The Netherlands - Report 1993/1994

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In this annual report the emphasis is on activities in which the Koninklijke Bibliotheek (KB) is involved. However, as the national library plays a role in most of the important academic library projects and activities in the Netherlands, this report gives also a good, though not complete picture of national developments.

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1. NATIONAL INFORMATION POLICY

The KB Board of Governors and the President of the University of Amsterdam are the initiators of a Platform for the innovation of scholarly information services, formed at the end of 1992. Participants are governors of all Dutch universities, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW), the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO) and the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. The KB is also represented by its President in the Steering Committee, which consists of seven Platform members. The Committee has the supervision over several projects, the secretariat is performed by SURFnet, the Dutch research network. The Committee commissioned a survey on document delivery services in the Netherlands and will negotiate with publishers to make an arrangement for the use of copyrighted material. The Dutch government considers the Platform and Steering Committee as the main instruments for the innovation of information services for higher education and scholarly research. Government policy was laid down in a memorandum for the Parliament. From this it can be concluded that the government has no intentions for more active involvement in the field. In discussions with the government the KB stressed the importance of the government's responsibility for maintaining the national information infrastructure. The Dutch Union Catalogue and automated Interlibrary Loan System is an essential part of this infrastructure, for which KB and Pica signed a new contract. The responsibilities for the infrastructure are now clearly distinguished: functional and content related management (KB) on the one hand, and technical management (Pica) on the other.

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2. STRATEGIC PLANNING

At the end of 1993 the Koninklijke Bibliotheek has started a strategic planning process. The first step in drawing up a strategic plan was an assessment of major issues and developments in the library's environment. An overview of these factors most of them in some way connected with information technology has been conducted as the starting point of the planning process. As the next step in the planning process a discussion paper has been produced identifying the main choices that the Koninklijke Bibliotheek will have to make. In meetings with all the departments, chaired by the Chief Executive, comments on these draft policy lines have been gathered and proposals for action will be discussed. The proposed accents in the future policy are: . Promoting one national infrastructure for access and delivery of printed and electronic information . Maintaining a broad basic collection in the humanities and social sciences, and an in-depth collection of documents in specific areas . Improving access to electronic information. Desktop delivery . Building and management of a repository

for electronic documents . Preservation of the Dutch cultural heritage. Apart from the results of the internal discussions, the outcome of a recent user survey will be helpful in formulating the strategic plan in the next months.

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3. INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AND NEW SERVICES

3.1 Cataloguing and locating electronic documents

Since April 1993 the Koninklijke Bibliotheek has been in charge of a bureau for networked information (InfoServices). The purpose is to improve network access through selecting, cataloguing and indexing network services, and to act as an intermediary between the individual researcher and electronic information. An ftp-archive and a Gopherservice have been installed for a number of information suppliers and SURFnet, which has commissioned the project. InfoServices has set up guidelines for the service organization and formats for file descriptions. It is responsible for quality control and continuity of service. KB/InfoServices, Pica and SURFnet are working together in a project (EDOC) to develop cataloguing facilities for networked information through the Shared Cataloguing System, and facilities for locating networked information through the Dutch Union Catalogue and Interlibrary Loan System.

3.2 KB Gopher Alexicon

Since April 1994 the Koninklijke Bibliotheek operates its own information server (Alexicon). This service, which is organized according to the InfoServices model, offers information on the KB organization and its services. This annual report for instance will soon be available through the network. Via Alexicon network users can also search the KB OPAC. Moreover, Alexicon offers IFLA's professional reports, documents from the European Library Automation Group (ELAG) and those from the National Preservation Office. Alexicon can be accessed through Internet (Gopher.konbib.nl or Python.konbib.nl).

3.3 Humanities Information Workstation

The KB developed a prototype Humanities Information Workstation for scholars in the field of history of modern art. The workstation will support the user in several aspects of information work. The user will have access to all online resources within or outside the library which are relevant to his subject field (databases, electronic documents, OPACs, Gopher services, images, CD-ROMs). For the project the Internet was searched for interesting documents and databases in the subject field mentioned, which were subsequently catalogued and indexed. The researcher will be able to download interesting information to his workstation and edit the results for his own purposes using wordprocessor, spreadsheet or other software. The Internet will be used for making an inventory of databases and documents in other subject fields too. Because of the innovative character of the service the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research agreed to provide the financial resources for further development and implementation of the workstations.

