

Report on the State of Libraries in Germany

Facts and Figures 2019/2020

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Dear readers,

Libraries are the embodiment of the right enshrined in the constitution to freedom of information, and contribute to spreading knowledge and help forming opinions. They provide all citizens with the opportunity to play an active role in society while the services they offer help put in place the necessary prerequisites for ensuring literacy and media competence.

In an era of misinformation and growth of populism, libraries are more important than ever. To effectively counteract these developments, we would be well advised to protect our libraries from political influence and provide robust support for the work they do.

Open Access to public research results is one of the aims of academic libraries. Open Access to digital information, for example, promotes the dissemination of academic findings. Digitalisation facilitates and enables involvement by citizens in questions and answers coming from research projects.

Libraries need support for these socially important responsibilities. The political support necessary to achieve this you will find in the present report on the state of libraries in Germany. I hope you find this a stimulating read.

Sincerely,

Prof. Dr. Andreas Degkwitz
Federal Chairperson of the
German Library Association (dbv)

What our partners say



"The role of libraries in ancient times was to gather and retain information that was of particular relevance to scholarship and society as a whole. Libraries have therefore always been more than simply collections of manuscripts or books. They are places of education and bastions against ignorance and neglect. For societies undergoing radical changes, in crisis or with populations on the move, libraries were always locations where cultural affirmation could be found and resilience strengthened. All the more important therefore that libraries and their holdings are open to all, that they actively reach out to people and also seek to appeal to those who would otherwise not find their way into a library. Over recent decades libraries have undertaken exemplary work in terms of online cataloguing and publication of their holdings online. The availability and visibility of their holdings has significantly increased and has also made these accessible for users in poorly-served and rural regions. In so doing libraries are making a major contribution to cultural education, to diversity and to social cohesion."

Prof. Dr. Markus Hilgert
Secretary General of the
Cultural Foundation of the
German Federal States



"Public libraries monitor the pulse of our society: as repositories of culture and knowledge, they reflect the many different interests and conceptions of life in our time. With the increasing digitalisation of all areas of our lives, libraries are becoming hugely significant in towns and cities, and not least in rural regions, as public spaces. As 'analogue' locations for meeting and exchanging views, libraries are able, when they adopt a contemporary focus, to also explore new forms of participation and organisation, and to make community spirit, diversity and tolerance both practicable and tangible. This remarkably huge potential for public libraries to address the fragility of social cohesion is being promoted by the Kulturstiftung des Bundes through our program hochdrei – Changing City Libraries."

Hortensia Völckers
Artistic Director of the German
Federal Cultural Foundation



"For all libraries, digitalisation is a synonym for challenge – in terms of conception, finance and staffing. This also applies to academic libraries as it does to all others. What is mainly driving this in their case is the increasing development of Open Access and Open Science. These complex phenomena are forcing the entire academic system to rethink and to create new structures – from the funding of publications through to the archiving of research data. Libraries are at the centre of this development and are taking on responsibility, for example, for the setting up and operation of repositories. In most cases the public is rarely aware of this but it is a highly political undertaking: globally available free and rapid access to knowledge promotes academic freedom, equality of opportunity, international exchange and quality in research."

Prof. Dr. Peter-André Alt
President of the German Rectors'
Conference

German libraries in figures

Across Germany there are approximately **9400** public and academic libraries. These were visited more than **220 million times in 2018**.

340 million books, films and music titles

In 2018, public libraries lent out around 340 million books, films and music titles.

29 million e-media items in public libraries

Public libraries lend out more than 29 million e-books or other individual electronic media items each year.

240,608 user workstations

In 2018, a total 240,608 of user workstations were available of which 105,461 were in public libraries and 135,147 in academic libraries.

81% Wi-Fi coverage in large cities

Around 81% of public libraries in towns and cities with more than 50,000 residents offered Wi-Fi in 2018.

550,000 people receive training

More than 550,000 people participated in training courses, tours, teaching events and webinars organised by academic libraries.

425,000 events

In 2018, public and academic libraries organised 425,000 events. In addition to readings and exhibitions, libraries also organised digital and media literacy courses, game conventions, makerspace activities, programming workshops, language courses and training courses. Of these, 190,000 (44.8%) alone were events designed for children in public libraries.

