In early 2008 the portal has been "brought into life." During the year, the editorial board (all as volunteers) was working on finishing the individual pages. The Database for the events was also finished. At the same time a work group, whose task is to define all the necessary parameters leading to the construction of a comprehensive database of statistics on public libraries, was established. The plan was also to educate librarians how to use/write in the database of events.

In 2008 the second joint project of public libraries *Ask librarians* has been moved to the portal.

Also, after the end of a three-year program of the Croatian Library Association Information about the European Union in public libraries,

the portal continues selecting relevant information about the European Union for the library community. The results are continuously enriched with new content and links to sources of information about the European Union that are available online at the official website of the EU and the public authorities of the Republic of Croatia, as well as on the pages of information intermediaries (the EU information centres), research institutions and associations of civil society.

Public libraries in the Republic of Croatia were related even before these projects, but the portal and the projects that are part of it, contribute providing insight on public libraries in the Republic of Croatia, as well as serving the communities in which libraries operate.

The portal can be found at the address http://www.knjiznica.hr (knjiznica = library)

National Cultural Policy of the Czech Republic for Period 2009 – 2014

By PhDr. Eva Marvanová
National Library of the Czech Republic

The creation of the new national culture policy is a very important act, because there was no officially declared state cultural policy for quite a long time (the past one was valid from 2001 till 2005). This absence of official state strategy in the field of culture was largely criticised by the culture managers, artists, and different culture institutions.

The works on new culture policy started in summer 2007 and the preparations lasted more than one year. During this period large researches in the culture fields were made including detailed SWOT analyse, several working groups were created with the members from different field of the culture.

Finally the national cultural policy in 2009 – 2014 was approved by the governmental decree on November 19, 2008.

The document itself starts with the "vision", which sees the culture like and "ticket to the future" for the Czech Republic. This vision defines the main task of the state which is "to create optimal relations between culture and

other realms of life of society and therefore enrich the lives of citizens, develop creative opportunities in the economy, research and education, motivate donors as well as provide sufficient resources to strengthen the competitiveness of the state in global environment".

The task of the state regions and municipalities and its institutions is not only to support the culture itself but to connect it with other realms of life in a society, particularly to make its values accessible – the cultural heritage as well as the freedom and creativity important for cultural production – so people can make use of it in their various activities.

This vision of culture enables to formulate some concrete objectives, but first of all the tasks and steps which will contribute to achieving a desirable situation in the sphere of culture in the years to come.

The very important issue which the culture policy focuses on is the economic impact of culture on national economy. That issue was marginalized for a long time, and culture was rather viewed as "a way of spending a person's

leisure time or as a superstructure", I. e. anything using the resources created in the more productive sectors. This national policy suggests a number of steps which should overcome this way of thinking about the culture.

This cultural strategy also focuses on landscape conservation as well as the preservation of historical monuments and urban complexes, because these form the space of everyday life and influence society in a positive way once they are maintained and used also for economic purposes with respect to their values, or in a negative way once they are neglected and ignored. Without demeaning the importance and the support of original artistic production, the new culture policy wants to give more support to those aspects of culture which also have the potential to stimulate other sectors.

This strategic material deals with all areas of culture, significant part of which represents libraries. Individual goals are linked up to collection of various tasks and measures enabling its fulfilment. It is very important for libraries that this cultural policy contains five areas supporting libraries:

Support of copyright system development in accordance with international and law based on balance between legitimate right holders, various users of goods subject to copyright protection including enterprises and the public.

Copyright is an adequate protection tool for authors of cultural values and those who invest their means into promotion of results of creative activity, such as music companies, film producers, broadcasters and publishers. At the same time (for example) the system of exceptions and limitations as provided by current law, facilitates access to cultural goods, scientific findings and other information to the general public. These exceptions should serve to needs of libraries, museums, archives and education institutions.

Support of improved conditions of museum, gallery and library materials, space and technical grounds

Conditions for active operation of many cultural institutions are not sufficient in connection with current requirements for protection, specialized care and utilization of millions of movable cultural goods. A reconstruction of the areas where these goods are kept is required, and in other cases a new construction is mandatory as well as removal of depositories of exhibits into buildings that have so far been used for other purposes.

