

European National Libraries: a Review of the Year's Activities 1999-2000

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INTRODUCTION

This review of the activities of the National Libraries in membership of the Conference of European National Librarians has again been compiled from the summary reports for the year 1999 submitted by the Directors to the CENL Secretariat at the Koninklijke Bibliotheek in The Hague. The reports include developments in both 1999 and the early part of 2000, since they relate essentially to the start and end dates of the financial years of each library. In all I received reports from 30 libraries, but a number of those who reported in previous years have not done so this time. Following the pattern established in previous years, I have not reported on the everyday work of the libraries, nor have I quoted extensive statistics or financial figures. Rather I have sought, as in the past, to convey a general sense of the achievements and concerns of the libraries, highlighting those activities that are at the core of their work. As always, my selection of what to include has been governed by the emphasis that the individual library places on particular achievements. To those libraries that feel that I have omitted what they see to be notable achievements, I apologise, as I do to those where my understanding of their use of technical terms has led me to misinterpret what they have reported.

This year, the CENL Secretariat asked libraries to give particular attention in their reports to library management issues and to developments in the electronic library and my review seeks to show this emphasis. I have also included a separate section on staffing issues, reflecting the considerable concern expressed in the reports at the significant reductions in staffing levels, the problems of recruiting new staff, and the particular difficulties in attracting staff with computing skills.

FUNDING

Although most libraries continue to report that their funding is inadequate to meet their current needs, and that inflation in costs is not fully taken into account when their annual budgets are settled, there appears to have been some improvement in real term funding for a number of those reporting this year. Percentage increases in grant are always welcome news. They may not, however, reveal the true financial position since much depends upon the adequacy of the base line sum to which the percentage increase is applied. A well-endowed library receiving a 5 % increase in its funding is obviously likely to be much better off than a library with a very small recurring grant that receives an increase of 50 % but has to contend with exceptionally high inflationary costs. In real terms, the latter may be significantly short of the sums which would allow it some flexibility in expenditure, a capacity to invest in its infrastructure and systems, and enable it to keep pace with the growing demand for literature. For example, although the National Library of Romania, which is entirely dependent upon government funding, received an increase of some 70 % over the funding it received in 1998, it considers this figure to be well below its needs, especially when taking into account the costs of construction of the new library building. Its total grant for the year was Euro 2,087,638.7, compared with Euro 1,228,023 in the previous year, an increase of Euro 859,615. The National Library of Spain, which reports a 5.1 % increase in its general annual budget, on top of its 46.6 % increase in 1998, received a general annual budget for the year of Euro 35,232,609.25, and its budget increase amounted to Euro 182,863.94. Both of the increases in these two years were made primarily to allow for the early completion of the remodelling of its main building, over a two-year funding period. The additional funds have also allowed for improved telecommunication, and the retrospective conversion of the catalogues, as well as for the acquisition of additional bibliographic resources. The library is preparing a five-year plan for the period 2001-2005, which maintains the general budget at its present level in spite of the completion of the remodelling work and extension to the Alcalá depository. It is intended to use the additional sums provided originally for building work to invest in renewal of furniture, machinery and fittings as well as cataloguing work and the retroconversion of the catalogues. (By citing actual budgets for these two libraries, I am not seeking to make any comparison between them, nor, heaven forbid, do I want to imply that the National Library of Spain is in any way over-funded for its needs. However, the figures do show how misleading in terms of actual budgets a rise of 70 % may appear.)

After several years of hardship and savings to meet the additional costs imposed by its new building, the British Library received a favourable grant-in-aid settlement for the three-year planning period 1999-2002. Whilst falling

short of the level that the library considered necessary to support its ambitious programmes, government support for the period is higher than had been expected, increasing the library's operational funding baseline by some £ 11m above the indicative planning figures previously issued. This increase, taken together with substantial efficiency and economy savings achieved in the context of a zero-based review undertaken in 1998-99, has allowed the library to resource a number of developments. It has been able to achieve a significant increase in real term funding to support its acquisition programme which has been increased by 15 % on the real terms funding level for 1998/9, and it should be able to sustain that real term increase over the three year period against predicted inflation rates for books and serial prices. It has also been able to increase the baseline for its conservation programme, which will rise in real terms in 2001/02 to 135 % of its 1998 funding level. The improved funding has allowed the library to establish a Co-operation and Partnership Programme with a £ 500,000 challenge fund to facilitate active participation of other institutions in partnership activities, and to proceed with a procurement programme for its programme of investment in the technical infrastructure to support its digital library programme. The final benefit is one of direct appeal to its readers, in that the library has been able to increase the opening hours of its general reading rooms from 53 to 60 hours per week.

The annual budget of the National Library of Finland is also approved for a three-year period, although funding for individual projects can be renegotiated on an annual basis. Negotiations for the next three-year period, 2001-2003, have recently been completed and the library will receive additional funding because of the costs of the new underground stores, preparation for legal deposit for electronic publications and the inclusion of the recurrent costs of the National Archive of Recorded Sound and National Electronic library. The National Library of Ireland also reported a real increase in funding this year. Its funds for operating costs were increased by 13 % on the 1998 figure. This allowed the library to undertake further development of the collections, expand its ITC services, and reduce the arrears in cataloguing.

The year saw the beginning of greater financial independence and stability in the Slovak National Library, as it was for the first time guaranteed an explicit share of the funds, which was previously aggregated into the funding of the Matica slovenská. Although this did not improve the budget greatly, it at least guaranteed a minimum sum specifically for the library. Although from July 2000 it will receive its grant directly into its own bank account, its budget remains critically low, and does not allow for the development of new programmes, for the wider introduction of new technology or for the greater purchase of library material.

For the first time since 1993, the Russian State Library received 100 % financing for its budget. This allowed it to increase the salaries of its staff, to purchase supplies of materials, and to partly clear some of its debts. It also allowed the library to undertake capital repair works on its buildings. It resumed its reconstruction work on the Centre of Oriental Literature and the engineering systems for its main book stacks, whilst maintaining the everyday activity of the library. However, it continues to suffer from delays in payment of its grant, and irregular receipts. These delays particularly affected its acquisition and loan departments where the receipt of large sums at the end of the financial year did not allow a rational approach to collection building.

Lack of compensation for the increasing costs of maintenance has created serious financial problems for the National Library of Hungary throughout the year, and a wide range of cuts had to be made, including cuts in staffing. A relatively small amount of the library's budget could be spent on keeping the collections up to date, conserving them, and making them accessible to the public. The National Library of Poland, which has suffered a real cut in expenditure of some 10 %, reports similar instability in its budget because of lack of compensation for inflation. To make matters worse, the library has not received any funds to complete the construction of its new building, or to proceed with new investments. The National Library relies upon state finding for some 95 % of its expenditure, and its staff salaries account for some 70 % of its total costs. What little flexibility it can achieve within its expenditure plans is largely derived from its income from the sale of databases, publications, and services, and from grants from various institutions which are a vital part of its income.

Die Deutsche Bibliothek reported further cuts in budget. On top of the cuts that were made recent years, the federal government imposed a further 7.61 % cut on the total library budget in autumn 1999. This cut will impose severe constraints upon the work of the library. Lack of resources prevented the National Library of Cyprus from organising any exhibitions or cultural events. The budget deficit of the National Library of Estonia led to cuts in expenditure on information technology and renovation, but it managed to retain intact its budget for staff and acquisitions. New expenditure cuts imposed upon the National Library of the Netherlands will lead to a further reduction of staff after 2001 in addition to the cuts that lead to a reduction of 12 posts in 2001. The library is negotiating with the Ministry of Education, Culture, and Science about three major areas of financial shortfall: the need for funding for the deposit of electronic publications, for preservation and digitisation, and for its storage.

Sponsorship and Revenue Earning

Libraries are increasingly turning to sponsorship schemes and other forms of increasing revenues to augment their funds. The National Library of Austria has been highly successful in sponsorship, including schemes for the sponsored acquisition of books, and has increased revenue from the sale of reproductions and from renting out space for suitable special events. These measures increased the total budget of the library by some 10 % in 1999. The National Library of Croatia also supplemented its reduced budget by renting out seminars rooms, and providing other conference facilities as well as charging for selected services. The Czech National Library, where long term and ad hoc renting of space raised revenues for the maintenance of the same space, believes that the sale of services and goods can only achieve a limited revenue stream, given the increases in production costs and fees. In all, its revenue streams provided 9 % of its total resources. Revenue earning by the National Library of Estonia exceeded estimates by over 40 %, and formed 8.5 % of the budget. Much of the National Library of Finland's development work is carried out with the help of externally funded projects. Grants have been received from the Ministry of Education, from NORDINFO, from the European Union and from private sources. The National Library of Latvia also gained financial support from external sources for various projects. The Open Society Institute, the Soros Foundation Latvia, the Mellon Foundation, and the Latvian Cultural Capital Foundation all provided financial support, but the library's overall funding position remained inadequate despite an increase of resources in 1999. The National Library of Ireland generated 7 % of its total income from the sale of goods and reprographic services. The National Library of Lithuania raised 8.7 % of its resources from receipts from priced services and from grants by external bodies and private individuals. Despite this achievement, its financial situation was extremely grave during 1999, as the economic recession in the country continued. Its grant-in-aid from the state was cut, and the library was forced to cut its acquisition budget to some 60 % of what was required, leading to a reduction in subscriptions and of the acquisition of foreign literature. Building work on the new annexe was halted, library staff numbers were reduced by 10 %, and hours of opening are to be reduced.

LEGISLATION

Legislation governing the National Libraries in Europe ranges from the simplest permissive legislation to complex legislation covering the most detailed aspects of the library's work and functions. The work done by libraries such as the National Library of Norway during the year to assist the

Council of Europe and EBLIDA to prepare comprehensive guidelines for library legislation and policy in Europe is an important and timely development in moving towards a common basic legislative framework.

In the Czech Republic, three amendments were made to the Statutes of the National Library. The library now has the statutory duty to collect and make accessible documents acquired on line from information networks. It is explicitly charged to be active as the centre for research and technological development in the field of library and information systems, digitisation, preservation, and access. Under the legislation, its role as place of deposit for university theses has been allocated to the State Technical Library. Discussion has continued between the directors, the Ministry of Culture and the public on the proposals for modifying the policies and rules relating to national cultural institutions, including the library, to make them more independent not-for-profit organisations.

Under the disposition adopted by the Italian Parliament in 1999, *Testo unico delle disposizioni legislative in materie di beni culturali e ambientali*, there has been a substantial review of the whole of the regulations relating to the activities of the ministry responsible for the National Library of Florence. The disposition can be found on the library's website¹. In Latvia, three regulatory documents were prepared for submission to the Cabinet of Ministers. They dealt with standards for library materials and technical conditions, regulations for the national collections of libraries, and regulations for the creation and use of the national union catalogue. The National Library has participated in the formulation of the Copyright Act of the Republic of Latvia, representing the interests of libraries in this legislation. The library is also represented on the management team of the Central and Eastern European Copyright Users platform dealing with Copyright Legislation in Europe. The National Library of Liechtenstein was affected by a new law on information and media promotion adopted in 1999. This established a new regulatory basis for today's information society, guaranteeing freedom of information and the right of access to public sources of information. The National Library's role is seen as central to the provision of public access to information under this legislation. The revision of Copyright legislation was also completed in Liechtenstein in 1999. The new law is principally based upon Swiss Copyright and at the same time meets the stipulations of the EEA Agreement. A special collecting body for collecting fees from leasing and lending works will be established, but the government can exempt institutions and libraries from the payment of fees for lending working copies, and for access to published databases.

The 1988 Statutes relating to cultural institutions including those of the National Library are being revised and updated in Luxembourg. The final version of the draft Library Law of Romania is awaiting approval by the Chamber of Deputies. The Statutes and Regulations of the Vatican Library,

promulgated in 1995, are currently being revised; rules for readers, including admission rules, have been reviewed and revised, regulations for loan for exhibitions outside Vatican City have also been revised. A Papal Decree of October 1 1999 entrusted the management of the Museums of the Vatican Library to the Vatican Museums, allowing the staff formerly responsible for their care to be available to meet other needs in the library.

Although no changes were made to the legal status of the National Library of Poland during the year, the change in the funding rules for cultural institutions resulted in a detailed appraisal of the financial situation of the National Library. The library has applied to the Ministry of Culture and National Heritage for the approval of changes in its statutes to cover changes in its internal organisation and management structure, as well as changes in its funding rules. Work continues on the amendment of the Copyright Law, which has aroused considerable discussion in library circles because the current regulations towards the provision of copies for the private use of library readers are so unfavourable. The new law for the protection of author's rights in the Slovak Republic seems not to provide a satisfactory resolution of the problem of providing fair remuneration for the use of works in libraries. It allows only the collective collection and management of fees, and the National Library fears that the cost consequences of the fee system have not been taken into account in the funding of libraries or in the funding of the Ministry of Culture, and that they are not therefore in a position to pay the fees.

BUILDINGS

Once again, the year has been notable for the completion of major building projects, both for new buildings and for substantial extensions and renovations.

In March 1999, after over twenty years in the construction, the National Library of Poland's new premises officially became operational, and the library celebrated the symbolic formal opening of the main public entrance. However, the construction has taken so long that the storage space for the collections will be full within a few years. The library has already begun to seek additional funds for the construction of an additional storage building, which it hopes to begin in 2002. June 1999 saw the opening of the newly adapted space beneath the great hall of the National Library of Austria. The adaptation provides the library with a new exhibition area and entrance. The Aurum Hall has been subdivided by means of moveable glass doors to provide three areas that can be flexibly adapted to provide space for various academic, cultural, and social events. The new papyrus museum was opened in

September. Over 4000 exhibits can be displayed in the 53 cases now installed in the museum, which is the biggest devoted to papyri in the world, and the museum can now meet the many demands upon it for education and information. Visits from schools are given special attention, and many of the documents on display illustrate education in ancient times. Children can learn how to write on real papyrus, and the exhibitions cover a wide range of topics including material on life in monasteries, illumination, the art of the book and the book trade.

The National Library of Finland continues its reconstruction and renovation programme. The new underground four storey stacks have been completed, and the library will have a total of some 80 linear kilometres of shelving allowing all of its collections in Helsinki to be concentrated in these areas. The move of books began in September 2000. The Main library's public areas re-opened in September 1999 following repairs and renovation. The open access areas have been substantially enlarged by the removal of temporary office space. The old underground stack under the yard of the library is being renovated, and will provide two floors of open access stacks. By the end of 2000, when the programme is completed, the library will hold about 450,000 volumes on open access. A new modern cafeteria has also been opened and a new exhibition gallery has been furnished. Repair and modernisation work has also started on the library's other buildings in Helsinki and Mikkeli.

