

# 2015/16 report on the state of libraries in Germany

FACTS AND FIGURES



## Dear Reader

Libraries are the most-used cultural and educational institutions in Germany, as is impressively demonstrated by the key figures on this page. In times of increasing digitalisation, it is important to secure their long-term future. The German Library Association (dbv) is therefore publishing the sixth edition of its "Report on the State of Libraries". The report has become an established means of informing politicians, the media and interested members of the public about the varied and innovative services offered by libraries, and of substantiating the presented facts with statistics. It also highlights the relevant challenges and shortcomings, identifies the need for political action and proposes solutions.

For more than 65 years, the German Library Association (dbv) has been committed to developing and securing the legal and financial framework for comprehensive library services that should be accessible to everyone in Germany. The Association has over 2,100 members. It maintains close contacts with parliaments and ministries, as well as with municipal associations and local authorities. It formulates requirements for library policy and develops position papers. Its press and public relations work highlights the importance of libraries for education, culture and science, as well as for the social inclusion of all. The dbv has strong partners at both the national and international level, and maintains close contacts with representatives of book shops, authors and publishers. The Association's core tasks are financed solely by members' contributions. It also receives significant third-party funding.

We are pleased to present this informative report on the current state of libraries.

### DR. FRANK SIMON-RITZ

Chairman of the German Library Association

### KEY FIGURES 2014



Source: German Library Statistics, 2014

## Libraries: what the politicians say



**AYDAN ÖZOĞUZ**

Federal Government Commissioner for Migration, Refugees and Integration



**JULIA REDA**

Member of the European Parliament (Vice President of the Greens/EFA Group, Member of the Pirate Party)



**SVEN VOLMERING**

Member of the Federal Parliament, Rapporteur for Digital Education of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group on the German Parliamentary Committee for Education, Research and Technology Assessment

"Those who flee don't have any books. And yet refugees don't arrive here empty-handed - they bring their knowledge, experience and history with them. Of course they don't just need books to feel at home in their new lives, new city, new culture and new language. Accommodation and housing, work and education and above all secure prospects are imperative for building a new future for themselves and their family. But books and media provide information about their new homeland, create a link with their own history and can therefore build bridges between what they had to leave behind and what lies ahead. So their local library can represent a piece of home."

"Libraries are windows to new worlds and guarantee an informed, open society. They deserve legal certainty and support for their work in providing content regardless of the medium. When negotiating a new European copyright, the barriers that apply in the 'analogue world' should not be diluted. Libraries must retain their rights, even in the digital environment. We must all fight not just for libraries, but also for an open society."

"Digitalisation is finding its way into all areas of life within our society. Of course, children and young adults are now growing up with it, so I believe that learning about and understanding digital media and programmes is obligatory. The overall educational aim of digital autonomy includes (digital) information, research, source evaluation and media skills. As essential elements of Germany's cultural and educational infrastructure, I believe that libraries can make an important contribution to promoting these skills as part of digital education."

Photos: Federal Government/Denzel (Aydan Özoğuz), Stella von Saldern (Sven Volmering), CC0 licensed in the public domain (Julia Reda)



# 1 THE DBV CALLS FOR: equal rights for print and digital – e-books in public libraries!

All libraries acquire their media at the prevailing market terms, thereby paying a great deal of money to publishers and authors. In 2014 the total procurement budget came to EUR 416 million. Plus a further EUR 15 million for the so-called national and regional “public lending rights” that are paid to publishers and authors for lending or copying media via the copyright collective (VG Wort).

In research libraries, media acquisition has fundamentally changed: over half the media budget is now spent on electronic publications, and in some libraries this figure is up to 90%. This shift is due to the changing reading and study behaviour of scientists and students, who want to access all the necessary publications on their own PC at any time. The licences required for this are negotiated across campuses.

Municipal libraries must also fulfil their purpose of ensuring inclusion and accessibility in the digital environment. As publically funded institutions, they allow access to culture and information, regardless of income, along with equally fair remuneration for the creative artists. A balance between their media inventory and cultural and contextual aspects is therefore more important than the anticipated demand.