Supportive programme of modernization of cultural infrastructure to provide modern cultural services with higher added value

Despite the existence of a broad network of cultural facilities, most of them are equipped with out-of-date technologies. The programme objective is to repair and modernize all the nationwide centres providing technological grounds and consulting and assistance in distribution and promotion of products and services in the areas of book stock, book production and distribution, film, music and modern art, modern art crafts, theatre, dancing, multimedia and creation of nationwide networks of modern multifunctional centres providing cultural services in the areas of modern art and librarianship.

Digitization of cultural content

Digitization of cultural content material is a current urgent task as it is a method of preservation and protection of original carriers of information and a tool for getting information to public in an effective way. Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic therefore elaborates the National Strategy for Digitization of Cultural Content that will clearly specify tasks in this area.

Creating conditions for permanent maintenance and access to digital documents as an important part of cultural heritage

Development of information and communication technologies is the reason for the increased volume of different types of digital documents. The legislative, organizational and technical conditions for permanent maintenance and access to them for future generations are lacking. Therefore there

could be irreplaceable losses of cultural heritage. We propose legislative revision of obligatory creation of certified data storages and other systems guaranteeing permanent maintenance and access of digital documents (for example the Czech Digital Library run by the National Library of the Czech Republic).

Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic will prepare for individual priority areas differenttypes of funding programs for usage of libraries. The cultural policy of the government is a good starting point for processing new strategy of libraries in the Czech Republic, which will be prepared in 2010.

http://www.mkcr.cz/en/kulturni-politika/cultural-policy-of-the-czech-republic-6881/

Déjà Vu

By Barbro Wigell-Ryynänen
Counsellor for Library Affairs, Finland

The feeling is there, we have already been through a similar chain of events. But how will the current crisis differ from fifteen years ago?

The economic recession hit Finland in the mid-1990s, after a period of tremendous growth.

In the eighties libraries were able to extend their services and collections, and the number of staff increased rapidly. It was a time of great visions of a bright future also for libraries. Among other enhancements, services for children and young people were largely developed as there were many new positions established for childrens' librarians.

These bright prospects came to abrupt end with the economic crisis, and what is worse, we still suffer from the consequences. The childrens' librarian positions were among the first to be axed, and many of them are still lacking. Unfortunately, budget cuts seemed to be there for good, even after times got better. There are state subsidies of a little more than 40 %, based on virtual costs for library services throughout the country. When these costs decrease, state subsidies decrease. Communities continued to save in costs for maintaining and developing libraries long after the recession was over, though increasing the support for schools, for example. The trend was hard to break.

Book loans and library visits increased during the recession, and also this trend lingered long after times got better. Book acquisitions had decreased by a third, but the new technology brought entirely new possibilities for collaboration, making it possible to offer a wide selection of library material despite cut-backs.

In 1990, 10 visits and 17 loans were registered per resident. In 1996, there were 13 visits per resident and loans had increased to nearly 21. Today there are 11 library visits and 19 loans, there has been only a slight decrease in figures.

Circulation Desk, Ylöjärvi Main Library "Kite"

The current economical crisis is different from the crisis of the 1990s. Unemployment is on the rise again, but seemingly not to the same extent as then. This time, however, communities meet the crisis in the midst of a municipal reform with extensive consolidation of municipalities. As part of community services, libraries too are facing big changes. Former main libraries become part of the new, bigger community´s library system, and the trend is to roughly degrade the service level in these libraries.

In the 1990s the closing down of libraries was prohibited by the new library legislation, stating that municipalities shall be responsible for arranging library and information services according to the Library Act, and the Act enacted a sufficient amount of staff and continuously renewing of collections and equipment. This time, to forestall the worst, we luckily have an amendment in the legislation coming into force very soon. The amendment relates to competence of staff, and was originally meant mainly to adapt to the Bologna process, but has more and more become a way of securing a sufficient amount of competent staff in libraries in the new communities. A trained staff is the prerequisite for service development and quality of services.

So what will happen with library statistics in the current economic recession? Are we going to see the curve of library loans and visits swing upwards? This time it is different also because new media and new lifestyles are competing to fill people's leisure time.

In Finland 4 million people of a population of 5,3 million announce they are Internet-users, 2,5 million say they use Google for information search at least once a week. Fennovegans, Japanese pop fans, grandmothers, anorectics and Australian terrier breeders are just some examples of categories and groups exchanging views regularly in blogs. There are 400 000 Face Book users, and a million users registering every day into the Finnish speciality, the IRC-Gallery (Internet Relay Chat). There are 8000 chat lists. Digi-television has brought an abundance of new television channels to choose from.