The National Central Library of Florence opened its new reference room in December 1999 after extensive refurbishment work. The refurnishing has been completed with the installation of 48 ergonomically designed computer workstations with liquid crystal display screens. Each has access to the home page of the library's website, and is linked to the OPAC as well as providing access to other catalogues and databases. A further programme of reconstruction is in progress to create a new store providing some 13,000 linear metres of shelving, giving expansion space for a further ten years. The library expects the work to be completed within a year.

The remodelling of the coffee shop and restaurant at the National Library of Portugal was completed during the year, and work has begun on modernising the auditorium to accommodate new technology. The National Library of Spain continues its major programme for remodelling its Paseo de Recoletos building. During the year the restoration of the large reading room and the catalogue consultation room was undertaken. Work has also begun on a new storage tower, and this has required temporary relocation of a number of departments and services. Two new stacks are being built at the Alcalá de Henares site, one with automated facilities to expedite delivery of the most requested documents. New stacks are also to be built by the National Library of Hungary, and the construction project for creating this underground facility has now been launched.

Improved funding allowed the Russian State Library to make further progress with its renovation work, including the replacement of electrical transformers, the renovation of parts of the heating system and repairs to the roof of the main building. Much remains to be done, since so much of the library's estate needs emergency remedial work. The lack of funding for such work is inevitably leading to further deterioration and additional funding requirements.

It is not unusual to find that as a new building is brought into use, or within a few years of its opening, various changes need to be made to the facilities to deal with unforeseen problems, to rectify faults, or to allow for new developments in the library's services. The Deutsche Bibliothek, now installed in its new Frankfurt building, has found a feasible solution to the problems it has experienced in providing effective air-conditioning of its reading rooms. Although not the originally preferred solution, which required the reading rooms to be closed for a considerable period, this scheme has the advantage that it will not require major reconstruction of the walls and ceilings, whilst remaining within the original cost estimates. The library is continuing to address the building problems at Leipzig and in Berlin. The Deutsche Bücherei, Leipzig, urgently requires additional shelving space, and an application to extend the stack room is being prepared. A three-phase plan for the renovation of the Deutsche Musikarchiv, Berlin, is also being developed. The building is listed for preservation.

A number of improvements, planned by specialist working parties, have been carried out in the Bibliothèque François Mitterand of the Bibliothèque Nationale de France to improve working conditions for the readers and the staff. In March 2000, a library dedicated to the work of Flammarion, consisting of some 5,000 titles, was opened in the East Hall. At the Richelieu site, in the course of the last twelve months, part of the space now freed by the transfer of collections and specialised departments has been used to improve the conservation conditions for documents and for the improvement of services. In addition, technical studies have begun for the general programme of refurbishment. At the Arsenal Library, two building audits have been undertaken, one on the security provision in the building, and the other for repairs and refurbishment.

Despite the many successful building projects over recent years, much remains to be done before it can be assumed that national libraries in Europe are all well housed. However, a number of libraries are well advanced in planning new buildings, and others are beginning the lengthy process of identification of need, and justification for funding. The Office of Public Works completed the National Library of Ireland's plans for a phased building programme to meet its long-standing and critical accommodation needs. Improved reader facilities will include an enhanced family history service, and a vastly upgraded microfilm reading facilities, for which there is a strong

demand. The plans include the provision of a new catalogue and reference area, including better facilities for accessing electronic media, substantially improved consultation facilities for the library's collection of prints and drawings and a new map library. There will be new cloakroom and toilet facilities, an improved reception area, and disabled access to all parts of the library. The number of reader places will more than double and there will be provision for a substantial increase in the number of casual visitors, including tourists, who can make use of the library's public facilities. The nine-phase plan, of which the first two phases (the relocation of electrical and other service ducts in the main building and the installation of a sprinkler system in the building used by the Department of Manuscripts) have now been completed, is an ambitious and a complex one. It will present difficulties in execution and completion because of the interlinking nature of the library's buildings and services and the confines of the site. Some disruption to services will be inevitable during the next four years. However, these temporary inconveniences will be entirely outweighed by the long-term benefits that the building works will bring to the library service. An enabling element, ancillary to the overall development programme, is the provision of offsite storage to accommodate collections while the buildings in which they are currently stored are being refurbished; this storage was expected to be available in July 2000.

The General Conference of UNESCO in Paris has unanimously approved a draft resolution in support of the projected new building for the National Library of Latvia. A UNESCO International Expert Board is to be formed to advise in the planning and development of the building project. The National Library of Luxembourg is planning an additional new building in the modern Kirchberg district, allowing the later renovation the historic building in the city centre. The Rana Division of the National Library of Norway has received state funding for a second storage building for the Repository Library, and the Oslo Division has submitted its plans to the Ministry of Culture for the construction of an underground store and the complete renovation of its existing building.

Whilst these developments are very welcome, it is sad to report that many libraries remain very poorly housed. The buildings of the National Library of Cyprus are totally inadequate for its needs. The main building, on the D'Avila Bastion of the old Venetian walls, dates back to 1920, and is far from suitable for the provision of modern library services. The Children's Library occupies a building in the yard of a primary school and needs to be replaced. A building was bought in 1991 to house the library, but the refusal of the company that rents the ground floor to move out of the building has stalled all plans for renovation. A committee has now been set up to draft an architectural competition for the renovation of the building but real progress remains slow. The National Library of the Czech Republic also reports lack of progress in

the planned reconstruction of the Klementinum, due to shortage of funds, although some progress has been made in the partial repair of the main baroque frontage.

Many national libraries have outgrown their original buildings, which were often cultural monuments in their own right, and held in great regard by generations of readers and the public at large. It is always a source of satisfaction when they are converted to sympathetic new cultural use. The former building of the National Library of Iceland, built between 1906 and 1908, has been converted into a national cultural centre that will hold permanent and temporary exhibitions illustrating the development of Icelandic culture and society. The centre was opened in April 2000 after the building, which is listed as a national monument, had been totally renovated. Whilst the centre is an independent institution, the National and University Library has part of its book museum in the building's old reading room. The British Museum's world famous Reading Room, so long at the heart of the British Library, is being renovated to form a new reference reading room and information centre for the Museum. The former stack rooms surrounding the room have been demolished, the original classical facades of the internal quadrangle have been restored, and the quadrangle itself has been roofed in glass, providing what is claimed to be the largest covered square in Europe. This enormous space at the centre of the Museum includes a new cafeteria, lecture theatre and education rooms. The reading room itself has been refurbished, the original colour scheme has been restored, and, for the first time in its long history, it will be open for general public use. Any visitor can now claim to have sat at the same desk as Karl Marx!

MANAGEMENT ISSUES

Organisational Changes

After several years without proper management, the National Library of Cyprus appointed both a Director and Advisory Council. According to the legislation for the National Library, the Council's task is to advise the Minister of Education and Culture and the Library Director on all matters relating to the administration of the library. Plans for restructuring the National Library of Hungary were initiated by the newly appointed National Librarian. The library's Administrative Council, its highest administrative body, now consists of five members, the Deputy Director General for Scholarly Affairs, the General Deputy Director General, the Deputy Director General for Informatics, the Director of the Library Institute, and the Financial Manager of the library. The revision of the Statute of the Vatican Library provided opportunity to reflect on the library's purpose and nature. The relinquishment

of responsibility for the Museum made the case for revising its organisational structure of particular importance. The Museum had formed a significant part of the Vatican Library and its history, and the separation of these functions caused considerable sadness to the library. For the past year, the management of the library has been discussing with staff the changes that will result from an assessment of the quality of services they provide. An internal assessment will be followed by an assessment by an outside team. Certain areas are being restructured in order to improve quality and productivity. There is a particular focus on the management of correspondence and accountability, the admission of scholars, and the security systems.

In 1996, the Swiss National Library sent to the Department of the Interior a proposal for a different management structure, based on the concept of New Public Management, but at the time, this request was considered premature. In 1999, however, in parallel with a wider study on the reorganisation of the Federal Office of Culture, the SNL was asked to put forward proposals aiming at a greater autonomy. Within this framework, SNL studied the most appropriate legal status for the library, using input from CENL colleagues who generously replied to a questionnaire on the subject, and concluded that it should have its own legal status so that it might manage its development and take decisions more rapidly. This proposal was still being discussed in May 2000. In addition to this study, the library re-assessed its overall strategy. Given that it cannot substantially increase its resources, either financial or in personnel, it decided to concentrate its efforts on its basic mission: the management of the Swiss cultural heritage. However, the SNL also aims to continue work on an international level, building on contacts already made, especially with other national libraries.

The Bibliothèque nationale de France has undertaken the modernisation of its management in line with the reports made in January 1999 of the 9 working parties established in the previous year. Three major action lines have been followed: i. The modernisation of the organisation and of professional relations through more transparent and dynamic direction, coherent well-publicised rules for the management of staff, and the improvement of conditions of employment. The library intends to strengthen the structure through the creation of a specific office to document and review staff structures. It intends to share information with the staff through the adoption of a charter that recognises the right of access to information and expression of opinion and a greater participation in internal communication. ii. The improvement of working conditions and the public service through the creation of a committee to deal with day-to-day issues and the achievement of programmes of work in the building based on common practice. iii. The development of a project, launched at the end of November 1999 to define objectives and priorities for the years 2001-2003, to advance certain activities relating to the nature and particular missions of a national library, such as

legal deposit, conservation, and the remote supply of documents, and to take into account the electronic revolution. The project concentrates also on qualitative and quantitative indicators for achieving the objectives. An advisory group, which brings together external experts and those responsible for other cultural institutions, has helped with the work of the project.

Strategic Planning

Following its *Strategy for the Modernisation of the RSL*, the Russian State Library has continued to work on refining its management systems, and on the development of optimum methods of carrying out its main activities as a national library. In 1999, the RSL consisted of 60 departments, 9 centres, and 11 directorates. The organisational structure is undergoing considerable change. Three research departments were reorganised, and service grades on a uniform salary scale were agreed, but the library has so far failed to settle the question of bringing the staff establishment up to full strength. In order to take forward collective methods of planning and decision taking, work on reorganising and setting up new consultative bodies has continued. At present, 20 permanent commissions and councils are at work in the library. The RSL has carried out small-scale research into the information and statistical needs of its managers and specialists, and this has led to a new set of indicators for the library's activities.

The Library Board of the National Library of Finland approved the new National Library Strategy for 2000-2003. It clarifies the library's position in relation to the other libraries and defines the services provided by the library under its National Library funding. Although the strategy was well received, reactions of the libraries concerned revealed that, in spite of all information that has been distributed, they were not fully aware of the broad scope of services and developmental work offered by the National Library. Whilst the library, which is also the University Library, wants to be the national library for the whole nation, according to law, its responsibilities are limited to services for research libraries only. In the new electronic environment, this stricture is increasingly difficult to follow because all libraries are in need of the same services and naturally make use of what is available, despite formal regulations to the contrary. The library wishes to be a common resource for all Finnish research libraries, and at the same time to develop its role as one of the most important institutions in the information network for the whole country. In order to integrate the National Electronic Library Programme into its ongoing responsibilities, a new organizational unit and new posts have been established, including the Secretariat for National Planning and Co-ordination. Helsinki University has commissioned an extensive evaluation of

its library system that will be carried out during 2000. The study will evaluate how the University makes use of its local services, and relates only to the function of the national library as a university library. The complete national library evaluation will be a separate project, commissioned by the Ministry of Education. According to a decision of the Ministry of Education, separate contract negotiations between the Ministry and the National Library will be carried out annually and the results will be included in the contract of the University. This means that the Ministry will directly determine the annual goals and resources of the National Library activities.

The National Library of the Czech Republic gained the approval of its board for a new strategic plan for the period 1999-2003. Five main strategic long-term research and technical development projects have been defined, covering the creation of a digital library, the development of information systems using data files prepared in retro-conversion projects, linking records to full text digital documents, the enlargement of the union catalogue and conservation and preservation programmes.

In 1998, a committee of independent experts evaluated the National Library of the Netherlands. Following the recommendations of this committee to strengthen the user-orientation of the library, a marketing project was started in 1999. The first step of this project was to collect as much information as possible about the services from the KB, its existing customers, target groups, and its competitors. Many ideas were generated about how to reach more customers and improve the use of the KB and its collections. This resulted in the formulation of a strategic marketing plan. In this plan, the marketing targets derived from the library's core tasks for the period of 2000-2003 are defined. In working out these core tasks, the KB has opted to develop the functional requirements relating to the traditional library, to the virtual library, to the library as a cultural institution, and to the function of the library as a knowledge and service centre. Much effort was put in the formulation of the mission statement, which will inform all marketing decisions and communication developments. The mission statement reads *'The Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of the Netherlands, gives everyone access to knowledge and culture from the past and the present by providing high-quality services for research, study and cultural experience'*. The main documents for library management are the annual operation plans and the management reports, which the divisional heads submit three times a year. In order to improve the quality of the management information, continuous attention is being given to accurate quantification to support the data in the management reports.

The National Library of Sweden evaluated its external services in 1998. A report was published 1999. The result of this survey provided very interesting information. A majority of the library's visitors were men (60 %) and as many as 90 % came from either the city of Stockholm or its close suburbs. Fifteen

percent of visitors were using the library for the first time. (The library had expected this figure to be much lower.) Newcomers spent on average 56 minutes in the library. Those who visited the library each day stayed on average for 3 hours and 16 minutes. As a result of the survey, the library made some changes in the organisation of its services. Most significant are perhaps the changes made to the organisation of the information desk and a greater priority is now being given to different kinds of user education. With the assistance of the Board of the Library, the overall vision-statements were revised. Every second year the library will examine its strategies and test how they correspond with the realities under which the library is working. The focus in 1999 is upon the importance of service to the users of the library.

To coincide with the transfer of research funding for the UK library and information sector from the British Library to the Library and Information Commission, the British Library Board decided to set up a Think Tank and associated Policy Unit. Their main aims are to bring issues of strategic importance to the attention of the library, and to enable the library to develop its capacity to think radically. The Policy Unit was set up in April and the Think Tank in September 1999. Their remit is to help the library become more outward looking and to provide a constant spur to questioning existing practices and policies and implementing change so that the library is better able to cope with increasing uncertainty as the environment becomes ever more diverse and dynamic. In its first year, the Policy Unit has undertaken studies to assess the scale of future publishing, to identify trends in information provision in Science, Technology and Business, looking at the future from the perspective of the national libraries, market research in patents, and market penetration of remote document supply services. At its first two meetings, the Think Tank raised many challenging questions for the library, going as far as to question whether there was a need for the library in the long term. (Presumably its answer was that there was, otherwise this report would have been much more dramatic and unsettling!) It has encouraged the library to determine who the future users will be and to focus upon their needs, and to change the focus away from „collection first“ to „users first“. It has urged the library to investigate trends in information provision in the humanities as well as in the sciences. The library has stated its determination to ensure that recommendations are followed through so that it can make the most of its Think Tank and Policy Unit. It believes that, taken together, they have the potential to change the dynamic of the library for the better.