278 million users access e-books in academic libraries

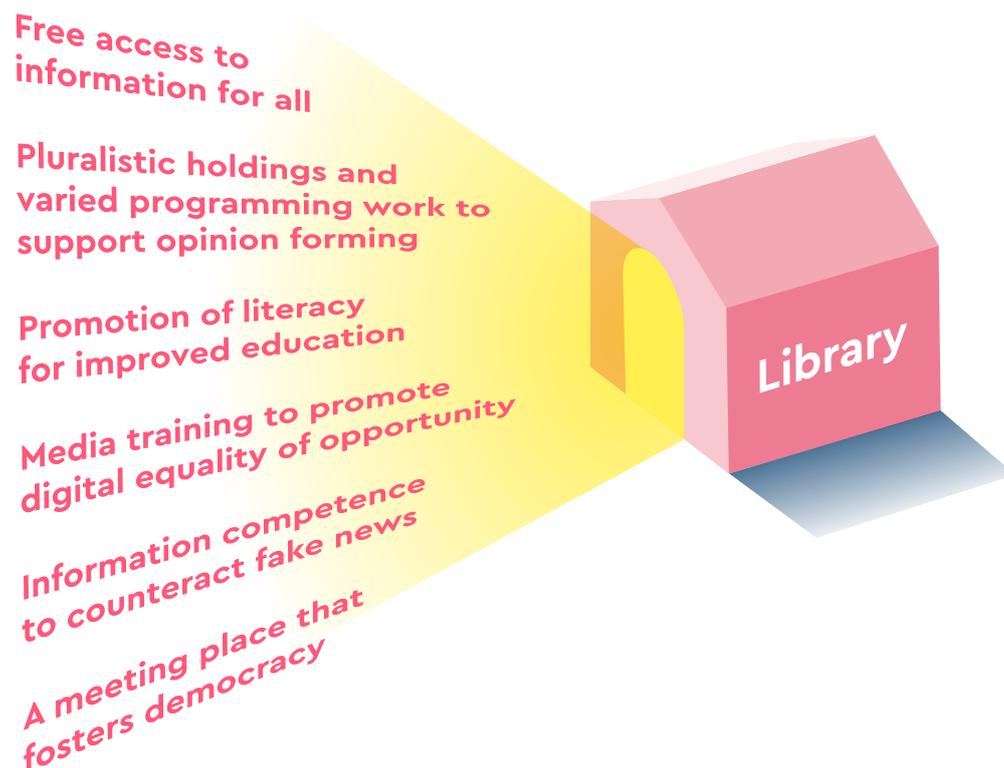
In academic libraries, users have accessed e-books some 278 million times and have also accessed digital journal articles around 78 million times.

58% for digital media in academic libraries

Around 58% of expenditure for acquisitions (€329 million) by academic libraries was used to acquire digital media in 2018.

The dbv calls for:

Libraries must be protected against any form of political interference



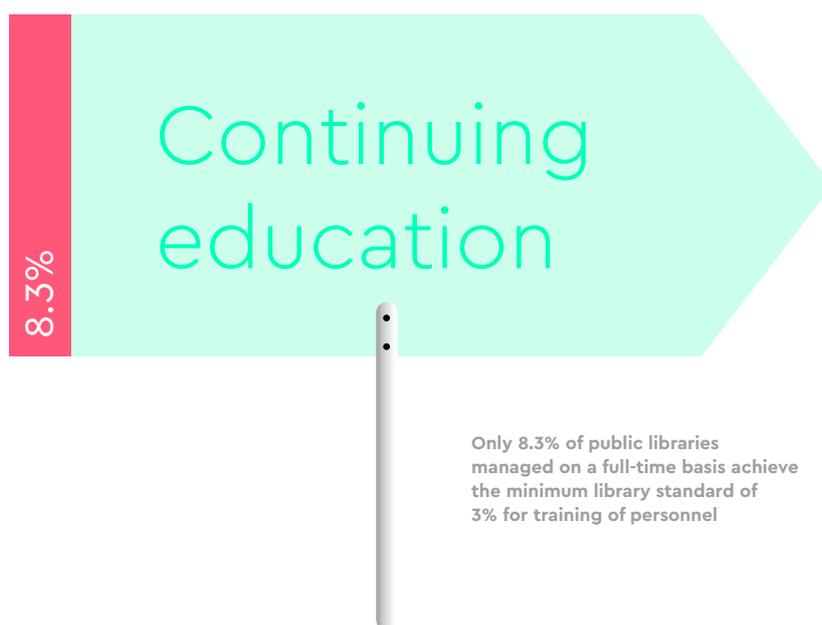
Part of the core mission of libraries is to contribute to freedom of expression and the unrestricted provision of information. Libraries are pluralistic when it comes to their holdings; in other words they reflect a diversity of ideas, opinions and thoughts. Policymakers must ensure that freedom of information is also safeguarded for all citizens in the future and that libraries are supported as locations where information is freely available and opinions can be freely expressed.

