

ANNUAL REPORT 1994/1995 Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of The Netherlands

Introduction

The main mission of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek as the national library of the Netherlands is to preserve the national printed and written heritage. Apart from the deposit collection of printed material, the KB has a high level collection of scholarly literature in the humanities and a number of special collections comprising incunabula, medieval and modern manuscripts, early printed books etc. The coverage of the social sciences is less in depth; scientific literature is not actively collected. In 1994 the KB had an estimated 2,200,000 bound volumes.

Library in Politics

The Dutch law for higher education and academic research contains a general description of the tasks of the national library as an independent legal body, funded by the government. In 1994 the KB elaborated those tasks in a position paper, which was endorsed by the State Secretary of Education, Culture and Science. Research & development will be strengthened in the years to come.

After long discussions the government came to a decision on the ownership of the library building. For the time being the present situation will be continued in which the government is the owner of the building. Sufficient resources were promised for its maintenance until 1998.

Information Technology and New Services

A plan was made for the further development of informatization in the KB during the years 1995-1997. The plan was published in April 1995 and is also made available through Alexicon, the network information service of the KB.

Library automation

KB continued the use of Pica systems for all library functions. OPAC access has been improved by the addition of a dial-in facility and by adding the OPAC to our Alexicon service. A separate file was added, containing references to articles in KB journals: the Online Contents File. Records are produced by a subscription agent and are downloaded from the central Pica OLC file. A new financial mechanism was introduced, called the ILL-account, by which the end-user can order documents, using a prepaid account to settle the costs.

Office automation

KB office automation was expanded to include Internet access (Gopher/WWW) for a group of KB workers. This inevitably leads to the migration of the existing DOS environment to Windows. A datacommunication plan was drawn up describing among others the instalment of a new cabling structure for data and speech and active components for high speed networking (100 Mbps and up).

Retroconversion

The retroconversion of the old card catalogue of the KB started in the beginning of 1995. This catalogue with some 700,000 entries is still used for the retrieval of books acquired before 1979. As part of an employment project extra staff was appointed to carry out the job.

Advanced Information Workstation (AIW)

The KB invested largely in activities to develop and offer electronic services for the end-user. AIW is a workstation which integrates different information services, network navigation tools and a number of PCutilities. A prototype has been developed in 1994 and successfully reviewed.

Alexicon

Since April 1994 the KB provides the network information service Alexicon. The service started as a Gopher. During 1994 a Word Wide Web server was installed (<http://www.kb.nl>). In 1995 the web-environment will be further developed, including the choice and/or development of authoring tools for the local information suppliers to deliver their information in the required formats.

Storage and distribution of electronic documents

In April 1995 representatives of Dutch universities, other research institutions and the KB entered into an agreement with publishers which will enable both parties to initiate experiments exploring technical, legal and accounting issues related to the use of electronic files.

National Preservation Policy

Since 1990 the KB and the National Archives of the Netherlands cooperate in the National Preservation Office (CNC). In June the KB issued a report on the feasibility of preserving Dutch books and journals which were published in the years 1840-1950. Dutch libraries hold 580,000 book titles and 18,000 journal titles from this period in one or more copies. A preservation programme should include microfilming, registration of data in the central Pica system for shared cataloguing, packaging and de-acidification in due course. The KB started a pilot study in which 67 unique newspapers in the collection are put on microfilm preceding a national plan.

Public Relations

In 1994 the KB compiled 'Honderd hoogtepunten uit de Koninklijke Bibliotheek / A hundred highlights from the Koninklijke Bibliotheek', issued by the publishing company Waanders. The book contains hundred full colour photographs and text presenting items from the special collections of the KB: books, manuscripts, book bindings and items from the paper-historical collection. The items were displayed during an exhibition which was inaugurated by the Crown Prince and attracted wide interest in the media and from the public. Moreover, the content of the book has been scanned. The images can be retrieved through Alexicon.

International Cooperation

The KB is participating in several international projects:

MECANO

UseMARCON

INCIPIT

Hand Press Book Database

CoBRA-METRIC

BIBLINK

GABRIEL

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