There is no statistical evidence yet, but I´m sure libraries will see a similar increase of library use, maybe not to the former extent, but certainly noticeable. We have already seen how library use has changed with a new attitude, the library is a common space in the community, an alternative - and how much more rewarding! - to spending time in shopping malls and cafés, for example. Libraries strive to offer welcoming premises, on the web and in the physical library, and the new services relating to the social web are much appreciated.

In a year or so I'm sure there will be sufficient statistical evidence to use for reassuring decision-makers of the importance of library services. One can only hope it will not come too late.

Better start today!

Usage of Public Library Services among Other Municipal Services in Lithuania

By Ramunė Petuchovaitė
Senior Specialist
Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Lithuania

In the beginning of 2009 the studies on the usage and evaluation of public library services in comparison to other municipal services were launched. They were done in the framework of baseline studies of the project *Libraries for Innovation*, aiming at achieving considerably better use of the capacities of information technologies among the Lithuanian population, through strengthening and using the capacities of public libraries. It is expected that within the next three years most of the Lithuanian public libraries will have launched free of charge public Internet services and the digital competence of the librarians will improve substantially, which will make the libraries a powerful medium helping the people and communities to master and use the information technology capacities.

Studies were performed in 5 municipalities (out of 60) of Lithuania and included over 2000 inhabitants of the age 15-74 years. This sample should well represent the opinion of Lithuanian people.

There were three main research questions defined:

- how municipal services are used and valued;
- how often and what for people approach municipalities;
- whether municipal e-services are known and used by inhabitants.

So following is a short fraction of the main findings of the studies related to public library services, that might be also be interested for international audience.

It was found that 80 per cent of inhabitants are satisfied or rather satisfied with the education services, funded by the municipalities, and the culture and leisure is in the second position (77,3 per cent), accordingly followed by environmental (74 per cent), sports (62,6), public transportation (56,6), social (56,3), housing (30,5) and other services.

Majority of people cannot imagine the culture and leisure without the library, and it is the most frequently used service in this category of services.
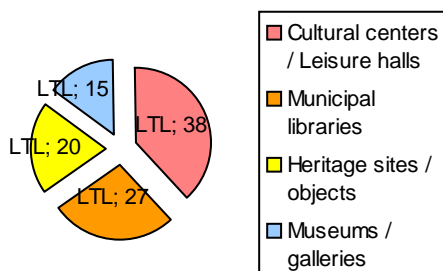
Usage (visits) of municipal cultural and leisure services
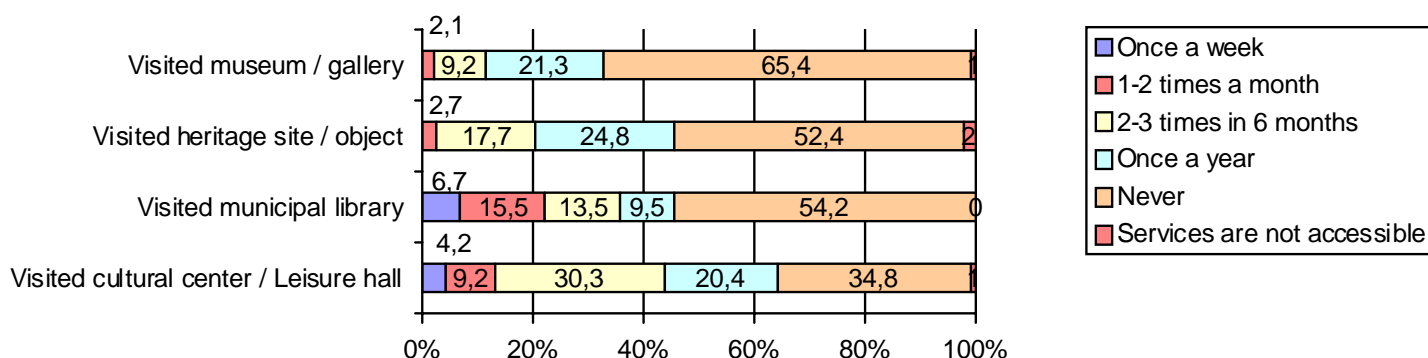
When asked if they are satisfied with the municipality funded cultural and leisure services citizens are, over 80 per cent said that they are satisfied (51,1 per cent) or rather satisfied (25,3 per cent) with the public library services and this stands on the top of all services of this category.