Libraries enable their users to seek arguments for and against particular issues for and against particular outlooks and to develop their own views and opinions. In so doing, libraries contribute to the formation of opinion on political issues and to social participation.

In many cases the media provision is supplemented by events. Through the programmes they offer, libraries continue the heritage of education and the values expressed in the constitution. Since the beginning, libraries in Germany have championed the protection and defence of these values.

As developments contrary to this begin to threaten, a clear commitment to the values of the constitution and to the European idea is essential, as is working actively within society to reinforce these values. Increased awareness of attempts to influence libraries politically is required. In times such as these, it is incumbent on library patrons and on policymakers in particular that they provide long-term support and protection for the remit and mission assigned to libraries.

The dbv calls for: Increased investment in continuing education and training



Libraries respond to changes impacting on society as a whole, such as digitalisation, demographic transition, the increased need for Open Access locations and new forms of citizen participation. This leads to a great change in the tasks of library staff. Today, in addition to having librarianship skills, staff members also need social, communicative, IT and organisational skills together with media competence. Many libraries however do not have a budget that enables them to fund training. Greater investment is therefore needed in continuing education and training so that the systematic staff development required can be realised.

Increasing visitor numbers, new target groups and altered expectations mean that the scope of duties has broadened. Although the provision of information and knowledge certainly remains the core function, advice and information activities now also encompass digital services as well as

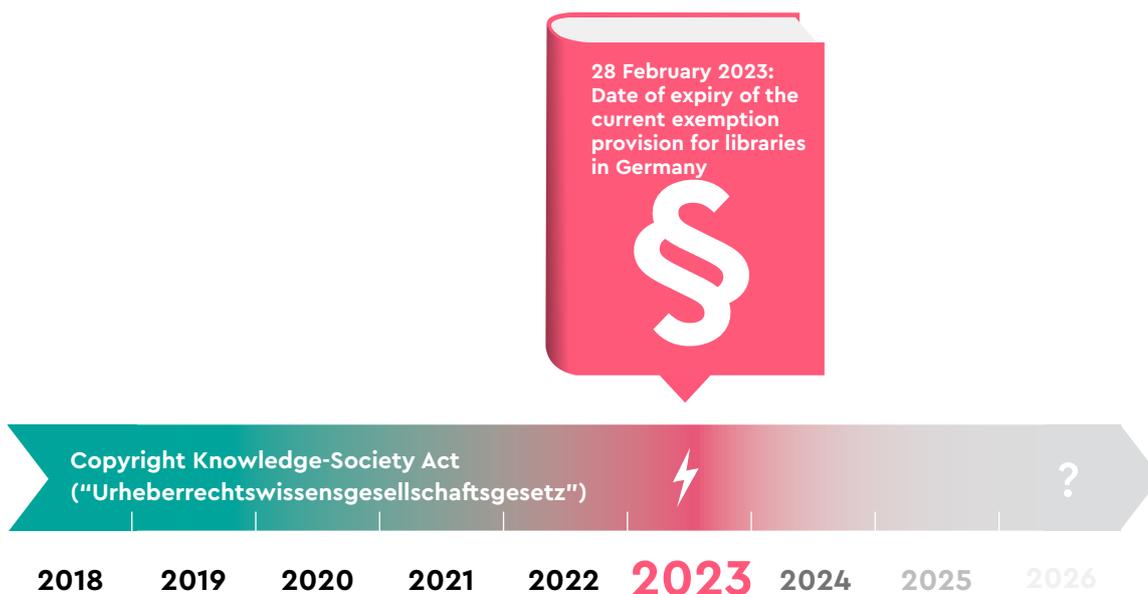
digital forms of literacy promotion and media reception, training in media and information skills as well as the creative use of digital tools. Among the key tasks today for libraries is networking and collaborating in projects, and this requires the personnel to have the relevant qualifications. Currently, however, only 8.3% of public libraries achieve the minimum required standard* of a training ratio of 3% of working days.