The National Library of Ireland has prepared a draft statement of strategy, and formal consultation will take place with staff in 2000 on its content. Following agreement on the strategic objectives, business plans will be drawn up by each department. These will set out in detail the programmes and objectives they will follow.

Quality Systems and Performance Indicators

The National Central Library of Florence has been deeply involved with its quality system project based on ISO 9002. A manual has been produced which is intended to serve as the staff reference guide for all activities related to quality. The special topics the project is covering in the immediate future are the enhancement of access to the collections by computer catalogues, improvements in the management of legal deposit as a source for acquisitions, improving procedures for new accessions and the provision of staff training sessions.

Die Deutsche Bibliothek began a project in autumn 1999 through all parts of the library to carry out an organisational survey in the core areas of acquisition, descriptive cataloguing, and subject indexing. It is intended that the survey will serve as a basis for future evaluation of staffing needs. In addition, it is of major importance for the improved control and better assessment of resources. The survey is to be completed by the end of 2000. New management measures for accounting and controlling cost-performance have been prepared so that new controls can be quickly introduced based on the evidence of the organisation survey.

In Liechtenstein, the government has introduced a model for quality management based on that recommended by the European Foundation for Quality Management, and after a pilot phase has been completed, the National Library will be integrated into the programme to be adopted by the whole of the national administration. A performance related contract between the National Library of Iceland and the Ministry of Education and Culture for the period 2000-2002 was signed in December 1999. Under the contract, which promotes a closer relationship between the library and the Ministry, the library will send an annual report stating how successful the projects funded for the previous year have proved to be, especially in respect of the initial plans and the results forecast. Liaison meetings between the library and the Ministry are to be held at least once a year. However, the contract does not include any financial commitment by the government; the library's budget continues to be determined annually by parliament.

In November 1998, the Professional Advisory Board of the National Library of Croatia considered a methodology for data gathering and criteria for the evaluation of library activities and processes. This methodology provided an agreed platform for monitoring the performance of the library as a whole, including technical processes as well as services to readers. In the first year of assessing the data gathered by the library, the results were successful in raising awareness of overall performance. A comprehensive user survey was undertaken in 1999, based on questionnaires and interviews. Five hundred questionnaires were issued and the results are expected to be

available by the end of 2000. The feedback on user satisfaction will help in the evaluation of the various services provided by the library.

STAFF

Over half the libraries submitting reports this year have experienced staff cuts, or the freezing of posts. Many have not been able to recruit new staff because of poor salaries, poor promotion prospects, or greater opportunities for graduates in other fields. A number of libraries find that their staffing establishments are cut or limited because of government policy for restricting the number of civil servants across the whole range of government departments and agencies. Shortage of staff at all levels is commonly reported, as is the need to recruit technical experts, and people with knowledge of foreign languages, especially English. Several libraries report with increasing concern that the average age of their staff is much higher than they would wish, and that they need an injection of young blood to provide a new sense of purpose. Others recognise that established staff are becoming demoralised as they cope with increased pressure, suffer from the lack of promotion prospects, and spend more time on comparatively low skilled routine work that does not require them to exercise their professional skills. It would appear that the concept of fixed staffing establishments, with a clear career opportunity for new entrants to progress through regular promotion to the higher posts, is giving way to a much more fluid system where the establishment is largely fixed annually on the funding available, and short term appointments are increasingly common. A number of libraries recognise that this is not a temporary phenomena and are adjusting their ways of working accordingly, and at the same time are seeking improved ways of defining the number and type of staff required to meet the demands upon their services at minimum cost. This is not an easy task, but it is difficult to conceive how a library that rigidly holds to establishment numbers that have not been achieved for many years, and where there appears to be no intention on the part of governments to fund the now theoretical establishment, can effectively cope with present demands or plan a more effective service. New personnel policies reflecting the present needs and present circumstances are urgently needed.

The National Library of Cyprus believes that since 1987 it has been a victim of the government's attempt to hold down the exploding numbers of civil servants. For more than a decade, individuals who had no formal library training have administered the library and it considers that this has led to a lack of knowledge in the country of the work of the library and to lack of progress in its professional work. Although there has been some improvement

in the last year, the situation remains far from satisfactory. The library's small staff includes an assistant librarian on loan from the Ministry of Education and Culture, three other staff on three afternoons each week who are also employees of the Ministry of Education, and a teacher with health problems also on loan from the Ministry to staff the Children's Library. Two posts remain unfilled because of the lack of qualified candidates and the delays in appointment resulting from government bureaucracy.

Frequently, libraries report that government policy and financial constraints lead to posts being left vacant for long periods. The National Library of the Czech Republic has 50 frozen posts, none of which it will be able to fill in the next financial year. Staffing cuts led to a reduction of 27 staff in the National Library of Estonia. The National Library of Hungary reduced its staff numbers by 3 % by the end of 1999. The staffing policies that had led to these reductions were enforced by the Ministry of National Cultural Heritage, and were leading to considerable uncertainty in respect of security of tenure among library staff. At the beginning of the year, the National Library of Lithuania employed 500 qualified librarians and library specialists. Reduced funding led to a fall to 452 staff by the end of the year. The post of assistant director in charge of the maintenance and proper running of the library was abolished, and under the reorganisation undertaken to cope with reduced staff numbers, a post of assistant director responsible for collection preservation was introduced. A number of specialised departments such as Manuscripts, Rare Books, and Reprography were placed under this assistant director's responsibility.

Recruitment difficulties and pressure to reduce staff numbers have caused serious staffing problems in the Slovak National Library. The library, like a number of others, suffers particularly from a shortage of younger employees, and is particularly short of graduates in library science and specialists in information technology. The lack of recruitment and overall shortage of staff is damaging the motivation of staff that are increasingly having to spend more time on routine work. The library believes that its urgent need is to recruit young people with new skills and a good knowledge of foreign languages, especially English, but finds that the young graduates it seeks can find more profitable employment with more attractive conditions of work in other sectors than libraries. The National Library of Lithuania also remains seriously understaffed, and relies heavily upon part time workers and students, but the reduced funding in 1999 drastically reduced the number of students it could employ.

The National Library of Finland was unable to appoint to permanent posts on the establishment because of budgetary cuts during the 1990's, but new staff could be hired for short-term contracts or special projects. It now has 168 permanent posts, but additional short-term staff, appointed mainly for development, research, and catalogue conversion work, brings the total numbers

up to about 200. The result has been that the average age of the permanent staff is now high, and there has been a considerable increase in the amount of sick leave. The library is concerned that younger staff are not being appointed to ensure good succession planning and the introduction of new skills and wider perceptions to the permanent staff. The library management is paying special attention to these difficult issues and has been taking special measures to improve the working environment for the benefit of staff. However, these measures have to be set against a background of major changes in the work undertaken, and many staff have found these changes difficult to accept.

The Bibliothèque nationale de France has lost some 57 permanent staff in the last twelve months, partly because greater staff movement to posts in other institutions led to some 120 resignations but only 80 replacement staff. 2,187 staff are now in post. Permanent positions were cut in Die Deutsche Bibliothek during the year from 650 to 616.5, but the freeze on filling posts, which had lasted from 1997 to autumn 1998, was lifted, and it was hoped that new vacancies could again be filled. The library was undertaking an organisation survey to help produce reliable data for calculating the right level of staffing. Constant inflation and instability in Russia continued to affect the Russian State Library where 795 posts in its establishment of 3060 remained unfilled. It too reports with concern that the average age of staff is increasing, and over 20 % are now over 55. There is a considerable movement of staff in the 18-25 year age range, and low salaries and difficult working conditions continue to affect recruitment and length of employment. Some 64.2 % of the staff are graduates, or are in university education. The National Library of Spain has experienced a considerable loss of technical experts as its staffing numbers have declined in recent years from 600 to fewer than 500. In 1998, it had 475 staff, and in 1999, this had fallen still further to 464. Again, it appears that technical staff can gain better salaries and promotion prospects in other employment, in particular in university libraries, other ministries and in the autonomous regions of Spain. This loss of personnel is particularly affecting the services offered to readers and the technical processing of incoming material, which is now almost impossible to keep up to date. The library has to rely on personnel supplied under contract by private firms and on student interns working under the supervision of experts.

Although the general trend during the year has been towards reducing the overall staff numbers employed, two libraries reported that they were able to hire additional staff. The National Library of Ireland obtained approval for a package of staffing measures for the second year in succession which included the creation of a number of additional posts at senior and middle management levels, as well as increases in staff in the technical services area. Notwithstanding these increases in the last two years, the shortage of staff in all areas continues to be a major constraint upon the improvement of service in the library, and in the development, processing and conservation of the col-

lections. The level of staffing required for the day-to-day operation of the reading rooms and other public services leave some areas of the library with virtually no staff at various times. The library is continuing to press for progressive increases in staff levels to meet identified needs. The National Library of Luxembourg also increased its staffing with an additional librarian and a computer specialist.

Staff Training

Changing technology and its impact on working methods, the emphasis upon service to readers and the need to develop a more flexible staff effective in managing resources have led to many libraries placing greater emphasis upon in service training. Among those reporting increased time spent on training are the Bibliothèque nationale de France which is giving emphasis to establishing new staff competences in information technology, particularly in the use of the Internet, in developing its reception services for the public, and in project management. The National Library of Iceland introduced new plans for training in 1999. Its scheme includes encouraging an increasing number of colleagues from foreign libraries to spend short periods at the national library either for training purposes or to study the library's operations. Six librarians from the Baltic States spent short periods in Iceland under this scheme. Staff in the National Library of Lithuania have been encouraged to develop their skills by attending foreign language courses and computer courses, and have participated in workshops, and undertaken training in libraries abroad. This work is being supported by the Open Society Institute, which is providing a grant to enable the library to establish a training programme in 2000. The entire staff of the National Library of Luxembourg attended data processing and computer training classes during the year. The Russian State Library successfully encourages staff to undertake evening courses in professional training at the Moscow State University and has reopened its own postgraduate education centre with the subjects of theses by postgraduate students forming part of the RSL's research work. In 1999, 571 members of staff undertook intensive foreign language courses and 135 people from 37 departments in the library undertook training seminars in computer literacy. Specialist courses for its own staff and for other organisations in the restoration of documents are also provided. The National Library of Slovenia also carries out an extensive education and training programme for its own staff and others. 1360 librarians attended courses organised by the library for basic, specialist and continuing library education.

TECHNICAL SERVICES

IT Developments

National libraries are investing heavily in upgrading their IT systems, establishing, or extending their local area networks and their facilities for communication by electronic means. In some cases, the investment is mainly in the purchase of additional personal computers, either for staff use or for use in the reading rooms, and, as the National Library of Cyprus points out, a number of libraries have been able to find funds for this thanks to the Year 2000 problem. Whilst the Year 2000 problem does not seem, so far, to have hit national libraries in the form of a major disaster, most libraries placing a heavy reliance on IT found it necessary to put in place various checks, and some software changes. The National Library of Ireland changed its main database server during the year to ensure Year 2000 compliance. It has also created two new posts for ICT work with the aim of providing better support for existing systems and achieving more rapid development of IT programmes.

With their increasing dependence upon IT systems, and the importance of the Internet in their communications, an urgent problem for a growing number of libraries is the need to strengthen anti-viral control, and improve the efficiency of their firewall systems. The Czech National Library included a programme for this work in its major new development strategies for IT. This was part of a wider programme for the enlargement of the capacity of its network in the main building, and its reinvestment in new servers. It has bought a new Alpha Server DS20 and is implementing the new ALEPH 500 library information system. Its digital library is to be served from a new SUN 450 Enterprise server supported by an ADIC Scalar robotic magnetic tape system.

In the British Library, IT now underpins all aspects of the library's work, including core services to both on-site and remote users. Information systems have been a vital element in opening and operating the reading room services in the library's new building at St Pancras. Access to the library's collection at the new building is principally via the St Pancras Integrated System, which generates reader passes, allows readers to search the eight million records in the library's Online Catalogue, and relays orders to the bookstores. The system handled almost a million requests in 1999-2000. Surveys show that users are satisfied with its performance. Following the opening of the final reading rooms at the new building in July 1999, the system was named as one of nine medallists in the prestigious British Computer Society Awards for IT, 1999. The library was successful in a field of ninety-one entrants, and was the only public sector medallist. The quality of the library's approach to IT was also recognised with the award of a National Heritage Museum of the Year Multi Media award to the 'Turning the Pages' multimedia system which allows

visitors to the library's galleries to browse through digital versions of its treasures. The library is already developing the next generation of St Pancras systems through its Access Development Programme. The existing online catalogue will be replaced with a 'Z39.50 compliant' system available for searching both in the reading rooms and remotely. It will be linked seamlessly with stand-alone catalogues for newspapers, manuscripts, and sound recordings. Key catalogues not already automated will also be added. In 1999-2000, users conducted 5 million searches on the current web version of the catalogue. Work continues on the Corporate Bibliographic System, which will integrate and underpin the library's cataloguing, bibliographic, and information systems. Implementation will commence in 2000. The system will support up to two thousand concurrent users and handle up to thirty million records.

The Bibliothèque nationale de France which broke with the agency commissioned to implement its IT system in July 1999, has taken in house the completion of the system for document delivery and has also begun to prepare new schedules for the implementation of its cataloguing and conservation systems. A call for tenders has been issued and the selection of a contractor is under consideration.

Integrated Library Systems

The ALEPH system is a popular choice for libraries upgrading their earlier integrated library systems. The National Library of Sweden installed ALEPH in April, and much of the year was devoted to ensuring that the system would function well. It has had a major impact on the working conditions of most staff and has brought particular benefits to the library's readers. The library is still developing its system for local loans, but users are already able to order books from their home computers. There has been a considerable increase in access and some 6,500 people visit the library's home page each day. The LIBRIS-system supporting the Swedish union catalogue is also undergoing changes. The library is not confident that a commercial system exists that will adequately meet the requirements of a modern national and regional union catalogue.² The contract the library placed with Dynix GmbH for a Horizon system to be delivered in 1998 has not yet been fulfilled, and the library has now decided to run in-house most of its computer systems, including its administrative systems. This meant that new competences had to be developed by the staff to maintain the hardware and software. A new computer-hall was created in the library to house the equipment. The library hopes that running its systems in house will lead to considerable savings in recurrent expenditure.