Also respondents were asked how they would divide the funding among the cultural and leisure services, if they have 100 Litas (diagram bellow). So here the public libraries appeared on the second place – getting almost 1/3 of the "funding". It was also very clear that the most frequent users of public libraries are tend to support them most.

Less than half Lithuanians know about e-services provided of municipalities and only one out of ten has ever used them. And these are less favourable findings for state and municipal authorities in consideration with the solid funding to information society development projects during the recent years.

In Lithuania more than half inhabitants are Internet users, one fifth of them go to the library for Internet access. And 1/3 of these said the library is the only place for the Internet access they have.

12 per cent of Internet users said they visited public library webpage, 27 per cent checked the webpage of municipality. The wider research of last year shows that the Internet in libraries as well as in general is mostly used for leisure and culture purposes. However libraries uniquely contribute in the fields that are not so frequently accessed from home or other access points: e-government services, education and health. So the general conclusion could be that libraries help users to master the services that need advanced user skills and knowledge. And this means they are in the information literacy development business.

Reference:

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2.   Rutkauskiene, Ugne. "Libraries are good". Prove it. A presentation for 5th NAPLE (National Authorities on Public Libraries in Europe) conference „Public libraries in broader cultural / political agenda". Vilniu, October 9-11, 2008. [unpublished]. Access at: http://www.naple.info/Vilnius/ugne_rutkausk iene.pdf

3.   "Libraries for Innovation" Impact assessment baseline study full reports and data are accessible at:

http://www.bibliotekospazangai.lt/ImpactAsse ssment/Forms/AllItems.aspx

The Fifth NAPLE Conference was organized by the Ministry of Culture of Lithuania and was held in Vilnius from 9th to 11th October of 2008. In the Assembly, Ramune Petuchovaité was elected to participate in the Board and María Antonia Carrato Mena was elected as the new chair of NAPLE replacing Jens Thorhauge after years of dedication to NAPLE. Now, he will take care of The Library Building Database project. In addition, Spain assumed the web management for two years, as newsletter publication during this year just as was approved in Madrid. In the meeting, it was agreed to organize a joint conference with EBLIDA in order to strengthen the cooperation between both institutions. This conference was held in Vienna from 7th to 9th of May (see article on p.3). The proceedings of conference are available in NAPLE website, in its provisional URL: http://www.mcu.es/naple/index.html

New Statistics, Awaiting Effects of Global Crisis

By Marian Koren,
Netherlands Public Library Association

Apart from the annual state statistics, new statistics become available thanks to the Library Sector Information System (BIS) developed by the Netherlands Public Library Association. BIS collects a number of extra figures and has more in depth data, which allow libraries to benchmark with same-size libraries etc.   In the Netherlands, with a population of 16 million inhabitants, more than 4 million people are members of the public library, more than half of them under 18 years of age. Youth members have grown slightly with 0,25%; adult members show a small decline: 0,56%. The number of loans shows an increase for children with 2,8% - maybe due to intensified reading programmes with schools -

and a small decrease for adults (0,56%) Overall, collections are getting smaller with 9,9% for adults and 4,4% for children. Use of the digital library (bibliotheek.nl) increased (32 million visits); top content consists of literary abstracts and reviews, newspaper articles, literature, and bibliographic data.

Statistics: http://www.debibliotheken.nl/english

Are effects of the global (financial) crisis already visible in the Dutch Library landscape? An interview round among public library directors in spring 2009, demonstrates that it is still too early to judge. But some thoughts are aired: The social role of libraries has been stressed in recent years, including care for semi-illiterates, and we will highlight this role with new services and partnerships.' Some

notice that partners have difficulties in attracting enough visitors and participants, but library figures seem stable. Expecting financial pressure at the municipalities is anticipated, and may affect libraries, within two years. 'We should use the crisis, to demonstrate the value and advantages of a library card.'

(BibliotheekBlad nr. 4/5, 2009, p. 15)

Working for sustainability of Libraries

There might be other ways to care for the sustainability of libraries for the future. *How green is my library? Exploring Sustainability and Libraries in a Global World*, was the title of the first Dutch library conference on sustainability, which took place in Madurodam, The Hague, Netherlands, 23 April 2009, attended by international guests, IFLA board and staff members, and Dutch colleagues.