Libraries urgently need new staff training concepts in order to provide the expertise required in the area of IT, in media education and to appeal to specific target groups. In order to support existing personnel in adapting to these changes, more must be invested in continuing education and training.

* Source: DBS 2018, Indikator für Personalentwicklung/ Mindeststandard cf. 21 gute Gründe für gute Bibliotheken. Leitlinien für Entscheider, issued by Bibliothek & Information Deutschland 2009

The dbv calls for:

Copyright law must be interpreted in a way that is in the interests of library users while the exemption provision for libraries must be extended for an indefinite time



In the digital world, science and research need an up-to-date copyright law. The 'exemption provisions' in the Act to align Copyright Law with the Current Demands of the Knowledge-based Society (UrhWissGesetz – Urheberrechtswissensgesellschaftsgesetz) currently provides libraries with the certainty that they will not violate legal requirements. In order for library users to be able to continue benefitting from the provisions in the future, these exemptions must be extended for an indefinite period.

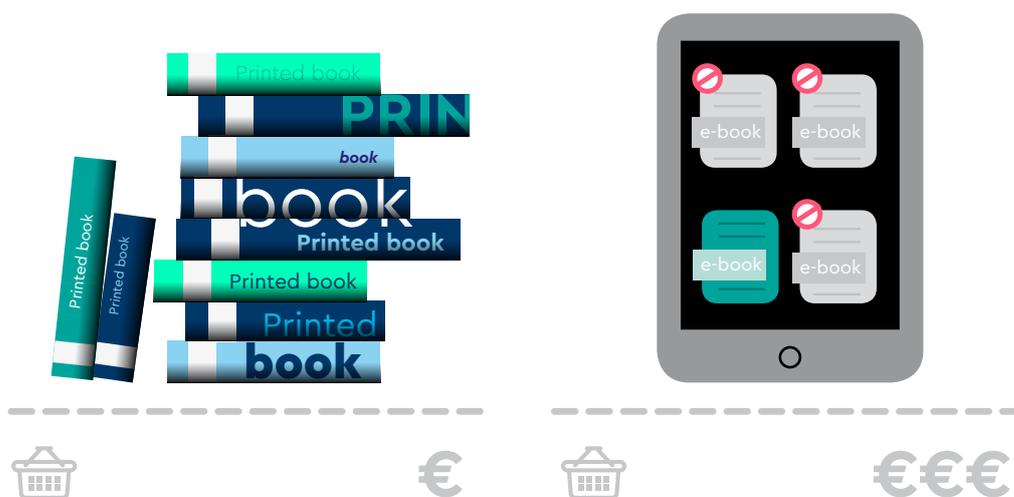
Copyright law impacts on libraries and their users in various ways – when it comes to the use of texts or images in research and teaching, when accessing out-of-print items or digitising texts with unknown authors. In the digital age, copyright law must be regularly updated as circumstances change. The so-called 'exemption provisions' for libraries and research are specified in Art. 60a to 60e of the German Copyright Act (UrhG).

Since the UrhWissGesetz came into effect on 1 March 2018 initially for a five-year period only, the dbv is urging policymakers to set about extending the law for an indefinite period and for the key exemption provisions for libraries to continue to apply even after the date of their proposed expiry at the end of February 2023.

The EU Directive on Copyright in the Single Market adopted in March 2019 regulates certain aspects relevant to libraries. Legislation concerning some aspects of the EU Directive has already been implemented in Germany. To safeguard freedom of expression and free provision of information, there should be no algorithms for filtering data imposed on libraries in Germany. In the course of implementation, it must also be ensured that e-lending is regulated by law.