ALEPH 500 has also been installed by the Russian State Library under a pilot project for its integrated library system (the TACIS programme), and by the National Library of Luxemburg, which has successfully migrated its data from the SIBIL system. The National Library of Slovakia has upgraded its system to ALEPH 500 and has bought some 25 new PCs with additional funding from the Ministry. However, it reports that its IT development plans are delayed since it is suffering a critical shortage of specialist IT staff, mainly because of the low salaries it is forced to pay. ALEPH has also been bought by the National Library of Latvia, which has started to use the cataloguing and acquisition modules for its daily work. The reader service modules are being tested and will be implemented soon. The data prepared under the previous systems, VTLS and IS ALISE, have been uploaded into the ALEPH databases. The library has now finalised its computer network infrastructure that provides every workstation with access to local and Internet resources. While the network is capable of expansion, there is little space for the installation of additional workstations in the library. At present the library has 150, with five local PC servers and 10 workstations dedicated to network support tasks, including data fire walling, virus protection and back-up arrangements. The National Library of Hungary bought 150 state-of-the-art computers as part of its IT development programme. Unfortunately, it has had to delay the launch of its new advanced integrated library system, AMICUS.

The National Library of Estonia completed its installation of the INNOPAC library system during the year. The system covers cataloguing, acquisitions and reader services. The library has now a functioning database of readers, and issues books electronically. The translated web interface allows users to search the electronic catalogues at home or in the office. The National Library of Poland upgraded its INNOPAC software at the end of 1999 and has bought Windows client software for its cataloguing department. The library has commissioned expert advice to analyse the status and capacity of its local area network, which dates from 1996. As a result, a programme for upgrading has been established and work has begun on modernisation of those elements most critical to the performance of the LAN. A new information system is being implemented at the National Library of Portugal, and in 1999 modules for acquisition, bibliographic processing and the OPAC were successfully installed. A second phase covering circulation and document supply is to follow. The work builds on the experience gained since 1988 in developing and implementing automated systems, but this new phase has required considerable staff training. It has been necessary to translate screens and instructions into Portuguese. The National Library of the Ukraine continued its work on the creation of formatted structures. Specialists in the library concentrated on programmes for improving the search facilities for electronic catalogues through linguistic analysis. Databases of authority files for personal names of Ukrainian and Russian writers were created.

Work continues in the Vatican Library towards the provision of an integrated information system. During the year, the library has continued to define its formats for machine-readable cataloguing of older material, musical scores, and electronic documents. Further work is being done on the systemisation of indices of headings for personal and collective names with appropriate links across languages. Machine-readable cataloguing has been introduced in the Prints Cabinet, and a feature of the records is that they allow the reader to access a digitised image of the relevant item. The acquisition module of its integrated system was also activated during the year, as was a management system for handling periodicals. A study has been completed of the essential parameters for the module that will manage reader admissions. Information has been collected on electronic devices for the control and maintenance of inventories of material both in the reading rooms and in the storage areas.

A major effort has been made by the National Library of Norway to establish a well-functioning common ICT infrastructure. This included the provision of hardware components as well as routines and maintenance procedures. As part of the overall programme, video conferencing studios were established in both Oslo and Rana to improve contact between the physically remote staff of the library. During 1999, a structured, switchable, 100Mbps LAN was put in place in both divisions. The LAN was established using Ethernet switches from Cisco systems. The new solution is modular and may be upgraded to one Gbps LAN as the need for bandwidth grows. New cabling had to be installed to handle the higher bandwidth. To meet higher demands for availability, new and more powerful Novell servers were put into operation in 1999. At the same time, the most important UNIX-servers were upgraded and integrated in a cluster with common storage. All the critical components of the systems are now duplicated. To further improve availability, it was decided that the infrastructure should be extended to the homes of the most critical ICT personnel to enable them to check the systems every evening, as well as to perform maintenance operations if necessary. This procedure will be implemented early 2000.

Collaborative Work

Increasingly, national libraries are acting as a hub for area networks, and the year has seen further progress on collaborative schemes for IT development. On behalf of the universities and some other institutions, the National Library of Finland has been preparing to buy a new library automation system. After thorough testing, the Voyager system of Endeavor Information Systems Inc. was chosen for all participating libraries. The contract was signed on February 4, 2000. The majority of the participating libraries wanted to replace the

present network architecture, consisting of local installations, by mounting all databases on one common server. This allowed libraries to rid themselves of the basic maintenance of computers and to concentrate on developing their services. At the same time, they wanted to reduce the annual costs of the library system and to improve the level of maintenance support. The basic assumption was that due to the powerful academic data transmission network, FUNET, distance no longer causes constraints, and it is no longer important that the server should be in the vicinity of the library. Separate competitions for tender were arranged both for the purchase of the server and for the selection of the maintenance organization. Three different options were investigated: a centralized solution, a combination of 3-5 servers, and a fully decentralized solution. The centralized option proved to be by far the cheapest, when factoring in the annual maintenance and support costs. All 25 databases will be mounted on a common server which will be a powerful SUN E10000 maintained by the Centre for Scientific Computing CSC, a company owned by the Ministry of Education. CSC is also in charge of the academic data transmission network and the country's supercomputers. The National Library was authorized to sign the contracts, but the universities share the costs of the system. A consortium will be established and a formalized contract regulating the rights and duties of its members will be signed. Until another organization is established, the Council for Finnish University Libraries will continue functioning as the Project Steering Committee. The implementation of the system will be completed in June 2001. The National Library has been authorized to act as the administrator of the consortium and to represent the members in negotiations with the suppliers. The library feels that the consensus reached by the Finnish universities lays a firm foundation for a modern, powerful and economically advantageous library network. The polytechnics, convinced of the benefits, also want to become members of the consortium and negotiations with them begin in the autumn.

In Iceland, the committee appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture in 1998, with the task of making recommendations for the selection of a library system that could be adopted by all Icelandic libraries, including the National Library, issued an invitation for tender in January 2000. Eight tenders have been received from foreign suppliers of integrated library systems.

In Switzerland, the government carried out a major reorganisation of IT at the federal level (NOVE-IT), grouping all IT work into 7 departments, corresponding to the seven government ministries. As a result, at the end of 1999, the Swiss National Library's Computing Department was officially disbanded, although the staff will not be moved to the new centralised offices until some time during 2000. The only IT application excluded from this centralisation was the management of the library system software, VTLS, for which it is planned to establish a centre of expertise outside the federal

structure in co-operation with other federal libraries and the Swiss–French network of libraries (RERO). The library is concerned that this centralisation is fundamentally contradictory to the growing trend for management autonomy. However, it recognises that it is too early for it to measure the full effects of the reorganisation and the implications it will have for management and the library's move to greater control of its own affairs.

The implementation of the Lithuanian Integrated Library Information System (LIBIS) made good progress during the year. The cataloguing software was successfully adopted and extended to include the provision of name and subject authority files. ORACLE database control programmes have been installed in the workstations. Five new libraries have joined the development of the consortium using the system, and creating the union catalogue. An acquisition sub-system has also been launched. The Open Society Institute in Budapest provided financial support for the implementation of the software and the creation of computer networks in 11 public libraries. 3.5 million records in the card catalogues were scanned under the retrospective conversion programme, and OCR conversion, editing and restructuring of the scanned images has now begun. In Croatia, a number of integrated library systems exist, and, in 1998, 15 libraries initiated a co-operative cataloguing programme using the CROLIST library system. This allowed them to download full UNIMARC bibliographic records with the corresponding UNIMARC Authority records. The Computing Co-ordination Unit of the National Library of Spain has concentrated on increasing the functionality of the library's ARIADNE database with new modules for cataloguing the older material belonging to the libraries in the Association of National Libraries of Latin America (ABINIA), and for inter-library loans.

Cataloguing

The retrospective conversion programme for the catalogues of the Austrian National Library continues. The programme is based upon the initial creation of image catalogues and the subsequent transformation of them into bibliographic databases. Four image catalogues (Katzoom) are to be converted. The catalogues of printed books from 1501-1929 will soon be available on the ALEPH database, and work is proceeding for the catalogues of printed material from 1930-1991. The aim is to create a unified catalogue of all printed book holdings in the library from 1501 to the present day. For the first time it is now possible to undertake a common search of holdings in the collections of the departments of music, manuscripts, and the Austrian literary archives through the Union Catalogue for Literary Remains and Autographs (NAK). The catalogue, based on the ALLEGRO-HANS database used in

Germany, was enabled for Internet access in April 2000.³ The data will be extended over a period to include all the literary remains and autograph collections located within the library. The library also contributes this data to the European network of catalogues under the MALVINE project. As a first step in the creation of a digital picture archive, the complete catalogue of the picture and portrait archives containing 1.8 million documents will be transferred into electronic format. The Katzoom software will be specially adapted to undertake this work, and the catalogue should be available on the Internet by the end of 2000. The next step involves the creation of a picture database that provides a facility for selecting and transferring images to the user.

The National Library of Portugal has decided to speed up the process of converting its manual catalogues in order to support the automation of all user transactions. The library issued a call for tender to convert the remaining 250,000 catalogue cards, excluding the special collections and rare book catalogues, and work is to begin in the second half of 2000. The firm Jouve is now developing a special program to convert the old cards, some of which are in manuscript, and the majority of which were produced using different cataloguing rules. The retrospective conversion will be completed in 2002.

The National Library of Latvia, which in 1999 adopted both ISBD (M) and ISBD (S) as its national standards for descriptive cataloguing, has begun a retrospective conversion programme, funded by the Soros Foundation, for the National Bibliography from 1763. The printed bibliography will be scanned, converted from image to characters by OCR, and then processed into MARC format. In this format it will be entered into the ALEPH database within the ALEPH integrated library system installed in March 2000. Under the Czech National Library's retrospective conversion programme, over 100,000 records covering publications from 1928-1944 were added to the Czech National Bibliography. All the major National Library catalogues have now been scanned and some 5 million records are now available on the Internet.

The National Library of Norway has completed its retrospective conversion of the Norwegian National Bibliography back to 1940, and has completed its conversion of the periodicals catalogue, including some 30,000 cardex cards converted under Project FORTUNA. The National Library of Poland completed the conversion of its bibliographic and cataloguing databases from its own MARC format within its local MAK system, to US MARC for inclusion in the INNOPAC system. By December, this system included 318,000 bibliographic records of serials and almost 2000 records of documents of social life. Cataloguers have begun work on unifying and rearranging authority files for names, corporate names, and series.

The Bibliothèque nationale de France installed a new version of its catalogue of books and periodicals, BN-OPALE PLUS, on its website. This catalogue contains some 7,070,000 bibliographic records, and 3,525,000

authority records. Almost 5 million of these records have been provided through the retrospective conversion programme launched 8 years ago and completed in July 1999. In May 2000, 730,000 records for audio-visual and multimedia documents were added to BN-OPALE Plus. The retrospective conversion of the map and plan catalogues, of prints and photographs, and 'fonds anciens' from the Arsenal Library are to follow. The National Library of the Netherlands is developing an integrated catalogue incorporating the general catalogue, special collections, journal articles, digital material, and Internet sources. It is expected that this will be available in the second half of 2000, on its restyled website. The Russian State Library has translated US MARC into Russian for standard cataloguing purposes in preparation for its use of the ALEPH 500 system. The guidelines for creating machine-readable records in US MARC format were prepared for book and serial publications.

It is clearly with a sense of triumph in their accomplishment that the National Library of Ireland reports that the cataloguing of books published in Ireland is now up to date for the first time since 1994. Work has begun on cataloguing the substantial backlog of second-hand material using the OCLC service. Cataloguers continue to work on a contract basis to clear the backlog. It would be splendid if the example of Ireland would act as a spur to those many libraries where a backlog is considered not only to be a normal part of daily life, but also a requirement for any well organised cataloguing department. Unfortunately, there is always something more exciting to do, some other priority to follow, or some minutiae of cataloguing practice or significant rule change to occupy us. Perhaps it is too much to suggest, nowadays, that the clearing of backlogs might in fact contribute more to improving access by readers to material they might need than many expensive schemes for digitisation of the collections. It is nevertheless true that an uncatalogued book will not be found by a reader whatever the sophistication of Internet access to the catalogues.

THE DIGITAL LIBRARY

The term *digital library* still seems to have many meanings. At one level, it means little more than the provision of digitised catalogues within the library or on the Internet which can be used to verify what material the library holds (and which might also be used for bibliographical research into the history of the book, or of libraries and their collections). At the other extreme, the more generally held public perception is that all the content that a library has hitherto held in paper documents is now, or will shortly be, available anywhere in the world on a PC screen. To others it is the creation of collections of digital forms of communication, anything from an e-mail archive to a

collection of electronic journals. For some it is the solution to the problem of preservation of the content of books, journals, and manuscripts; to others it is on-line document supply on demand. However the digital library is defined, it appears to imply that the dream of universal access to information is about to be realised, and that many of the problems that librarians have struggled with will be resolved with a click of a mouse.

The reality is of course that the new technology does not displace the old. We are no nearer the paperless society. Creating any practical form of digital library presents a new range of problems for the librarian in addition to the traditional problems. The danger is that dealing with these new problems might easily divert too many resources from the traditional tasks and needs of the readers. Dealing with digitised information is still a small part of the work of any library, and the production of printed books, reports, pamphlets, and journals continues to grow. The demand for information from conventional sources continues to grow, and has to be met with what seem to be fewer resources. Our colleagues in conservation departments rightly consider that digital formatting does not guarantee conservation of content. The traditional technology of conservation must continue to be employed and developed, at the same time that new technologies and routines are developed for the preservation of digital data. The need for heavy investment in electronic systems, in wide band communication systems, and in technically skilled staff inevitably requires the diversion of funds from other work, or justification for an increased budget. The work of a national library as a permanent repository of the written cultural history, and the primary task of providing service to readers from that repository, can easily be downgraded in favour of making electronic access to material that may well be easily accessible without a national library. Expectations and promises are in abundant supply; delivery and reader satisfaction are less easily achieved.

The investment national libraries are making in the new technology is very high, and in many libraries far exceeds the resources that are put into acquisition, collection development, conservation and conventional access. The annual reports suggest that a clear unified view of the objectives in creating a digital library is only now beginning to emerge, and that progress, although it may be exciting, is still for the most part across a limited range of deliverables. Improved remote access to the actual content of our libraries is being achieved, but, as yet, in a fragmented manner. For many, who find from our on-line catalogues that we have a copy of the work they need, there often remains a real problem in consulting that work in a timely efficient and user friendly way. As someone recently remarked, the superhighway often leads to the impenetrable stack aisle.