As sustainability is a key factor in the politics and economics of the global world, referring to concerns about the planet's quality and the environment, but also to the human activities, building and construction, investments and culture at large, the main questions are: How are libraries responding to this global concern and issue?

- Are they housed and styled in sustainable buildings and design?

- Is the staff aware of the discourse on sustainability and sensitive to it in their own activities and organisation?

- Do they also work on (digital) sustainability of their collections?

- What do libraries contribute to global awareness of sustainability?

- How can libraries demonstrate their role in working for a sustainable world?

- How sustainable is the concept of libraries?

These questions were addressed by experts from banks, architecture and energy consultancies, but also by librarians themselves, from France, Denmark, and by IFLA president Claudia Lux, who highlighted specific aspects for libraries to collect and distribute information on sustainability and to find ways to support sustainability in libraries. She also related her theme *Libraries on the agenda* with sustainability: how to guarantee sustainability of libraries, if not through advocacy. Sustainable libraries are keys to a sustainable knowledge society.

Vincent Bonnet, secretary, presented the new IFLA Special Interest Group on Environmental Sustainability and Libraries, which will have a first programme at IFLA Milan: Wednesday 26 of August. http://www.ifla.org/en/about-environmental-sustainability-and-libraries

And what about Europe? A sustainability strategy has been developed by the EU, to address the Member States and their citizens. A sustainable future in our hands is the title of an EU citizens guide. Print copies were distributed to all participants of the Madurodam conference.

Within the European Union, a practical website is available and can be useful for developing a sustainable library policy in Europe. (http://ec.europa.eu/sustainable/welcome/index_en.htm)
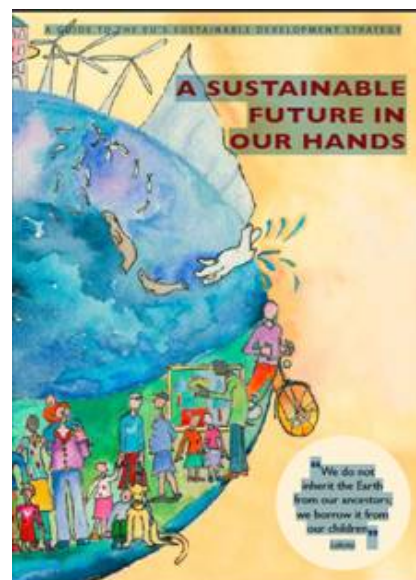
The National Project for Public Reading (RNLP) and the Global Crisis

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In Portugal, the free access to Public Libraries was born under the National Project for Public Reading (RNLP). The main target of this project is to create, in each municipality, a public library, in order to get a near involvement (connection) with all citizens. The RNLP has now 174 libraries, covering 63% of the Portuguese municipalities. Unlike other European countries, where economic problems led many libraries to come to an end, the Portuguese network is still growing and, at the present time, more 87 libraries are in a stage of installation. Even though this reality, it doesn't mean that the crisis is not being felt.

Side of building, Bento de Jesús Caraça Municipal Library

Public Libraries develop their work in a "target mission" as defined in the UNESCO's Manifesto, through the provision of several services, including computerized equipment with Internet access, printing and photocopy services, educational services for children and youth, cultural activities, decentralized small libraries, community support (hospitals, prisons, etc.), everything provided in free basis charge. These activities reach a wide-ranging audience in terms of age, education, economic level and different knowledge requirements. A huge work, which is only possible with human and financial resources.

Although in Portugal there is no closure of libraries, the financial constraints currently faced create difficulties in the maintenance of qualified teams, quality and quantity of the provided services. In the present context, with the general loss of economic power, many people are discovering the public library, reaching their services, prospecting a potential growth of users and readers. We confirm the increase of certain user profiles, such as students seeking specialized books, unemployed/inactive users demanding for newspapers and free Internet access, and public looking for leisure activities, including seniors and families. It must be remarked the fact that families found in the library a real alternative recreation for all family instead of playgrounds or shopping centres. At the present time and by the fact of economic power reduction, we may say that all those who are difficult to conquer, are now voluntarily demanding the libraries' services.

The above scenario, superficially examined, leads us to believe that public libraries are now in a good moment, creating new users and loyal readers. A deeper analysis shows us that the limited economic resources of libraries pulled out the possibility of a good response to this new audience.