The dbv calls for:

Extension of public lending rights to e-books



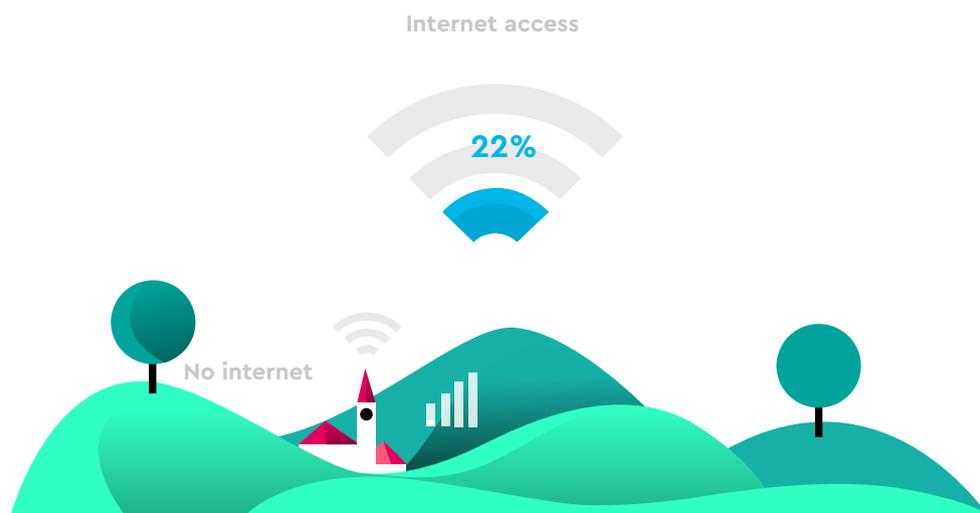
As digitalisation progresses, texts are increasingly being read online or take the form of e-books. Libraries, however, are unable to make many books available to users before months after the publication date. For libraries, the acquisition costs are also much higher than for bookshop customers. To guarantee full access to information in the electronic sector, public lending legislation must also be extended to the lending of e-books.

Digitalisation has changed the way we read. Books and magazines are still read although this is increasingly done online or in the form of e-books. Barely any book title or magazine is published without a digital version. However, libraries face problems when it comes to providing their users with e-books. One reason for this is the imposition of so-called 'windowing' that, among other things, means that libraries may not be able to lend out bestsellers until twelve months following their publication date.

Secondly, fixed book pricing does not apply to e-books and, as a result, licensing costs for libraries are significantly higher than for private purchasers.

The dbv is therefore calling for statutory framework conditions for e-book lending to be rapidly adapted to the needs of the digital age and for access to information in the electronic sector to be guaranteed. The public lending permission for libraries urgently need to be extended from printed books to ebooks.

The dbv calls for: The nationwide expansion of the network infrastructure must be ensured



As public institutions supplying information, libraries have a significant role to play in digital participation. They are only able to comply with this wider social responsibility if an appropriate network infrastructure and technical equipment which meets requirements is provided. However the situation in the roughly 7200 public library systems in Germany is very varied: of the approximately 2000 libraries managed on a full-time basis, 82% do have internet access, however of the 5200 libraries in rural areas, which are managed on a voluntary or part-time basis, only approximately 22% are connected to the internet.