However, many e-books cannot currently be borrowed from public libraries, as some publishers do not negotiate licences. According to the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, this contradicts the cultural policy interest in broad, comprehensive access to cultural assets.<sup>1</sup> The widespread accusation within the publishing world, that libraries would offer free flat-rate services that compete with the publishing houses, is simply not true. Because access to e-books in libraries is only possible to a limited extent: consecutive loans make simultaneous access by many readers impossible, because

as soon as an e-book is borrowed, it is no longer available to anyone else. There can still be no talk of supplying the entire population with e-books from a single library, as municipal libraries are funded by towns and cities and their services only provided for their registered citizens.

This is why the dbv is calling for legal equality between electronic and printed publications. Book shops, publishers and libraries all advocate the equality of book prices and VAT. Whilst there is already draft legislation for controlling book prices, politicians also criticise the unequal treatment of VAT: “Be it digital or analogue – it is the content that distinguishes a book and not the format in which it is made available to the reader. A book is a book, regardless of how it is supplied.”<sup>2</sup>

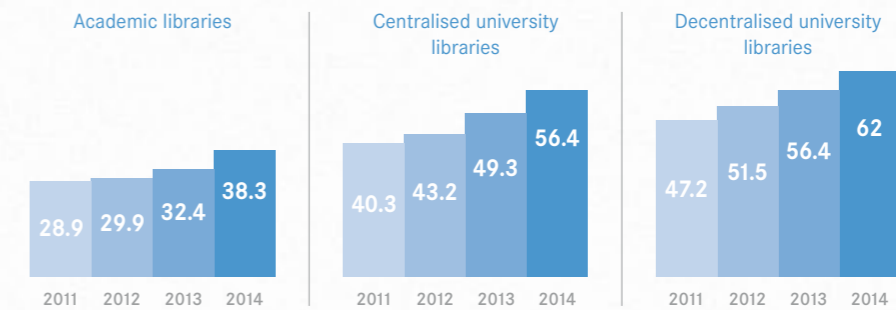
So if a book is a book, then this must also apply to library lending and author remuneration. This equality will be achieved by an extension to the copyright law which regulates the legal basis for libraries to purchase and lend physical media in the book market. In future, the approval of this library lending must also include lending in digital format. For the population, this is a critical concern for the future of a public asset.

<sup>1</sup> Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media, “Culture policy requirements for copyright in the digital environment” press release dated 10.3.2015

<sup>2</sup> The Culture Secretaries of France, Poland, Italy and Germany in a press release dated 19.3.2015

## RESEARCH LIBRARIES

Electronic publications’ share of the media budget (in per cent)



Source: German Library Statistics, 2014

## PUBLIC LIBRARIES

Use of electronic publications (lending)

Category	2011	2012	2013	2014
e-books	828,581	2,525,486	6,040,923	10,124,761
e-audios (digital talking books)	430,538	700,948	1,081,370	1,813,690
e-periodicals (newspapers/magazines)	293,256	484,925	729,120	986,099
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,552,375</b>	<b>3,711,359</b>	<b>7,851,413</b>	<b>12,924,550</b>