Standards and Rights

Standards for the unambiguous identification, authentication, and retrievability of Internet resources continue to be discussed at an international level, and Die Deutsche Bibliothek takes a keen interest in such work. It is particularly interested in the development of numeration systems for digital publications such Digital Object Identifiers (DOI) and Uniform Resource Names (URN). The former have been developed by the DOI Foundation and have been applied on an international level by publishers primarily for their own products. As national libraries have to process and index non-book trade publications in addition to publisher's products, the Conference of Directors of National Libraries (CDNL) and CENL have opted to use identifiers within the URN system. DDB is preparing testing projects for use with both systems, relating to allocation of identifiers, administration and use of both DOIs and URNs.

Many libraries report that they are involved in discussions relating to the complex world of copyright agreements for the storage of digital data, and the provision of access to it. Often these discussions arise from broader discussions focussed upon the need for the extension of legal deposit arrangements for digital materials, or the implementation of enhanced deposit arrangements. Generally, it appears easier to reach agreement upon arrangements for holding and providing access to physical digital media, for example CDROM and DVD, than it does for creating or accessing digital archives from material accessible on-line. It appears that the benefits of remote access to such digital artefacts is often limited or negated by agreements that limit access to use in reading rooms and will not allow off-site access.

Access to Content

Although I have suggested that the digitisation of content is at present fragmented, as will be seen below, a number of very impressive programmes have begun. The major themes for these programmes are selectively to bring together texts and images from well-defined areas of cultural interest. In some cases, programmes are also driven by conservation priorities to limit access to originals.

In terms of access to digitised content, the Bibliothèque nationale de France has made considerable progress in establishing a working digital library. It has carried out a feasibility study to allow it to offer integrated access to its electronic resources and to on line databases and serials by the end of 2000 through the creation of a public intranet that provides controlled access to the Internet through terminals in its reading rooms. Since July 2000, the library has offered free access with no charges to readers to its GALLICA 2000

database.⁴ This contains 250 periodical titles, some 35,000 images and 1,240 titles set up to test on-line searching of the Bibliothèque nationale de France digitised collections, together with fixed image collections produced jointly with the Musée de l'Homme, the Maison Pierre Loti and the National School of Civil Engineering Document Centre. Although GALLICA currently focuses on the 19th century in France, the material being added will provide a much wider historical perspective. At the heart of this collection is an encyclopaedic collection of material from the middle ages to the dawn of the 20th century to which are being added thematic collections, archival documents, and material from collaborative heritage projects. GALLICA 2000 thus provides students, researchers and the general public with opportunities to consult contemporary editions, reference texts and monographs, rare periodicals and early images (prints and photographs), many of which had previously been difficult to locate. Data base contents may be searched via an indexed bibliography, or in full text through monograph and journal contents lists. Users may also access the contents through a chronological subject-based overview of the entire database. For non-specialists in particular, navigating is greatly facilitated by the hypertext links provided in a general introduction to the GALLICA collection.⁵

The opening of GALLICA 2000 has led to a major increase in connections to the website. In the first five months, the number of daily hits rose to 409,201 of which 290,439 were to the home page, 73,452 to GALLICA, and 45,407 to BN-OPALE PLUS. The BnF has negotiated with publishers to obtain rights to provide internal site access to all digitised documents, and in certain cases, the right to make these available over the Internet. It also participates in the work to create international standards for the long-term preservation and archiving of electronic documents, through the NEDLIB project and through the research programmes of the Research Library Group (RLG) in the USA in digital preservation. It has particular interest in the archiving of electronic documents on the Internet from the perspective of a widening of the legislation on legal deposit to include such material.

The digital library of Die Deutsche Bibliothek is being extended and improved. Since March 1999, the first completely digitised periodicals from the collections of Deutsches Exilarchiv 1933-1945 have been made available on the Internet, as has the collection of Exile literature held by the library. A project for digital processing, cataloguing, and archiving for the creation of a distributed information system for legal sources was completed in the middle of the year. The project, jointly undertaken with the Bavarian State Library, was mainly concerned with the preservation of original sources and was funded by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft. The Library is also actively involved in project CORC (Co-operative Online Resource Catalogue) that was initiated by OCLC at the beginning of 1999. The intention is to create an international, co-operative, retrieval database for Internet resources. It aims to

make it possible to compile a database of records of diverse origins, processed according to divergent rules or produced from diverse data formats.

The National Library of Iceland hopes during 2000 to complete the SAGANET project for the digitisation of several hundred pages of Icelandic Saga manuscripts and printed material. It is also preparing a project for converting all nineteenth century Icelandic newspapers into digital form, using both scanned images and OCR.

A number of libraries also report good progress on projects for electronic access to digital journals. The National Library of Finland, which has incorporated its National Electronic Library Programme, FinELib, into its regular work, is preparing a national digitisation programme within a policy adopted by the Council of Finnish University Libraries. It has established a new steering committee for this programme consisting of top-level representatives of the university and research community. Its intention is to improve the visibility of the programme and to increase its coverage beyond the academic community. The programme involves a number of participating libraries, and has an annual grant of six million Euro, which is supplemented by further funding from the universities. About 80 % of the central fund is being used to purchase licences to electronic publications and the remainder for developmental projects. Licences for some 3,000 scientific journals and 80 databases have been acquired. The most important development work is to create a common portal for all electronic services, and to provide search tools to full text journals. It will be based on OCLC WebZ, a Z39.50 gateway. The library is also investigating the use of using ENCompass software developed by Endeavor Inc. The National Library will establish a digitisation centre, and will develop a programme for digitising older newspapers from microfilm, using OCR for text searching.⁶

The National Library of Latvia is undertaking a digitisation programme to assist with the preservation of older periodicals. The output will be in PDF format, accessible by the Internet and CD-ROMs will also be produced. A second digitisation project covers its photographic collections, including negatives from which prints have never been made. The Lithuanian National Library is preparing projects for the conversion of older materials, including manuscripts and the Judaica collection of periodicals and books. It has submitted preliminary proposals to the Open Society Lithuanian Foundation and to the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme.

The National Library of Estonia, a library that is taking a number of initiatives in these matters, has started a pilot project, the Electronic System of Articles (ARES) for the input of full texts of four Estonian research journals in the NLE server in order to archive them and make them publicly accessible. The analytical entry in the INNOPAC catalogue contains a link to the corresponding full text. The library is also providing remote as well as local access to the database of Estonian newspapers through its Index Scriptorum

Estoniae. The database is updated daily. It is about to launch a new project, the Electronic Preservation of the Estonian Humanities National Memory (HERMES), which will provide full text access to items of cultural and historical importance (old maps, manuscripts, photographs, and archival documents), through an electronic archive. Priority will be given to digitising unique copies and endangered items. Electronic access to digital surrogates of rare materials of value to the cultural heritage is offered through the *Memoriae Mundi Series Bohemica* programme of the National Library of the Czech Republic, as a component in a new national programme for cultural policy. This uses the SGML-based Digitisation of Old Books and Manuscripts (DOBM) format, adopted by UNESCO for its Memory of the World Programme, as a common metadata container for complex documents. The library has installed equipment with a storage capacity of 2.3 terabytes to deal with its digital collections, and has been testing various emerging digital formats and compression systems. It is preparing to launch its programme for the bibliographical control of Czech electronic documents in 2000 and will offer access to full texts of newspaper and journal articles following a successful test period in 1999. Its electronic document delivery service from in house materials was launched with the full functioning of the digital library in April 2000.

As the number of digital items in the collections grows, a robust infrastructure capable of handling digital information over a long period becomes an essential element in the successful development of the digital library. Under its Digital Library Programme, the British Library proposes to implement a 'digital library' infrastructure - the Digital Library System - to store the growing output of published digital products and digitised parts of the collection, and to provide wider and faster access to these holdings. It will ensure that in the new digital environment the British Library remains the major source of information serving scholarship, research, and innovation in the United Kingdom. This 'digital library', which will be implemented in 2001, supports the UK Government's initiatives on the 'information society' and the four objectives of the Department for Culture, Media and Sport as set out in its strategic document, *A New Cultural Framework*. These four objectives are:

- The promotion of access for the many not just the few through remote access to catalogues and the digital collection;
- The pursuit of excellence and innovation in academia and science-based industries through digital document delivery services, including research articles and patents, vital for scholarship and industrial research and development;

- The nurturing of educational opportunity through online connections to networks serving education, all sectors of which would wish to access the collections for student and faculty use;
- The fostering of the creative industries through remote online access to the UK's pre-eminent cultural holdings in the arts and humanities.

The library has already begun implementing other measures to provide reading room and remote access to digital materials. It is placing a high priority on collecting digital materials and is acquiring appropriate items by purchase and voluntary deposit as it awaits introduction of legislation to extend legal deposit to UK non-print publishing. During the year, the library installed a new system for accessing CD-ROMs and DVDs in the reading rooms. It also implemented an electronic storage and retrieval system providing access to over nine hundred major science serial titles both in the reading rooms and by remote document supply. The library is seeking to secure further agreements with publishers for electronic storage and delivery. Prototype support systems are being developed. Web initiatives included improvements to the web version of the inside service, which provides contents information on journals and conference proceedings, and document ordering facilities. More than three quarters of the requests for remote access to the library's collection handled by the Document Supply Centre at Boston Spa are now sent electronically. The library's main website attracts over 3m 'transactions' a month. It plans to introduce new web-based services for a general audience.

In the first initiative of its kind by a government-funded body, the British Library held a live Online Open Meeting on the Internet in March 2000 to publicise its latest *Annual Report* and to stimulate discussion with key stakeholders. The meeting was the library's response to challenges posed by the Cabinet Office document *Quangos: opening the doors* to make the operations of public bodies more open, accountable, and effective. Hundreds of the library's users around the world took part.

The National Library of Norway has been developing an infrastructure for storage through its concept of the digital safe deposit box. This disk-based system can hold two terabytes of data. The storage system is connected to the Unix clusters via Fibre Channel with full duplication of all Storage Area Network components. In 2000, the system will be extended to include secondary storage as well as additional disks. The total capacity planned for the end of 2000 will be some 20 terabytes. The rules for formats, quality control, and identification, and those for metadata and the migration of digital data will be established early in 2000. The library has digitised some 50,000 pages from a Norwegian newspaper, and these are to be made available on the Internet. A microfilm scanner has been upgraded to handle grey-scale, and the

capacity for the digitisation of photographs has been expanded by the use of a hybrid camera handling exposure to film base and digitisation in one operation. The library is now using five digital cameras. A major strategic collaboration with the National Broadcasting Corporation for the establishment of a common digital radio archive has led to a programme for the digitisation of historical sound collections, and a network based on the legal deposit of new broadcasts. The common digital archive will link production systems and databases at the Broadcasting Corporation and the National Library. Some 50,000 hours of broadcasting covering the period 1934-2000 will be included in the programme. The capacity for digitisation is about 9000 hours per year. The material will be digitised in full linear quality (48KHz, 16bit) for preservation purposes and kept on line in full production quality (384kbps MPEG) as well as in browse quality (64kbps Real Audio). A documentation project on Norwegian emigration to North America in the 19th and twentieth centuries aims to develop a bi-lingual web-site giving access to bibliographic entries, parts of monographs, serial articles, letters, photographs sound and film recordings. The library expects to complete this programme in 2000 in time for the 175th anniversary of the first emigration.

Several digitisation projects are in progress at the National Library of the Netherlands, as part of its development of the KB as a virtual library, a declared objective of the library.⁷ The National Library and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam are collaborating to produce *The Digital Historical Atlas*. This project aims to provide improved access to digitised seventeenth century Dutch pamphlets (KB), historical prints, and commemorative medals (Rijksmuseum), through a specially developed website. The library has been gaining valuable experience through this project, and in 1999, it established a digitisation laboratory and a National Digitisation Office to co-ordinate programmes for the digitisation of the Dutch cultural and intellectual heritage on a national scale.

Digitisation of cultural heritage material is the main objective of the work being undertaken in the National Library of Portugal. Within the *Bibliotheca Universalis* project, the library has begun digitising material relating to Portuguese travel and exploration. The first theme focuses on the discovery and exploration of Brazil. The digitisation programme for the Portuguese written heritage aims to make the complete works of major Portuguese writers available in electronic format. During the course of this year, the works of Castilho and Eça de Queirós have been digitised, together with bio-bibliographic information and relevant images. Statistics of visits and comments received via the web show that these digital collections are widely appreciated not only in Portugal but also in many other countries. Work continues on the digitisation of literary archives held by the library, and these are being made available for consultation within the library. Work is also beginning on two

other projects in collaboration with the University of Lisbon, concerning the canons of the Portuguese language and of Portuguese Literature.

The Russian State Library under its programme for the Open Russian Electronic Library (OREL) is also working on full text digitisation. The digitisation of 12,000 pages of early books in Cyrillic-script has been completed and can be accessed through the Internet.⁸ The Slovak National Library, although it has not yet begun a systematic programme of digitisation because of lack of funds, is participating in the Memory of the World Programme and has scanned a medieval antiphonar in its collections uniting three parts held by three different libraries. Anticipating the introduction of the new legal deposit laws now before parliament, the National Library of Sweden has received additional funding to collect and store electronic material captured from Swedish sources on the Internet. This programme, which began in 1996, has so far made six different harvestings of material and there are now 36 million web pages in computer storage. High priority during the year was given to refining search functions, and it is now possible to find material in all six harvestings and follow and analyse the development of different home pages.

The National Library of Switzerland is collaborating with other libraries and museums in a programme to test the feasibility of creating a national union catalogue of posters. The first stage of the project is a prototype catalogue containing 1,500 digitised posters and their descriptions. MEMORIAV, the Association for the preservation of the audiovisual heritage of Switzerland⁹ has funded a part-time cataloguer in 1999 and 2000, and has covered the costs of digitising 1,500 posters from the SNL collection, using as a basis the Ectachromes or slides previously prepared for a print publication. The test set of posters represents prize-winning Swiss posters from 1941 to 1998. By the end of 1999, around 200 posters had been catalogued and all 1,500 posters digitised. Work on cataloguing will continue in 2000, with the help of colleagues from the participating institutions. The prototype will serve as a showcase in the search for sponsors to support the development of the union catalogue.

The Vatican Library is making the riches of the Print Cabinet more accessible through a project for the retrieval of digital images using the catalogue reference to the items. The process of making 60,000 images of illuminated codices has begun, and this project will be used as a pilot for creating a digitised catalogue of the library's manuscript holdings.