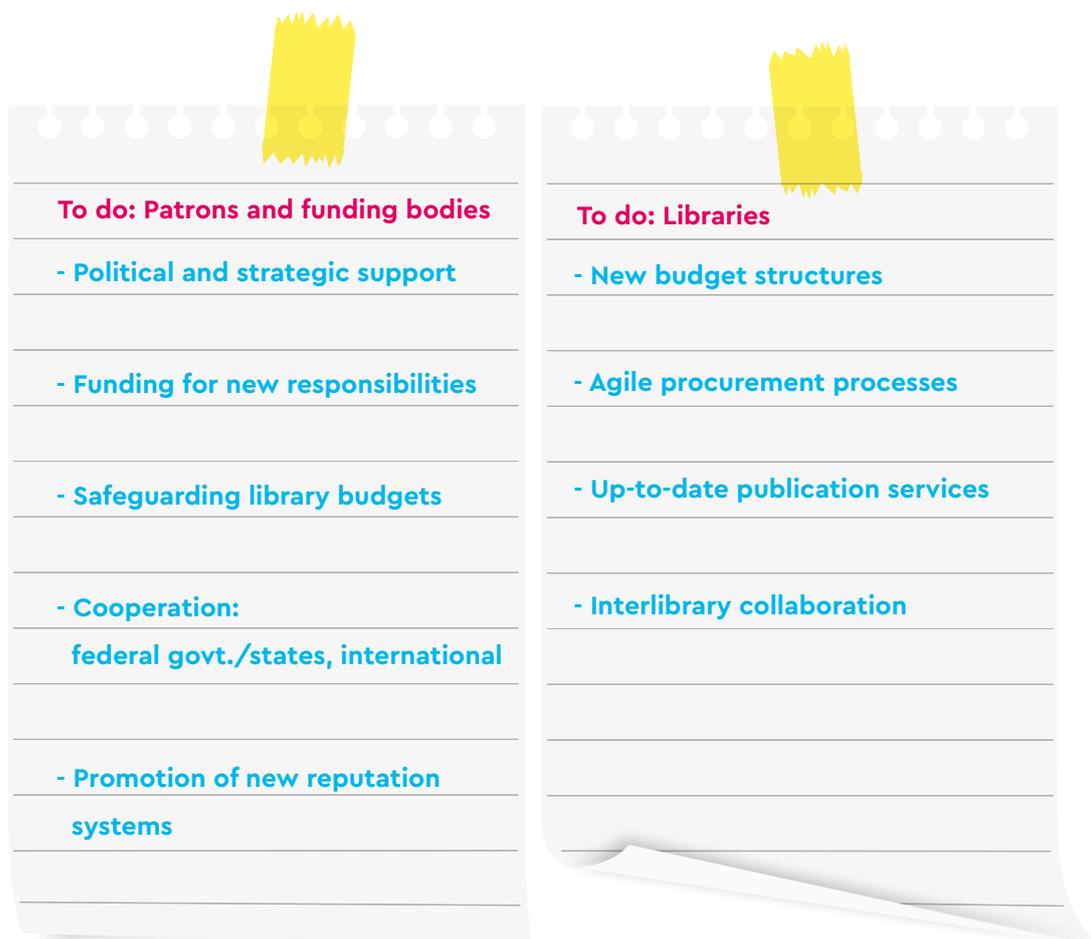
As readily accessible centres of culture and education, libraries contribute to social and cultural life. As stipulated in the Federal Government coalition agreement, the intention is to examine how, in the digital age, libraries can continue to function as important promoters of education and culture. In view of the current challenges facing society, a working group of the *Gleichwertige*

Lebensverhältnisse committee, appointed by the federal government in July 2018, proposed that increasing support should be provided to libraries in rural areas. Libraries are able and willing to take on the challenges of digital transformation. Expansion of the digital infrastructure is an essential requirement in this regard.

With advancing digitalisation, the ability to contribute to establishing equal opportunities for all requires connection to the fibre-optic network, equipment which meets requirements and is technically up-to-date as well as public and free-of-charge access to digital information and to electronic features, such as e-books and film streaming services. Only in this way can library provision in both rural regions and in towns and cities be brought to the desperately needed level. This will require collaboration on the part of the federal government, federal states and the local authorities.

The dbv calls for:

Policymakers must provide strategic and financial support to the establishment of Open Access