Source: German Library Statistics, 2014

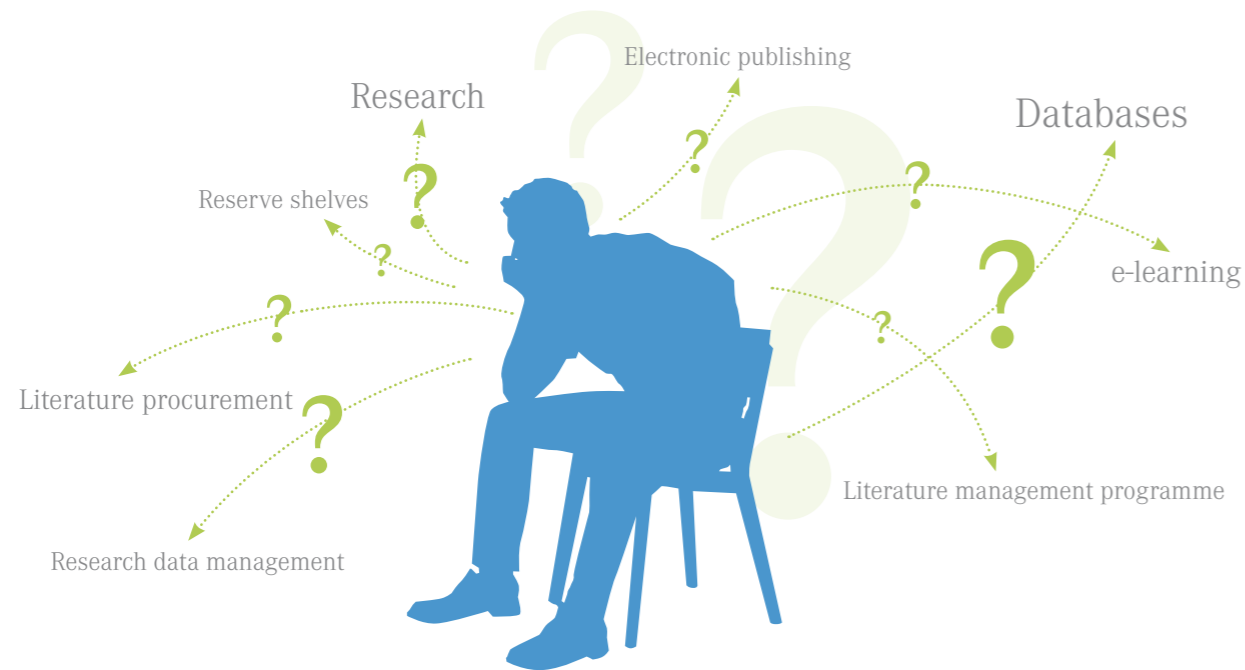
## USE OF E-BOOKS

German citizens aged 14 and over



Source: Allensbach Media Market Analysis, AWA 2015

## 2 THE DBV CALLS FOR: library staff to be specifically trained to promote media and information literacy



With its “digital agenda”, the Federal Government is also seeking to improve citizens’ digital media and information literacy. For many years, libraries have been promoting these essential skills to people of all social classes and age groups, by offering appropriate training.

They run age-appropriate library tours and research workshops, which typically develop these skills and include electronic information resources.

Academic libraries are strong partners in supporting information literacy among students, teachers and researchers at universities. Research libraries have extensive experience of and proven concepts for promoting information literacy. In 2014, for example, they delivered over 50,000 training hours.

Children and young adults must be given a solid foundation in digital media. City and municipal libraries organise many events for families, and support the educational transition of the younger generation through close cooperation with nurseries and schools. Efficient school libraries can also play an important role in this. In towns and cities, the digital media literacy of older people is also being specifically promoted by various services and their confident handling of digital media improved. Over 100,000 events were held in public libraries in 2014.

Promoting media and information literacy is a fundamental task of libraries – and policies should exploit this. The aim must be to actively support appropriate staff development actions in libraries and expand library services through the targeted development of their professional staff.

## 3 THE DBV CALLS FOR: media literacy to be improved by developing school libraries

The Federal Government’s digital agenda and a decision by the Conference of Education Ministers on 8 March 2012 call for media education in schools, in order to firmly establish media education as an area of study. Media literacy should also be taught in schools as a fourth core subject, alongside reading, writing and arithmetic. A demand which the German Library Association strongly supports.

The “Frankfurt Declaration” adopted by the Executive Board of the German Library Association defines the Association of School Libraries as a lynchpin of media education work. It therefore calls for these libraries to be given the necessary media infrastructure and appropriately qualified staff.

Today’s libraries define themselves as learning establishments in the context of lifelong learning. They have therefore developed new spatial, media and educational library services in recent years.

At the same time, the demands on school education and school libraries have also changed. The decision by the Conference of Education Ministers initiated the innovative expansion of the curricula in all Federal States: promoting media literacy has finally reached all subjects and therefore requires the extensive use of media. Yet there remains a lack of specialist media teachers who could identify schools’ needs and implement this training programme.

There is also no nationwide survey of the development of school libraries that perform these educational functions.