SERVICES

Almost every library reports increased demand for its services. The National Library of Croatia is now open for 72 hours per week and its new building is heavily used, especially by students. More than 17,000 subject searches were made and over 22,000 bibliographic enquiries were satisfied. In addition, over 240,000 bibliographic searches were undertaken over the Internet. A considerable increase is also reported of the number of users who are consulting the library's home page, and there are plans to revise its design and content. Regular training courses for users are organised twice each week, and a number of seminars were held for librarians from throughout Croatia. The National Library of Latvia, where despite shortages of staff, use of the library continues to increase substantially, doubling in the last ten years, has opened a new Internet reading room. The Russian State Library has also opened a new reading room for access to the Internet and to electronic documents and databases. This accommodates 40 readers, and there are currently 15 fully equipped workstations, which will be increased as new equipment is bought. In the first month, 1,548 readers used the new facility. The cost of the service depends upon the type of resources used and there are discounts for people of limited means, but prices are lower than those charged by commercial Internet cafeterias. The library's ability to provide a high level service as the national centre for interlibrary loans was improved by the introduction of full cost recovery of postal expenses using International Postal Union coupons. The National Library of Poland opened a new reading room for consultation of documents on social sciences, and preparations are in hand to open a new audio-visual reading room. The library has 600 reader places for its 217,462 users and in 1999 supplied some 795,000 volumes, 40,000 microfilms, 40,000 prints and engravings and 200,000 photocopies to meet their needs. Users have access to various CD databases, on-line catalogues, and bibliographic databases from dedicated terminals in the reading rooms. The newly renovated reading rooms of the National Library of Finland have allowed the library to provide an open access collection that has doubled in size. Whilst the working conditions in the new rooms are excellent, the introduction of new services in the old historical buildings is not an easy task, and it is clear that a number of adaptations will be needed in the future. Users have been following the changes keenly, and whilst they have been generally accepted once the readers were familiar with the proposals, the changes proposed for the important Slavonic Library led to protests from foreign scholars.

The Bibliothèque nationale de France has placed particular importance on the improvement of services to readers during the last year. At the Bibliothèque François Mitterand and in its research library, it has been possible to order, for delivery the same day, 10 printed documents (5 on

Saturdays) and 8 microforms to which can be added deferred requests up to a total of 25. The time taken to provide readers with immediate requests has been speeded up and in May 2000, 74 % of documents were made available within 45 minutes. In addition, it has been possible to make reservations for places in the reading room via the library's website since March 2000. These improvements have been accompanied by a revision of the access charges by means of supplements for particular services, for example for cards giving access both to the reading rooms and to the exhibitions, and by better recognition of the real needs of readers in terms of consultation of material. During the first half of 2000, an average of 1,014 readers used the Tolbiac research library each day and 3,261 documents were made available to them, an increase of 12 % and 29 % respectively over the figures for 1999. This is, however, a light reflection of the frequency of use of the overall study facilities, since the new reading rooms of the public information library at Tolbiac caters for 2,409 readers each day, and the Richelieu site, which has now stabilised its readership, attracts 324 readers each day and makes available 26,484 documents each month. To improve its knowledge of those using the reading rooms and those visiting the exhibitions at Tolbiac, the BnF undertook a new survey in spring 2000. This revealed that a relatively stable cross-section of the public used the library, that there was an adequate level of collections available to them, that the open access collections had been widened, and, in retrospect, that there was a good level of user satisfaction.

Despite all the controversy, and often-hostile opposition to the British Library's plans for the new building at St Pancras during the years of its construction, the new building has proved to be hugely successful with the library's users. The reading rooms provide a superb working environment and greatly enhanced levels of service. The software systems, handling the entire process of locating and delivering any one of 12 million volumes to any of the 11 reading rooms, has continued to work without a major hitch from day one. With the move to St Pancras completed, the British Library concentrated on conducting the largest ever consultation exercise to find out what users and stakeholders want from their national library. This provided a range of useful information, and helped determine the priorities for the future. Guided by the views expressed, the library's task of planning and implementing change is underway. As custodian of the nation's written heritage, the library's priority this year was to make that heritage available to the widest possible audience, through the reading rooms and by remote document supply, through the exhibition galleries and by ensuring the widest participation in its educational programmes and events. In the first full year of operation, 43,000 new passes were issued. Over 600,000 visitors were received at St Pancras, 880,000 items were supplied to reading rooms, and over 4.2 million documents were supplied remotely through the Document Supply Service.

Two user surveys were conducted by the National Library of the Netherlands under its programme for marketing the library, attracting new readers, and stimulating use of the library. Former users were asked why they did not continue their membership. It appeared that most reasons for ceasing to use the library lay outside the library's control, and that there was little the library could do to prevent most cancellations of membership. New users were asked how they had heard about the National Library, for example, from public libraries, universities or from journals. In seeking to reach potential readers, the library will focus more on publicity through the sources identified. It is also experimenting with extended opening hours and preparing an electronic newsletter for interested readers.

Die Deutsche Bibliothek again reports an increase in the number of users in the reading rooms, which, although it is very gratifying, poses great problems for the library. It has undertaken extensive discussions to find solutions to these problems. However, with a declining number of permanent positions, temporary staff had to be employed to avoid loss of quality of service. The reading rooms are frequently full and overcrowded, and the number of workstations available has been extended as far as possible. One possible solution to ease overcrowding in the main reading rooms is to improve the remote supply of documents. In collaboration with the Technical Information Library in Hanover, the library has developed a document delivery system building upon the Z39.50 interface. The system functions as a Document Ordering and Delivery Station for the SUBITO-group of libraries, and Die Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft is supporting the development of the workstation.

The National Library of Lithuania, which newly registered almost 15,000 readers in 1999, bringing its total readership to 55,961, provides 570 desks in the reading rooms. It serviced 456,299 reader visits and retrieved 1.5 million documents for readers during the year. Library services were improved by installing 27 reader terminals to help meet the demand for information searches into local and on-line databases. The number of remote users has also grown and the website has been upgraded. A project to improve audio and video facilities has been prepared and submitted to the Japanese government for consideration under its cultural support programme. In 2000, modern audio-visual equipment will be installed in the music and arts reading rooms. The National Library of Slovenia has 11,200 registered readers of whom some 7,500 are students. During the year, 200,000 reader visits were made, and about 3,500 new readers were registered. Unfortunately, the library was unable because of lack of staff, and because of the renovations to its building, to extend its opening hours, but a newly reorganised information centre with 18 networked computers has greatly improved access to information. Renovations to the buildings are thought to be the main cause of a 9.43 % decrease in the number of users visiting the National Library of

Spain during the year. However, the library reports that there was an extraordinary increase in the number of readers who consulted the indexes and catalogues through the Internet; these exceeded the number who visited the library in person. The Vatican Library instituted a new office for bibliographic information, and appointed a specialised reference librarian for this area of work. The work involves both direct contact and contact by mail, telephone and electronically with scholars.

The National Library of the Czech Republic adopted a new pricing structure for services and a new version of its regulations. The subscription fee paid by library users was increased substantially but the library considers that the new level of charges is not a deterrent to readers who now all pay the same fee, except for senior citizens over the age of seventy for whom admission is free. Free access to the Internet is generally included in the subscription, but the growth in use may lead the library to consider charging in the future. A new reference centre serving as a gateway to the library's reference services was opened. Charges for photocopying and reproduction services were increased by the National Library of Hungary, which also placed an embargo on readers taking their own books into the reading rooms. Under a nationwide regulation introduced in 1999, smoking is now prohibited in all parts of the library buildings. New regulations were also prepared and published by the National Library of Portugal in order to help set up a new framework for the relationship between the library and its users, and to take account of the introduction of electronic facilities into traditional services such as document supply. A questionnaire has been prepared for readers to provide guidance on how the library meets their needs and to help in the determination of priorities for changes and improvement to services. This type of survey will become a regular part of the monitoring procedures for assessing the performance of the library.

LEGAL DEPOSIT

The much-debated amendment to Austrian media law has now been passed by parliament, extending legal deposit from printed materials to all kinds of publications on physical media excluding sound and picture carriers. The legal deposit of electronic off-line publications has now been regulated, although the arrangements do not apply to on-line networked publications. The Austrian National Library is however undertaking a pilot project for acquiring the latter. The National Library of Croatia under its Library Law of 1997 also receives, by legal deposit, digital publications on physical media, but the deposit law does not extend to on-line publications. During the year two CD-ROMs were deposited, compared with 6,228 book titles. The existing law of

legal deposit in the Czech Republic explicitly includes only audio CD publications, and the National Library is obtaining these and building a CD archive. However, the library claims that since the law does not specify the information carrier to be deposited, it remains a matter of interpretation whether publishers are required to deposit electronic publications. There are no plans to change the law at present, but the library is urging publishers to deposit electronic publications in physical formats. In Finland, the final government proposals for the new Legal Deposit Act will be sent to Parliament following a period of discussion. This will cover the deposit of all types of electronic publication, and will modify the number of copies of traditional publications to be deposited. To secure a legal basis for the handling and use of electronic legal deposit, the copyright regulations will also be revised. This may cause some delay in the enactment of the new Legal Deposit law since the government has to await the decisions and directives of the European Union concerning copyright. The library has been instrumental in drafting the new law and its proposals are based upon its understanding of developments in other countries and its own development work. Publishers have shown interest in the possibilities of solving their own archiving needs and some of them obviously hope that the library will provide these through legal deposit. The proposals allow the library to offer a neutral and permanent authentication service. A consensus view has now been formed that the Act should be amended to include the deposit of radio and television programmes, and that the National Library should be responsible for archiving these. However, more time will be needed to prepare an appropriate proposal and resolve the financial issues relating to this additional deposit. Concerned by the cost and logistic problems of receipt and distribution of the six copies of each printed work deposited, the library has explored the possibilities for outsourcing the whole process. After a full analysis of the details of the whole chain of work, it has been surprised to discover that it is cheaper to continue to perform the work within the library.

Die Deutsche Bibliothek has through the Working Group on Electronic Deposit presented its conclusions relating to the amendment of the law of legal deposit to the Committee of Publishers of the Börsenverein des Deutschen Buchhandels. The working group consists of representatives of five publishers and the DB and is elaborating the conditions under which voluntary deposit of networked publications should be achieved. Model contracts concerning usage of commercial electronic publications offered via the Internet by the publishers were designed. These describe the legal deposit arrangements at the DB and the form of permission needed to access commercial electronic publications free of charge in the reading rooms. External access via the library is subject to licensing arrangements. The presentation of the results of the working group's deliberations to the Publisher's Committee and its

subsequent agreement to the proposals has brought the amendment of the deposit law nearer to realisation.

The National Library of the Netherlands, after working with bilateral agreements with a few publishers for the past years, has now reached a general agreement with the Dutch Publishers Association for the deposit of electronic publications. IBM Digital Library software is used as an autonomous host system to support the storage, retrieval, and accessibility of electronic documents. The government has agreed to subsidise further development of the deposit of electronic publications over the next three years, and the library hopes to expand its deposit collections to include both off-line and on-line electronic publications. It believes that an improved technical infrastructure is required to ensure the controlled storage and preservation and the completeness and availability of electronic documents. In 1999, it took the first steps towards the realisation of an overall deposit system for electronic publications. A request for information was sent to a limited number of ICT companies that might be capable of building the system, and a European tender procedure has been begun, based upon the information supplied in the responses to the request.

In Iceland, the present legislation on legal deposit dates from 1977 and only refers to printed materials and sound recordings. In a new bill, based upon proposals drafted by a committee chaired by the National Librarian, electronic data is to be included both in hard format and from the Internet, although it is recognised that receipt, conservation, and access to electronic data is technically and legally complicated. The National Library will receive all electronic data under the bill, and the National Film Archive will be responsible for deposited film, videotape, television, and radio broadcasts. The proposal extends the deposit of film to include foreign films with Icelandic subtitles or dubbed into Icelandic.

Electronic publications are already deposited in the National Library of Spain since the law provides for the receipt of publications in any medium, although this concept in effect limits the deposit to electronic media in physical formats such as diskettes, CD-ROM, CD-Audio, and DVD. To date the law has not been interpreted to cover networked electronic publications. A special section in the National Library database has been created for electronic publications. The records are in MARC Format for Electronic Resources. At present 1,640 electronic documents are recorded in the database.

In Ireland, it is expected that new legislation, including revised provisions for legal deposit will be enacted in 2000 following discussion of the new copyright and related rights legislation now before parliament.

The following countries are among those seeking to enlarge legal deposit to cover electronic publications: Liechtenstein, Portugal, where a pilot project has been undertaken with selected universities for the legal deposit of theses

in electronic formats, Sweden, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom where the British Library is in the meantime working to achieve a code of practice for the voluntary deposit of all non-print publications.

Meanwhile, the legal deposit of printed materials remains a difficult task for many. In Lithuania, the National Library reports that, with the increasing range and cost of production, publishers are increasingly reluctant to supply legal deposit copies free of charge. Some 13-15 copies of each publication should be delivered to Lithuanian libraries, and of these, four should be deposited in the national library. However, only 1-2 copies are being delivered to the library. The library continues to place emphasis on claiming missing titles, rather than additional copies, and spends considerable effort trying to trace these. The publishers often decline to deposit any audio-visual or electronic documents. The National Library of Poland has similar problems in obtaining its entitlement of two copies, and estimates that only 80 % of national book production reaches the library. In 1999, it undertook systematic 'counselling' of publishers in respect of the legal deposit requirement. The National Library of Slovenia continues to stress to new publishers, of which there are many, the obligation upon them to deposit all their publications, and to place emphasis upon claiming missing titles.

The Russian State Library hosted an all-Russian Conference on legal deposit in September 1999, attended by over 1,000 delegates from libraries, archives, publishing houses, and scientific institutions. The conference sent a number of proposals to the State Duma in support of stronger legislation to support legal deposit, including heavier penalties for non-compliance. The proposals included the development of a national system for the exchange of bibliographic data between the Russian Book Chamber and regional library hubs to ensure better control over deposit, and sought new legislation to require the deposit of networked electronic publications. A standing group is drawing up draft legislation for the enlargement of the deposit to include audio-visual production and electronic publications. The draft will define the number of copies to be deposited and the recipients of these copies.