3.4 Document delivery

The Pica project for rapid document delivery RAPDOC was continued. In the project nineteen Dutch libraries are participating. For easy location of articles from a core collection of periodicals, a database is used containing information from the table of contents (Online Contents - OLC). The tables are provided by the Dutch subscription agent Swets & Zeitlinger, which operates an international scanning service. Articles are supplied within 24 hours, for ordering and delivery procedures the existing national ILL infrastructure is used. The annual growth of the OLC database is more than 2 million articles. At the end of 1993 the agreement with the subscription agent was renewed, implying among others an extension of the core collection from 7,000 to 14,000 periodicals. Pica developed end-user facilities for the OLC database, as well as for the Dutch Union Catalogue. The facilities concern end-user searching and document ordering. The Jupiter consortium (KB, the Technical University of Delft Library, the Agricultural University of Wageningen Library and the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences Library) extended its document delivery activities. In 1993

Jupiter received 600,000 requests for copies of journal articles. This is 70% of all external journal article requests in the Netherlands. Over 90% of the requested documents is delivered from a collection of 40,000 current (inter)national journal subscriptions. Jupiter, in cooperation with the Medical Library, Erasmus University, launched an international document delivery service: the Jupiter Article Highway. Requests for copies of journal articles will result in delivery within four days upon receipt of the request.

4. COOPERATION THROUGH COORDINATION

4.1 Shared subject indexing and cooperative collection building

Since July 1993 the KB is the national coordinating body for a system of Shared Subject Indexing. Using the Pica Shared Cataloguing System, participating libraries (major Dutch research libraries) add subject headings to individual titles as well as a classification code. The subject headings are chosen from an index (thesaurus) which is periodically reviewed, while the codes come from a new classification system known as the Dutch Basic Classification, which has been developed specially for this project. The new classification has been designed as a broad classification only, and does not provide a deep, hierarchical system. The index of subject headings has been developed during the 1980s in the Library of the Amsterdam University, and is converted to the Pica system for this project. At the moment the index contains about 40,000 headings. Under the auspices of Pica and the group of university libraries, KB, and KNAW library, a national Steering Committee is guiding the project. The KB provides a National Coordinator who supervises the development of the system. Frequent consultations between the subject specialists of the participating libraries are an indispensable part of the project. Until now about 350,000 copies have been indexed during a period of three and a half years. The new strategy for cooperative collection building in the Netherlands, coordinated by the KB, has been implemented (see annual report 1992/1993). Instead of a central, overall approach to the whole area of learning and science the approach is now more differentiated and directed at existing discussion groups of subject specialists. In the long run, the Basic Classification will provide the tool for the comparison of individual library collections.

4.2 Supplementary acquisition of foreign literature

In May 1994 a committee of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences issued a report on the provision of scholarly literature and libraries in the Netherlands. The report contains an analysis of severe problems in the provision of literature for research in the humanities as a result of high journal prices and budget restrictions. The `Verteilungsplan der Sondersammelgebiete' in Germany has been suggested as an example for a Dutch plan for coordinated supplementary acquisition of foreign literature. The committee claims additional resources to the amount of Dfl 15 million yearly. In a letter to the Minister of Education and Science the Academy Board stated to agree with the problem definition in the report, but recommended further study into the extent of the problem. The KB decided to take the first step and announced to carry out a quantitative analysis of collection building in several subject fields in the Netherlands.

5. COOPERATION IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PROJECTS

5.1 UseMarcon

With the growing demand on exchange of bibliographic data, conversion is a major problem. The aim of the UseMarcon project, which is partly financed by the European Commission, is to develop a toolbox that is able of converting bibliographic records from any MARC-like format into any other format, possibly through UNIMARC. A feasibility study was carried out, the results of which will be issued in the second part of 1994. Partners are: British Library, Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro (Lisbon), Deutsche Bibliothek, VNI Informatica en KB.

5.2 Mecano
In February 1994 the Mecano project started, partly funded by the European Commission. It aims at the development of a PC based interface to process search results of a CD-ROM session through the holdings of journals available in the local library and perhaps also in other libraries. The user should be able to know directly the actual availability of the requested document(s) without manual intervention. The Mecano interface will be developed in a joint project of six European libraries together with a Dutch contractor (Cap Gemini).

5.3 Forum on National Bibliographic Databases
CENL has set up a Forum as a subgroup to develop a European programme of research on national bibliographic databases. The KB is actively involved in the development of several projects in the framework of this programme that is called Computerised Bibliographic Record Actions (CoBRA).

5.4 Management Information System (MOSAIK)
At the end of 1993 the specifications were established for a management information system for the KB, which should also be an example for similar systems in other libraries. Data input will be by keyboard or, for most data, automatically from the databases of the operational systems (library system, financial system, etc). All kinds of statistics will be generated, at different levels, to monitor operational and financial library performance.

5.5 National preservation policy
Since 1990 the KB and the National Archives of the Netherlands cooperate in the National Preservation Office (CNC). In recent years several research projects were carried out which gave insight into the extent of the problems associated with the physical conservation of the contents of archives and libraries. Three projects concerned the preservation of the Dutch cultural heritage. An inventory was made of the most important collections of Dutch and Friesian literature in Dutch libraries, together about 220 collections. In a current project information about all Dutch literature in five large libraries, among which the KB, is gathered to assess the conservation costs of this cultural heritage. In April 1994 CNC organized a seminar with speakers from libraries, archives, a quality newspaper, and the government. So far, the government subsidized research projects, but did not hold out the prospect of providing the financial resources needed to tackle the problem of the paper damage itself. It is expected that the government will soon deploy its funding support in a letter to the Parliament.

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