### THE FRANKFURT DECLARATION 2015

#### The dbv has formulated three principals for future school library work:

- 1 The school library should become the school’s media hub.
- 2 The school library must be used as a flexible learning environment.
- 3 The school library needs to be managed by a media education professional who unlocks the library’s educational potential in collaboration with all those responsible for teaching and school life.



Photo: Weik1 / GEWOBA

## 4 THE DBV CALLS FOR: additional funding for library services for refugees

Given the ever increasing number of asylum-seekers, libraries are helping towns and cities with their integration work. Libraries have developed special services for displaced persons, in close collaboration with refugee shelters.

To facilitate their arrival in Germany, Bremen City Library, for example, has provided temporary housing facilities with bilingual media boxes of new books and toys on permanent loan, which residents can use without the need for a library card or any other red tape. The library has also issued all refugees in Bremen with a library card that entitles them to use the library's services free of charge for a year. They are introduced to the library during guided tours.

In other libraries, materials are provided for adults to learn German and multi-lingual readings are being planned for refugee children. The permanent provision of books in

transitional classes helps them learn German, so that they can be transferred to regular classes as quickly as possible. Voluntary library guides help the refugees select literary services.

Libraries provide dictionaries and "picture books", along with special tours and events. They organise donations to offset the annual fee. They are places for people to meet and learn, provide access to the Internet and work closely with volunteers who look after local people. With all these measures, libraries are making an important contribution to the inclusion and equal opportunities of displaced people in our culture and society.

Visiting the library should be included in the curriculum of the German Language and Integration Courses. Additional funding for multi-lingual information provision and the creation of additional internet work stations are also required.

## 5 THE DBV CALLS FOR: talks between all political levels regarding the design of a sustainable library landscape

Libraries are more popular than ever: as cultural and learning centres, as providers of knowledge and skills, as guardians of our cultural heritage and as modern service providers, they play a crucial role in the information society. Against the background of far-reaching transformation processes involving the digitalisation of all areas of our lives, the lack of a strategic approach to libraries as an important part of the educational infrastructure is having an even more serious effect.

So that libraries can continue to provide their key public services in future, it is vital to rigorously develop their role and responsibilities in the digital world. Joint agreements and uniform standards for facilities and services will help ensure quality.

Along with a lack of federal structures and local ownership, there is also a lack of central coordination and governance in Germany in the form of a strategic library development plan. This is the only way to improve quality and modernise library services.

The lack of a coordinated innovation and development policy for libraries is problematic. Public libraries, in particular, are unable to provide their services as they could and should, due to their continuously declining funding, subsequently inadequate media services and insufficient staff. This particularly affects those users with special needs.

In the case of academic libraries, university autonomy means that there is a lack of overall library management at a regional level. Many of the current difficulties can therefore only be resolved at a municipal and national level, as demonstrated by the example of long-term electronic archiving.

### NATIONAL LIBRARY STRATEGY



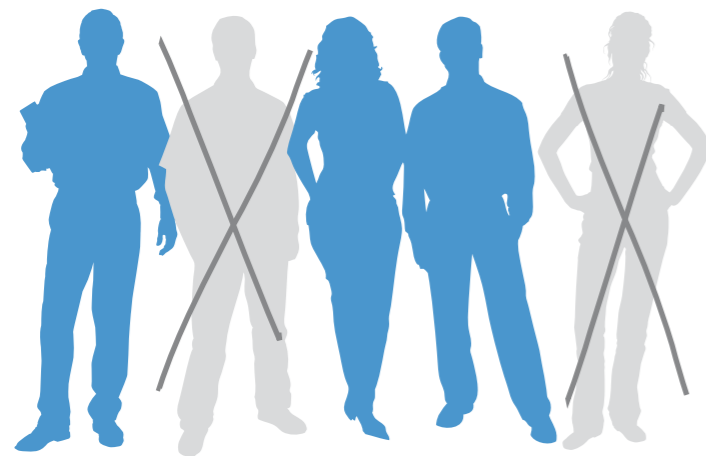
A national strategy is urgently required to reform librarianship. A municipal approach will only work in conjunction with the existing regional and local authority structures. All levels must therefore engage in joint discussions. Efficient libraries that play a vital role in towns and at universities and whose potential is fully exploited when resolving pressing social challenges, are urgently required, in the interests of every citizen. Such an initiative is therefore overdue.