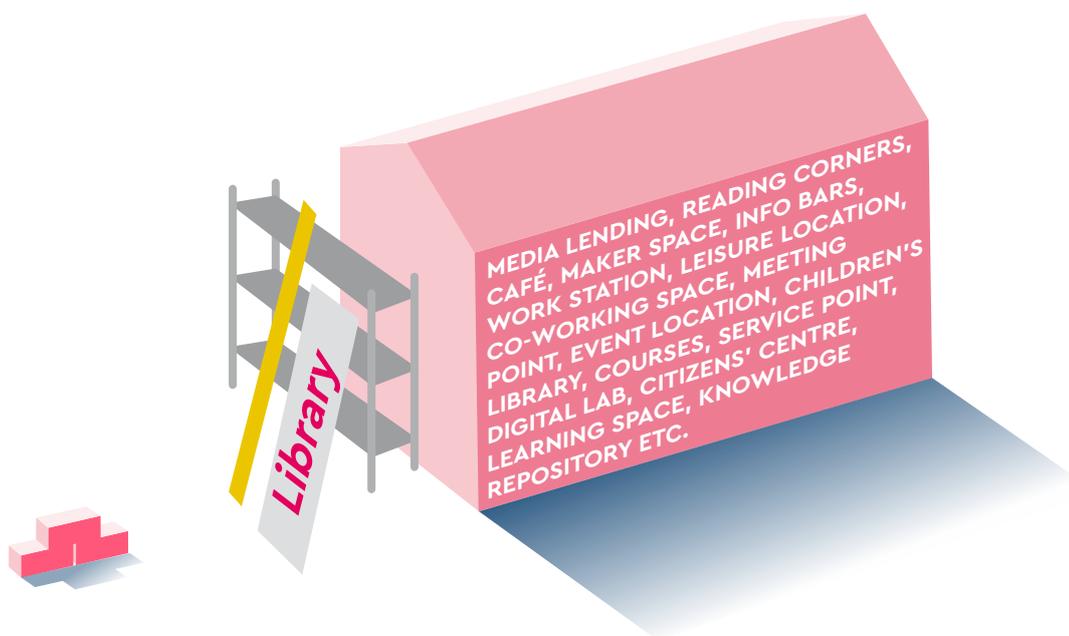


As contemporary service centres, academic libraries fulfil their core tasks of supplying information for research, teaching and study, also under the conditions of the digital environment. In order to safeguard this, national and international cooperation structures must be established and the funding of these core tasks must be secured over the long term.

The increase in electronically available content and the development of new publication formats mean that the ways through which information is supplied to academia are changing and diversifying. The transformation of the publication market and the huge number of different business models resulting from this show that libraries face major problems and new responsibilities.

The agreement between Wiley and the Projekt DEAL institutions in 2019 provided for a large scale transition of scholarly journals to Open Access. But more needs to be done to promote Open Access to academic information and findings. To enable purchasing, licensing, the supply of documentation and Open Access, libraries require political support, joint strategies, national as well as international cooperation and long-term funding through their patrons in the federal government and federal states.

The dbv calls for: **Libraries must be enabled to develop as 'third places'**



Today, libraries undertake a range of other tasks in addition to media provision and education. As non-commercial and readily accessible public spaces, they are used as venues for education and leisure activities. However, in order to be able to develop their potential in terms of the varied possible uses, smart investment is required in their equipment and in the design and organisation of spaces.

In the digital society in particular, locations where people can meet and communicate are becoming increasingly important. Public libraries provide numerous opportunities in this regard, all of which are actively used: in many locations visitor numbers are increasing and users are spending much longer on-site than previously. In order to respond flexibly to these changes in patterns of use, investment is needed in many libraries – for the redesign of premises to transform these into centres of learning and encounter e.g. by setting up maker-

spaces, creating new group workstations and by creating an up-to-date children's library. The annual financial survey conducted among public libraries run on a full-time basis revealed that 46% – i.e. just under half of the responding libraries – were unable to fund any necessary infrastructure renewal from their existing budgets. Almost 51% of libraries report they need additional funds for essential building measures.

However, despite the increased need for funding due to the additional responsibilities and requirements, there has been no increase in budgets after many years of cost cutting – a good 73% of libraries surveyed stated that their overall budget had remained the same as the previous year. If local authorities wish to create more attractive meeting places for their citizens, they must provide more funding in the future.

Deutscher Bibliotheksverband e.V. (dbv)

– German Library Association
National Head Office
Fritschestraße 27–28
D-10585 Berlin
Tel. +49 30 644 98 99 10
Fax: +49 30 644 98 99 29

www.bibliotheksverband.de
dbv@bibliotheksverband.de

 [bibverband](#)
 [deutscherbibliotheksverband](#)

Editors

Kristin Bäßler
Kathrin Hartmann
Barbara Schleihagen
Anne Wellingerhof

Design

mor-design.de

Printed by

Kössinger AG, Schierling

Images

dbv/Thomas Meyer/Ostkreuz
in: Luckenwalde library

ISSN: 2195–2531

→ **German Version**

Bericht zur Lage der Bibliotheken 2019/2020

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