Over the years, Portugal accomplished a huge investment in buildings and professional training to achieve a good quality service and the "creation" of readers, to call people, mostly with low reading rates. The actual economic crisis broke down all this work. The systematic budget cuts turned impossible the update of the collections, which are gradually becoming outdated and don't reflect the available supply in the market. The library not only ceased to afford the needs of new public, but also has difficulties to maintain the public with solid habits of reading, due to the fact of not being able to provide new documents and stimulate regular visits. Public libraries accustomed their audience to a regular and cultural dynamic, marked by almost daily minor events. At present is quite impossible to maintain such

level and dynamic. Libraries are in danger of becoming lifeless spaces.

The global crisis has shown the weakness of the financing of culture in Portugal, almost completely dependent on the government budget and funding. In the context that lacks basic resources to commence, culture will tend to be seen as something unnecessary and will be the first to suffer budget cuts. Libraries are not the exception.

The problem requires rethinking models, resizing teams and services. Maintaining quality services with good cultural dynamics became a huge challenge to creativity.

NEW NAPLE WEBSITE

The new NAPLE website has been renovated by the Subdirectorate General for Library Coordination of the Spanish Ministry of Culture during the last moths. It presents a whole new design. The current structure divides the website in five sections:

- ABOUT: where the statutes and the documents elaborated by the NAPLE forum can be consulted.
- DIRECTORY: in this section we can find all members of NAPLE, data of the secretariat, as well as the information on how to become a member.
- NEWS AND NEWSLETTER: it contains a section of news that we encourage you to increase and all the newsletters arranged by year of publication.
- MEETING: here you will find a compilation of all the meetings from the last years.
- LINKS AND DOCUMENTS: with links to websites of interest for librarians.

Its provisional URL is http://www.mcu.es/naple/index.html

# Slovenia: Traditional Services (still) Remains the Core

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Slovenian public libraries are trying to respond to new challenges of digital era however traditional services remain their strengths. They are focusing on development of new services in electronic environment - acquisition of electronic information resources, enabling remote access for their users and providing digital reference service. Perhaps most important is digitalisation of local history collections and publication of digital documents and databases. However lending of printed material and reader development still remain the core services. The annual statistical survey clearly confirms the statement. I will briefly present data for 2007, as data for 2008 are being collected at the time of writing this article.

Public libraries issued 22.216.129 units of library material to registered users in 2007. The figure presents 2,15 % growth comparing to the year 2006. Relative figures confirm growth as libraries issued 40,4 units per registered user in 2006 to 42,3 in 2007 or 10,82 per potential user in 2006 to 10,97 in 2007. According to preliminary data trend continues in 2008. This growth of loans confirms a constant trend in recent years. For example the number of loans increased from 38 % in the year 2000 from 8,09 loans per potential user in 2000 to 10,97 in 2007.

Statistical data on registered users do not grow with such a constant trend as it is the case with loans, but they are more subject to fluctuation. Slovenian public libraries reported 525.682 registered users which represent 25,9 % of population. The figure decreased in 2,4 % in the year 2006 when registered users represented 26,8 % of population. Percentage is still above the 2000 figure when it was 24,7 %. Comparison of collected data between different age groups of registered users reveals an interesting trend. Adult registered users (16 years and older) represent 20,9 % of corresponding population while young registered users up to 15 years represent 54,9 %