# 6 THE DBV CALLS FOR: improved funding of public libraries for the provision of essential social services

## IMPACT OF AUSTERITY MEASURES ON STAFFING

Permanent job losses



at  
**11.9 %**  
of all libraries  
surveyed

at  
**31.8 %**  
of all libraries in cities with  
over 100,000 residents

at  
**42.9 %**  
of all libraries in cities with  
over 400,000 residents

Source: dbv Members' Survey, 2015

**The innovation, quality and sustainability of libraries are at risk, due to continually reduced budgets. The responses of 758 public libraries (out of the 1,300 surveyed) to this year's financial survey by the German Library Association show that they do not have sufficient funding for essential services.**

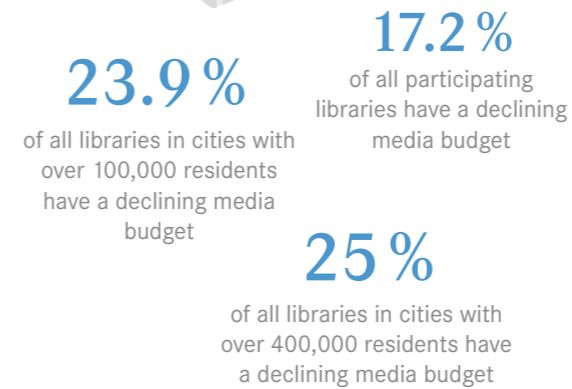
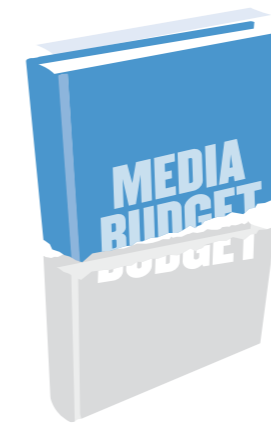
Despite the good economy, the financial situation of Germany's libraries remains tight: like last year, around a quarter of the libraries surveyed are affected by budgetary consolidation measures, and 14.2% are planning these. In cities with over 100,000 residents, the figures are even more dramatic: 40.3% are implementing severe austerity measures, and almost a third are planning to do so. A total

of 20.3% of respondents are subject to a global spending freeze, and in metropolitan cities, 2014's figure of 31.6% has even increased to 37.5% this year.

With consistently high visitor numbers, these restraints are having a major impact on the core elements of library work: 17.2% of participating libraries are having to operate with a reduced media budget. The austerity measures are particularly affecting events. A fifth of libraries therefore state that they are having to reduce the number of events. Almost half of the respondents are unable to provide essential services for those with special needs – the educationally disadvantaged, pensioners, people with disabilities and refugees – with the available funding. In metropolitan

## IMPACT OF AUSTERITY MEASURES ON MEDIA SERVICES

Declining media budget



## IMPACT OF AUSTERITY MEASURES ON OPENING TIMES

Reduced opening times



Source: dbv Members' Survey, 2015

cities with over 100,000 residents, where there is a particular requirement for this, over 60% of the libraries surveyed even state that they need additional funding for these services. The politically so important objective of educational equality cannot therefore be achieved to the required extent, although libraries could play a pivotal role in this.

Local partnerships and collaborative projects with partners from inside and outside their own institution in the areas of cultural education, promoting reading, supplying literature and improving information and media literacy are important components of the cultural and educational work of libraries. These can only be implemented with the appropriate financial and human resources – for design, third-party

funding and project management. Almost a third of the libraries surveyed indicate that they are unable to be involved in such partnerships with their existing budget. In order for libraries to be able to fulfil their social mandate – to facilitate inclusion and unrestricted access to information – even in times of increasing digitalisation, they must reinvent themselves. Yet 35.5% of the libraries participating in the survey revealed that they do not have sufficient funds to be able to satisfactorily provide the increasingly sought-after digital services and/or expand their services.

In order to invigorate libraries to execute their educational mandate, it is imperative to stem the tide and increase their funding in the medium to long term.

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