ACQUISITIONS

The lack of resources for acquiring books and journals continues to cause serious concern. The Czech National Library reports that the crisis in its acquisitions budget is more serious than ever before. The National Library of Cyprus considers its budget for books to be 'grossly inadequate' but also says that with its current shortage of staff it would not have been able to spend a larger budget or afford to process more books. The annual acquisition budget for the Bibliothèque nationale de France fell by some 26 %, which translated

to a reduction of 12.5 % in the number of monographs bought. The National Library of Lithuania cut its rate of acquisition substantially. 10,000 fewer items were acquired, and the library's acquisition of older material was very restricted, as was its purchase of Western literature. However, it was able to buy almost 1,000 Russian books at low cost with the assistance of Open Society Lithuanian Foundation. The National Library of Slovakia's restricted acquisition budget meant that it was able to buy directly only 34 foreign titles, and its exchange programme was limited to 2,134 titles. It purchased only 860 documents from within the country. It considers that its low purchasing power endangers the fundamental function of the library as the law defines it. Although the National Library of Switzerland received a special budget to buy some 12,000 items for its new open access area, its normal acquisition budget was cut in both 1999 and early in 2000. Since it is expecting to increase its subscriptions to electronic services as part of its obligation within the national consortium set up to provide these services, its selection criteria for acquisitions will need to be more restrictive this year. Several libraries also report a continuing decrease in the number of international exchange partners. The National Library of Latvia, which has exchange agreements with 73 partners in 26 countries, blames the continued fall in the number of partners upon its inability to cover the postage costs of exchanges.

On the other hand, it is encouraging to report that a number of libraries were able to increase their expenditure on acquisitions in real terms. The National Library of Ireland increased its expenditure on acquisitions by 12.6 % over the 1998 figure. It also benefited from the donation of several notable collections including 2,300 books and pamphlets documenting the Irish experience in America. Funding for acquisitions in the Russian State Library also improved in 1999. It was able to increase its purchases of material for its collections and for exchange purposes, and to undertake its full programme for periodical acquisition. Nevertheless, the library does not consider its funding to be adequate, and it has not been able to provide adequate reference material in its reading rooms, or to fund improvements in its special collections, although it was able to acquire 64 rare and precious items from the 17th and 18th centuries. Under a national plan drawn up by the National Library of the Netherlands to strengthen humanities collections, the library received a substantial grant from the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research which enabled it to buy almost 6,000 extra publications, most of them being unique titles in the Netherlands. A follow up application for further funding has been prepared. Faced with the knowledge that it cannot expect a major structural increase in its collection development budget, the library has decided to focus its acquisition policy towards its scholarly collections. More emphasis will be put on the humanities and, to distinguish itself from university libraries, the National Library will place greater emphasis upon acquiring popular culture.

In line with the strongly expressed external views from its Strategic Review, the British Library sought to make additional funding available for both collection development and library cooperation. Its acquisition allocations provided a real terms increase of over 15 % on the costs for the previous year. It was able to improve funding across a range of acquisition areas, and acquire a number of significant historical collections, adding some 2,000 items to the Early Printed Collections.

Despite its reduced acquisition budget, the Bibliothèque nationale de France was able to offer public access to electronic editions of 110 periodical titles, mainly of a scientific or technical content, for which the library already possessed the printed version. It was also able to enrich its patrimonial collections by purchase, gift, and deposit with some major collections of manuscripts, early printed books, engravings, and early photography. Die Deutsche Bibliothek acquired several new items for the Deutsches Buch- und Schriftmuseum and for its collection of Exile Literature. The National Library of Norway acquired the historic collection of photographs from the National Theatre in Norway, which, after being refilmed and digitised, was incorporated in the Norwegian Photo Collection and made available on the Internet. Among many notable acquisitions to its special collections, the National Library of Austria acquired the remaining items (up to 1850) of the Music Archive of the Imperial Court Chapel at Vienna, making the library the sole depository for the 500-year tradition of sacred music at the Imperial court.

Many libraries have provided impressive lists of notable acquisitions. Their annual reports show that, despite the financial stringency under which they plan their acquisition programmes, and the increasing demand for electronic publications and scientific and technical journals, most of the European national libraries are placing high priority in acquiring for posterity important books, prints, manuscripts, sound recordings, and photographic collections that form part of their national heritage.

CONSERVATION AND PRESERVATION

In response to priorities set by Strategic Review Consultation Exercise carried out in 1998, the British Library allocated £ 1 million more Grant-in-Aid to Preservation in 1999 than it had spent in 1998. This level of funding is to be maintained over the following three years. The additional funds enabled the levels of external binding and conservation microfilming contracts to be increased for the first time since 1986. It also enabled specific preservation projects to be carried out on very vulnerable material, at St Pancras and the Colindale Newspaper Library, using contract conservators.

Co-ordination of conservation work is a major aim of the National Library of Estonia, which has created a Conservation Board with the task of improving access to material and at the same time ensuring the preservation of the collections. An inventory of the collections was carried out, paying particular attention to preservation needs and storage conditions, and a number of collections were transferred to stack rooms where better conditions prevailed. The Library continued to lead Project THULE, a collaborative conservation project with major research libraries in Estonia. The first stage involved the creation of a database of the conservation assessment of the collections of Estonian printed matter in four major libraries. Work has begun on microfilming Estonian newspapers, and new microfilm readers are being acquired for the reading rooms.

The Austrian National library has continued to attract sponsorship for its preservation programmes. It continues to place emphasis upon microfilming newspapers, and, through sponsorship, it has completed the filming of all volumes of the *Neue Freie Presse* from 1848-1948. The Croatian National Library has also given particular attention to microfilming older newspapers, as has the National Library of Slovenia. In the National Library of Ireland, a „Withdrawn Newspaper Project“ has been begun. Badly damaged newspapers are withdrawn from use in the Reading Rooms to be replaced by microfilm as soon as possible. In recognition of the heavy research demand on the newspaper collection, this project is now a key area for investment in preservation. The library was one of the founding members of the Preservation Microfilm User group (Ireland), along with Trinity College, Dublin, and the Public Record Office of Northern Ireland. The aim of the group is to share information and skills and to promote training in order to improve the quality of preservation microfilming in Ireland. Preservation programmes include those for preserving the photographic collections where positive film copies are being made of the glass negatives in the collections of the National Photographic Archive. Work has also begun on surveying the preservation state of the map collection.

All current Finnish newspapers are being microfilmed by the National Library of Finland, which, following organisational changes in Helsinki University, has now taken on all the microfilming work that used to be undertaken by the University Visual-Aids centre. Due to weaknesses in the technical process in the 1950's when microfilming was first started, a large number of newspapers have to be refilmed. The library is therefore especially keen to ensure the high quality of its work because the present microfilms will be the only means to preserve the contents of the newspapers in the future. Quality is a crucial issue not only from the viewpoint of permanence. New requirements have to be met also when microfilms are being used for scanning in connection with digitisation. In many cases, microfilm will also be used as the archival medium of the material that has been digitised.

The microfilming of pre-war and current periodicals continued at the National Library of Lithuania. Some 30 Lithuanian and 101 Judaica periodicals were fully filmed through the cooperation of the Library of Congress and a commercial company. The microfilming of a selection of celebration prints from the Old and Rare Books Collection is about to begin in collaboration with Osnabrück University. The library continues with its programme of repairing and preserving old and rare documents in its collections and during the year began work of restoring a number of unique papal bulls, which were included in the exhibition celebrating two thousand years of Christianity.

Digitisation for Preservation

Growing interest is being shown in Europe in hybrid methods of preserving content first by microfilming and then by the subsequent digitisation of the microfilm. This later digitisation is essentially undertaken to provide improved access to content. A number of national libraries report new projects for the creation of digital images from microfilm. The main emphasis in the National Library of Finland lies in digitising newspapers from microfilm. The work is being done within the AURORA and TIDEN projects for digitising historical newspapers. The Ministry of Education and the NORDINFO finance the projects. Three other Nordic libraries participate in TIDEN. The aim is to create a digital newspaper library with good search possibilities. The Czech National Library, although lacking adequate funds for its preservation programme, which affects its ability to hire staff for routine work and employ larger numbers of specialised staff, is also taking a hybrid approach to the preservation of acid paper documents. It is seeking to provide better access to newspapers and journals by a policy of microfilming the material and then digitising the microfilm. TIFF format is used for the digital images produced, and the work is undertaken in-house. The preservation microfilming of important periodical titles is co-ordinated across the country as a major national programme. Financial support has been obtained from the Open Society Institute Regional Library Programme (Budapest) by the National Library of Slovenia for the digitisation of an important collection of Slavic Manuscripts, and for the electronic cleaning of nationally important sound recordings on vinyl discs. The Slovak National Library is also preparing a programme for the digitisation of microfilm. Under its Heritage project, the National Library of Latvia is digitally scanning the first Latvian newspaper, *Dienas Lapa*, to create a CD ROM version. Work continues on the microfilming programme for Latvian newspapers (seven titles) in co-operation with a publishing company. The Bibliothèque Nationale de France has opened two sound studios on the Marne-la-Vallée site to transfer and restore recorded

sound using digital techniques. Further conservation initiatives have been taken at Die Deutsche Bibliothek for the archiving of multi-media disks, and for the digitisation of magnetic tapes of the former Centre for Music Information of the Association of Composers and Musicologists of the former German Democratic Republic. The National Library of Spain has however discontinued its plan for digitalisation of recordings until it can find a more effective system for the control and retrieval of digital images. Only 3,633 records and 316 cassettes have been digitised.

Mass Deacidification

The Austrian National Library has further developed the Vienna method of mass deacidification of paper in collaboration with the firm Henkel Austria. The method, which is said to be economical and environmental friendly, not only deacidifies the paper but also strengthens it. The physical-chemical section of the laboratories of the Bibliothèque nationale de France at Marne-la-Vallée was opened in 1999, and research into deacidification became the subject of a comparative analysis of which the results are expected in the summer of 2000. In co-operation with the Department of Polymer Chemistry of the University of Helsinki, the National Library of Finland is carrying out research in paper conservation methods. It has proved that the use of mass deacidification methods is problematic because it is difficult to take into account the differences in the quality of the paper of individual items. Differences in the age and storage conditions as well as the origin of the paper mean that the same treatment cannot be universally applied. More research will be needed to discover acceptable methods. Preparations continued in the National Library of Switzerland for its mass deacidification programme. This required some adaptation of the VTLIS system to work with the data required for the management of the workflow. The centre for deacidification at Wimmis will be officially inaugurated on September 1st 2000, but the actual treatment of documents began in May 2000. A publicity campaign has been carried out to inform libraries and archives that are potential users of the service. This has been undertaken both in Switzerland and abroad, except in Germany where there is an agreement already in place with the company delivering the system. Die Deutsche Bibliothek has together with other institutions working under the aegis of the Ministry of Culture and Media Matters jointly negotiated framework contracts for mass deacidification work. The collaborative negotiations had a clear influence on the targeted prices.

Binding

Although the problems of acid paper continue to be a major concern of conservation and preservation staff, the traditional interest in the craft of repairing, refurbishment and replacement of bindings rightly continues to play a major part in the work of national libraries, and a great deal of excellent craftsmanship is being undertaken. Interest in historic bindings and the structure of the book extends well beyond the walls of the bindery workshop and is often a most important element in the overall scholarship of the library. The National Library of Iceland offers a good example of this. In the autumn of 1999, the Library hired a conservator from the Fitzwilliam Museum in Cambridge, England, for two months to investigate the bindings in its manuscript collections. His report commented, „First contact with the collections is fascinating. Though I have no direct evidence for this, it is my belief that Icelandic collections must be the largest of historical amateur bindings, certainly in the western world. As such, the bindings represent a uniquely valuable historical record in them, distinct from their content. Some of the bindings in the collection bear a remarkable resemblance to the earliest bound manuscripts in existence, the 3rd and 4th century Gnostic manuscripts found at Nag Hammadi in southern Egypt in 1945.“ But, as the Librarian and the conservator point out, not all binding structures within the collection are so basic, and a great number of them are in urgent need of repair. Indeed the library has many lifetimes' work for several conservators.

Disaster Planning

Libraries that have experienced the damage to the collections that can be caused by flooding or by fire know how valuable it is to have a practical set of procedures for preventative measures to protect the collection from risk, and a set of guidelines and drills for dealing with disasters if or when they occur. Very often, the simpler and more practical these plans are the better, for, in the event of a disaster, quick action in line with simple prepared instructions is often essential. The prior arrangement of facilities for dry freezing wet papers, the provision of plastic sheeting to throw over books stacks to prevent water damage from above, instructions for the rapid recording of important material that has to be removed from the building, are commonly part of such planning. What is however sometimes overlooked is the regular training, and practice drills for staff not only in how to handle and pack wet books and manuscripts, but also in the geography of the building and the location of key emergency equipment and supplies, and a host of similar practical measures that can help staff to be prepared for a disaster. We all need to be reminded frequently of the need for good housekeeping practice that might prevent a

disaster from occurring, and this is an important element in the best examples of disaster planning. New buildings are no less vulnerable to disasters than old ones, and it should be a matter of policy that disaster planning for the new building should be in place as soon as it is occupied. Unfortunately, disaster planning is often postponed until it is too late, and many libraries must regret that the intention to plan for disaster, an intention that frequently figures in forward planning, has never been realised in practice. It is not a costly exercise to undertake in its simplest and most effective form; it is far more costly to have the disaster.

The National Central Library of Florence, in a city only too aware of the damage that occurred in the disastrous floods of 1966, has taken part in a national project of the Italian Ministry for Environmental Services in organising action to prevent damage in the case of severe flooding. During 1999, the library took part in a disaster drill appropriately enough called ARNO. It is particularly significant that this took place at the time when, through the MERCURIO project, the library had just completed recording the losses and damages to the periodical collections at Forte Belvedere, where the whole periodicals collection of approximately 5 million single issues has been checked and missing parts reordered. This task has taken since the flood of 1966 to complete. In the Bibliothèque nationale de France, a plan for salvaging and saving the collections in worst-case disaster has been set out. The National Library of Norway has planned a comprehensive programme of preservation and digitisation to be completed in 2005 in connection with its move of the collections into modern storage areas.

Other Initiatives

In the National Library of Hungary, organisational restructuring led to the merging of the preservation departments, which had formerly been grouped within a division of Preservation and Conservation, in part with the Division of Special Collections and in part with the Division of Information and Document Provision. This was in support of the library's view that preservation and conservation should be a common requirement at each level of the library's operation. Grouping preservation departments with service units it was believed helped to put this principle into practice. The former Division of Preservation and Conservation has ceased to exist. On the completion of a new conservation laboratory, the National Library of Poland has started to prepare for the reorganisation of its preservation work and for introducing new technologies. The library has bought a Czech system, SUPHATEC, for disinfecting the collections and installation is planned in 2000. The long-term governmental programme approved in 1999 to save the most endangered

nineteenth and twentieth century collections places responsibility for coordinating this work upon the National Library, and this is being given high priority. The programme is to include mass deacidification and paper strengthening. The library continues its programme of microfilming early printed books relating to the German Polish cultural borderland, and of Jewish serials published within the territory of pre-war Poland. It has also undertaken new security measures because of the increasing frequency of theft from the collections and this has led to several technical improvements in the electronic monitoring of the collections and in the general improvement of the security in the buildings.