of adult population. Number of young users increased for 0,3% in the year 2006 but the number of adult users decreased for 4 %. It is obvious that adult users account for lower overall percentage of registered users in population. It would be interesting to explore further, but data are not collected at such detail for particular user groups. Comparison also shows that juvenile users are also more active borrowers. An average user borrowed 42,3 units in year 2007 while juvenile user borrowed 50 units and adult user 38,7. Comparison between two groups shows that juvenile users borrows 2,3 times more fiction while adult user borrows slightly more non-fiction.
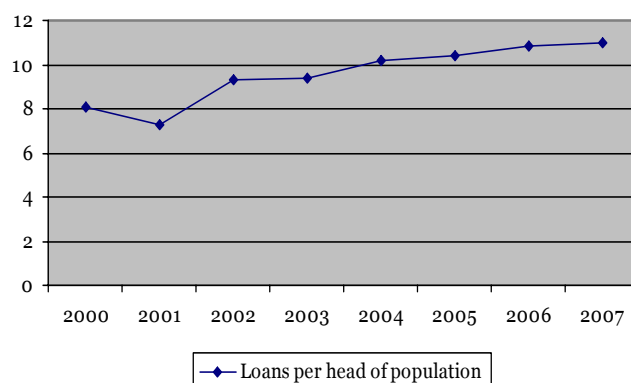
What is interesting about data of year 2007 is a quite large leap in number of events organized by libraries. Libraries organised 17.507 events which were aiming at reading promotion, user education and cultural enjoyment. Number of events marked increase for 16% compared to year before. Attendance increased even more, there were 686.841 participants, what means 29% growth. Although lending to home and on-site still accounts for about two thirds of use, this growth may anticipate shift in the library approach to users. Preliminary figures for 2008 confirm more active library stance. Hopefully we could talk about new trend of more active involvement of libraries with users as a response to challenges of digital era. We shall see whether the trend will be realised in the future.

Pregunte: Ask a Librarian Online

Subdirectorate General for Library Coordination
Ministry of Culture, Spain

Ask, the libraries respond offers a new chat service.

A new chat–based reference service was launched last 12th of May, it is accessible at

http://www.pregunte.es

The chat pilot project offers personal assistance in real-time (synchronous) as a complement of the traditional reference service by email (asynchronous). This new chat service is called "Ask on line" and is available on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 12 pm to 1 pm and 6 pm to 7 pm. In the near future, as soon as more libraries join the project, we will extend hours availability and answers will be provided in other Spanish official languages.

The new chat service is offered by 9 public libraries from different regions of Spain: Biblioteca de Andalucía, Biblioteca de Asturias, Biblioteca de Castilla-La Mancha, Biblioteca de Castilla y León, Biblioteca de La Rioja, Biblioteca Municipal Central de San Sebastián, Biblioteca Pública de Málaga, Biblioteca Pública de Salamanca, and Biblioteca Regional de Madrid Joaquín Leguina.

The Ministry of Culture, after some research, comparisons and deliberation, decided on acquiring *QuestionPoint* software, a product of the OCLC (Online Computer Library Centre). This software provides: interaction librarian/user, co-browse web pages and electronic resources, reception of the complete transcription of the chat session by e-mail, instant messaging with other librarians, research in a global knowledge database and statistical reports.

Ask a librarian service started as a pilot project at the end of 1999 and was officially launched in June 2000. *Ask a librarian* was the first online information service provided by public libraries in Spain. Users ask through the web page and within a maximum of 72 hours they receive a reply by e-mail. This collaborative information service was provided by 20 public libraries initially, but nowadays there are 44 libraries that represent all the 17th Autonomous Communities of Spain. The service is offered in four Spanish official languages (Spanish, Basque, Catalan and Galician).

From the beginning to March 2007 this service was managed by the Regional Library of Murcia. At this time, the Ministry of Culture assumed technical management and maintenance, coordinated by the Subdirectorate for Library Co-ordination, a Directorate General of Books, Archives and Libraries dependency. This migration offered the opportunity to redefine the platform adapting the web accessibility standards.

Questions received
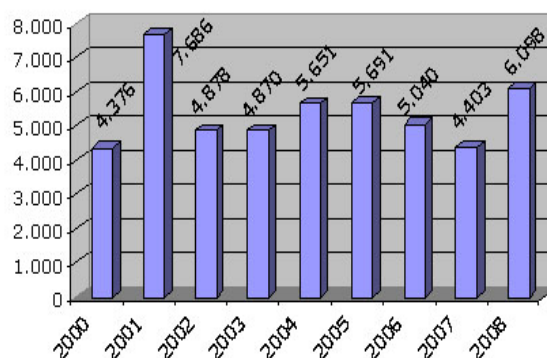
Ask a librarian digital reference service aims to promote and increase the active role of the public libraries within the information and knowledge society providing quality information for general public needs. Moreover, it expects to show the possibilities and advantages of the library collaborative work among different administration levels.

From 2000 to 2008 *Ask a librarian* answered more than 48.000 questions. Next charts show the evolution per year of the questions received and users participating.

Users

Year	Users
2000	2.880
2001	5.095
2002	3.562
2003	3.545
2004	4.017
2005	3.821
2006	3.674
2007	3.045
2008	4.501