The National Library of Portugal has totally reorganised its Conservation Laboratory and as a result has been able to increase by a factor of eight the amount of work done. The library continues with its programmes for cleaning, boxing, and microfilming documents, giving priority to the more valuable and fragile materials in terms of preservation work and to newspapers for microfilming work. However, it has difficulty in recruiting adequate staff, mainly because of the conditions of entry for civil service posts in Portugal. The Russian State Library is giving particular attention to preventive measures to improve the preservation of documents. These include the improvement of storage conditions- each stack room is checked for temperature and humidity three times each week-and the creation of a special collection control group of the Scientific Research Centre for Conservation which is undertaking monthly selective checks of the stacks. There has been a substantial increase in the amount of preventive repair undertaken to deal with minor damage and defects to printed texts. Research has begun in developing new technologies to strengthen the colour layer and to slow down deterioration of gall inks. The library places considerable emphasis upon its initial and continuing education and training in conservation and binding skills. It closely collaborates with other centres, and with the Russian National Library with whom it has reviewed the state standards for conservation terms and definitions and the general rules for conservation. At the request of IFLA's Section on Preservation and Conservation, it collaborated with the National Library and the Library for Foreign Literature in the translation of a dictionary of book and paper conservation terms.

The Vatican Library is preparing a new plan for the long-term training of personnel in conservation, and for the more efficient use of its conservation facilities. It has completed the cycle of work for cleaning and disinfecting all storage areas and consultation rooms, and is continuing with its programme of acid-free boxing.

CO-OPERATION

National Co-operation

The importance national libraries attach to offering leadership in national co-operative projects continues to grow as the value of co-ordinated library systems is more widely appreciated by both users and funding authorities. Members of CENL commonly report collaborative work in compiling and providing access to national bibliographies, in developing new programmes for collaborative microfilming of material at risk, and in the production of networked union catalogues and retrospective catalogue conversion. Increasingly, they report collaborative development work in setting up more sophisticated library automation systems where smaller and less well resourced libraries can benefit from the purchasing power of a consortium, and from the sharing of technical skills and common standards. Often these consortia transcend national boundaries, but even when they are formed within a country or region, there is a ready appreciation of the benefits that accrue from sharing common standards and from compatibility of systems.

A growing number of national libraries now recognise in their mission statements that an important part of their work is to promote co-operation between libraries in their country. Such is the case in Finland, where the National Library sees itself as the main instrument of this co-operation, and has already established a common computer network with the university libraries and leads the development of the National Electronic Library, a shared 'virtual' library resource. The library is also seeking co-operation outside the traditional library community, by collaborating with the Finnish Broadcasting Company in developing its collection and cataloguing of sound recordings, and with newspaper publishers in its conservation and digitisation programmes. It is also co-operating with the learned societies in Finland to develop electronic publishing of their proceedings, journals, and reports.

In Poland, the National Librarian presides over two country wide advisory committees established under the Library laws of 1997: the National Library Council and the Council for Countrywide Library Holding's Resource. In 1999, the National Library monitored the situation of public libraries in the new conditions resulting for the administrative reforms in the country introduced in January, and issues relating to the public library system have dominated the work of the National Library in relation to the overall library provision in the country. The library continues to work with other important academic libraries in the creation of a national union catalogue of research library holdings, and considers its role to be crucial in establishing the criteria and rules for co-operation in the creation of a unified database of authority files. In Switzerland, on the other hand, a feasibility study on the creation of a national name authority file concluded that in the current circumstances such

a file, whilst highly desirable, was in fact not feasible. The participants of the study recommended that libraries should use the Swiss National Library's authority file as a basis for their work, but the National Library believes that, without an organisational structure or the willingness to invest in harmonisation, the practical applications of this remain minimal.

In Portugal, the National Library leads the work in creating PORBASE, the national union on-line catalogue, to which 144 Portuguese libraries contribute. This year the library developed new automation programs for the use of libraries in Portugal based on the ISIS development for Windows. The National Library of Norway also plays an important part in co-ordinating different IT systems within the Norwegian library community. In 1999, it took over responsibility for the national committee on cataloguing and indexing. A new edition of the national MARC format, NORMARC, was published, and work on preparing a new abridged Norwegian edition of the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC21) was started.

A key theme arising from the British Library's 1998 Strategic Review was the need for it to co-ordinate its activities, and co-operate much more closely, with other libraries both in the UK and internationally. It was seen as essential that, to ensure maximum national benefit, the library should seek to establish a co-operative framework with other libraries for collection development, preservation, access, record creation, and bibliographic services. As an outcome of the Review, the library set up a new unit in April 1999 to develop and co-ordinate its Co-operation and Partnership Programme (CPP) in these areas. The unit's purpose is to co-ordinate existing and new British Library co-operative activities, provide an external focus and point of contact relating to co-operation, and administer the BL's new Co-operation and Partnership Fund to support co-operative and partnership initiatives. Key areas of action under the programme have included: the commissioning of a survey of UK library co-operative activity and the development of a library co-operation website. The programme supports additional collaboration and co-operation with other UK legal deposit libraries on the deposit and archiving of UK publications, including the extension of deposit to non-print publications. It also provides for the establishment of a high-level task force to explore and take forward areas of collaboration with the UK higher education sector. A series of strategic studies is being jointly funded. These include a feasibility study for the establishment of a national body for co-ordinating the development of a distributed national collection of library research resources. A second study considers the administration of collections of older material not in regular use and the provision of services based on these collections. A third study is on the feasibility of centralised or distributed approaches to national union catalogues of monographs and serials. The programme includes participation by the library in ten collaborative collection management projects under the Higher Education Research Support Libraries Programme

(RSLP) which provides part funding on a competitive basis, and support for a national strategy for a programme of retrospective conversion. Further financial support from the Co-operation and Partnership Fund for projects is promised in the financial year 2000/01.

As part of its national plan, the Bibliothèque nationale de France is at the centre of some 39 nodal points of a network comprising university and municipal libraries, archives, and research organisations, and 25 centres involved in the legal deposit of imprints. The network covers the country and a wide range of disciplines, services, and technical expertise. Several workshops have been organised and a major programme of work is the development of a digitisation programme for publications of French learned societies of the 19th century. The programme has begun with the collaboration of the archives départementales and municipal libraries in Aquitaine and Lorraine. The BnF is also responsible for the Catalogue collectif de France, and in July 2000, it made available on line the catalogue of books printed before 1811 from 55 municipal and specialised libraries, containing over 2.2 million bibliographic records.¹⁰

Die Deutsche Bibliothek is an active partner in a variety of national projects, and major areas of co-operation include the development and application of common rules and standards, the operation of shared databases, and the development of techniques for book preservation. Following the closure of the Deutsche Bibliotheksinstitut (DBI), a decision on the future maintenance of the cataloguing rules for the German library system had to be made, and the management and co-ordination of the work in maintaining the rules has been designated to the DDB in close partnership with the Bavarian State Library and the Berlin State Library.

International Co-operation

CENL has in recent years done much to foster library participation through European and international collaborative projects. Although much of the work is linked to the EU library and informatics programmes, and receives EU funding, other sources of funding have also been used, and in many cases, the collaboration is largely supported by work in kind by the contributing libraries where direct costs are absorbed by the libraries themselves. Many collaborative projects are concerned with exploiting the opportunities presented by the new technology and networking. These include BIBLINK, CASA, a project to create a European serials meta-catalogue as an Internet resource, and DIEPER, a project for providing digitised European periodicals. A new project, RENARDUS, aims to provide a working gateway for access to research sources in Europe; SOCRATES, an EU project to develop open and

distance learning to support the teaching and understanding of migration in Europe, is supported by a number of libraries. Further details of these and other EU collaborative projects and consortia, can be found through the GABRIEL website.

Although much of this collaborative work concentrates on technical matters and the development of standards, and of access tools to library collections and services, the content of collections is increasingly being made available through collaborative programmes. The MALVINE project, for example, which has been running since 1998, seeks to enable worldwide access to modern manuscripts and literary remains using web based technology and integrated networks. MALVINE (Manuscripts And Letters Via Integrated Networks in Europe) currently provides research access and services to collections in the National Libraries of Austria, Denmark, Germany, England, France, Norway, Portugal, and Spain.¹¹ Following the successful feasibility study into linking three Subject Heading Languages, (Library of Congress, RAMEAU and SWD/RSWK), the four partner libraries, the Swiss National Library, British Library, Bibliothèque Nationale de France, and Die Deutsche Bibliothek, signed an agreement in August 1999 to fund a prototype system, Multilingual Access to Subjects (MACS). A call for tenders was launched to targeted suppliers and an information day was held at the Royal Library in The Hague in November 1999. This is the first example of a project that is being funded directly by partner libraries within the structure of CENL. The proposals were analysed in December and work began on the prototype in February 2000.¹²

,*The European Library*' project, initiated as a pilot scheme by the National Library of the Netherlands, the British Library, and Die Deutsche Bibliothek, aims to create a seamless network that will allow the European National Libraries to present themselves and their treasures on the Internet as one coherent and transparent source of information and knowledge with multi-lingual access. The project has already achieved a great deal. A large number of European National Libraries have already made available digital images and commentaries relating not only to the outstanding treasures of their collections, but also to a range of lesser or unusual material that is no less interesting. The collections in this virtual exhibition are well indexed and many of the images are of high quality, making it a pleasure to browse. The EPOC project (European Poster Collection) ended in November 1999. The main results of the project were shown at an exhibition of posters from Austria and Germany, which was displayed in Vienna, Berlin, and Hamburg. A CD ROM *European Poster Art 1914-1945: Austria and Germany*, together with a digital catalogue of 10,000 posters, is now being prepared for publication by KG Saur Verlag, Munich.

The National Library of Croatia has been co-ordinating work on the international project for the compilation of the *Handbuch Deutscher*

Historischer Buchbestände in Europa. The project includes 40 libraries in Croatia. The project for the creation of a *Multilingual Dictionary of Library Terminology*, led by the National Library of Slovenia, includes the National Library of Estonia and libraries in ten European countries.

Perhaps the wide range of these collaborations can be best illustrated by project ACCELERATE. The National Library of Cyprus, together with the libraries of the University of Cyprus, the University of Macedonia and the Universities of Graz and Linz in Austria, is participating in this European Union funded programme, which aims to improve access to library resources for those with impaired eyesight.

The work of the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL) in creating a machine-readable database of the hand printed book in Europe continues to be strongly supported by the national libraries. The Hand Printed Book Database, accessible through RLG, will by the end of 2000 contain over 900,000 records, and within the following year it is intended to include a further million records. In addition to holdings from the national libraries, the data includes hand printed book records from a number of university libraries and specialist files from the Cathedral Libraries in the United Kingdom, and from Oxford colleges. New files loaded during the course of the year include those from the National Library of Russia, the University of Oxford, and a new file of 17th century holdings from the Swedish National Library. CERL continues to work closely with RLG in the development of its database and with the International ESTC, and offers its members access to both RLG's BIB files, and the IESTC database.

Contacts between European National Libraries and libraries outside Europe continue to offer good benefits. An increasing number of European National Libraries are in membership of the Research Libraries Group in the USA or participate in its international work on preservation and digitisation, or contribute their book and manuscript records to its database. Many individual partnerships for exchange of publications have been established, and play an important part in collection development work. The Russian State Library has two major collaborative projects with the Library of Congress. The microfilming project under which RSL films fragile materials in its collections started in 1998, and in December 1999 a long term project, 'The Meeting of Frontiers,' was begun to build on the Internet an electronic collection of documents connected with parallel aspects of the histories of Russia and the United States. Documents to be included in the project are those relating to the exploration, settlement, and development of Siberia, the Russian Far East, and American West.

None of these collaborative projects can succeed without a great deal of dedicated commitment by those involved, without a common vision of the benefits that can be gained from such commitment, and a high degree of trust between participants that each will support the other partners to achieve a

successful outcome. Trust, vision, and commitment are often the result of the many efforts now being made across Europe to develop common understanding and share expertise and resources. In recent years, the steady growth of LIBER as an organisation committed to sharing experience and forwarding common objectives has been of increasing importance in this work. Its annual conferences and expert groups have helped to set the agenda for collaboration, and, perhaps more importantly in the longer term, have provided a valuable forum for professional librarians in Europe to meet and get to know each other better. And of course, LIBER is only one such forum. The valuable work over many years of NORDINFO in supporting seminars, sharing expertise, and encouraging new initiatives is now widely recognised. The annual reports from the National Libraries of the Baltic States show how much this support is valued. The generous practical financial support of the Open Society Institute in the work of many less well-resourced national libraries in Central and Eastern Europe is perhaps less well known, but no less appreciated.

CONCLUSION

It will be apparent to readers of this review that the European National Libraries have achieved much during the year of which they can be proud. Despite the continuing shortage of resources, many have succeeded in developing their services, modernising their systems, and undertaking new initiatives for the benefit of their readers. An international public has enjoyed the many splendid exhibitions that their dedicated staffs have created. Their wide range of publications continues to uphold the highest standards of international bibliography and scholarship. Within Europe, a high level of cooperation between libraries is leading to the adoption of common standards, and to the sharing of expensive systems for networking, whilst national pride in the individual qualities of each library, and its unique contribution to the study of national and regional culture is preserved. The Conference of European National Librarians, still a young organisation, through its annual meetings, its common programmes of work, and the occasions these provide for library directors and specialist staff to share ideas, and to establish friendly relationships, has been a major influence in the development of this co-operation. Its importance to the strategic development of European National Libraries cannot be over-estimated. It is, in a practical and pragmatic way, instrumental in the promotion of outward looking policies, and the creation of international access routes to the cultural inheritance that is conserved within these libraries.

REFERENCES

- 1 <<http://www.bncf.firenze.sbn.it>>
- 2 The web version of LIBRIS attracts approximately 120,000 visits each day and is considered the most heavily used database in Sweden.
- 3 <<http://euler.onb.ac.at/cgi-allegro/nak/nak.pl>>
- 4 <<http://gallica.bnf.fr>>
- 5 Much of this information is quoted directly from the website.
- 6 Further information is available at <<http://hul.helsinki.fi/finelib/english/index.html>>.
- 7 In the new User Services Division a special 'virtual' desk has been established which will function as a signpost to knowledge in this virtual library.
- 8 <<http://sun450.agir.ru/memory>>
- 9 <<http://www.memoriav.ch>>
- 10 <<http://www.ccf.fr>>
- 11 <<http://www.malvine.org>>
- 12 The final report is available at <<http://www.bl.uk/gabriel/cobra/finrap3.html>> and the project home page is to be found at <<http://www.infolab.kub.nl/prj/mac>>.