

# KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK, NATIONAL LIBRARY OF THE NETHERLANDS

## Annual report 1999 to the Foundation CENL

Koninklijke Bibliotheek

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### Management of the library

In 1998 the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was evaluated by a committee of independent experts. Following the recommendations of this committee to strengthen the user-orientation, 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 and target groups and its competitors. Also a lot of 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 for the period of 2000-2003 are described. They are derived from the core tasks of the kb. In working out these core tasks, the kb has opted for developing the following four societal functions:

- the function of classic (physical) library
- the function of virtual library
- the function of cultural institution
- the function of knowledge and service centre

Simultaneously, much energy was put in the formulation of the mission statement, because this will serve as the compass for all the marketing decisions and communication actions. 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 division heads submit three times a year. In order to improve the quality of the management information, ongoing attention is given to quantifying data in the management reports.

### **Handling of electronic publications and formats**

After working with bilateral agreements with a few publishers in the past years, the kb reached a general agreement with the Dutch Publishers Association for the deposit of electronic publications. This provides an excellent base for the kb to expand the depository collection with all kinds of electronic publications (off-line and on-line).

IBM Digital Library software is used as an autonomous host system for storage, retrieval and accessibility of electronic publications. The Government agreed to subsidise the further development of the Deposit of Electronic Publications in the next three years.

When it comes to lasting, controlled storage and preservation as well as completeness and availability of digital documents, a more improved technical infrastructure is necessary. In 1999, the kb has made the first steps towards the realisation of an overall Deposit System for Electronic Publications. A system like this has never been developed elsewhere before. A Request for Information (rfi) was sent to a limited number of ICT companies, which might be capable of building the system. Based on the results of the rfi, a European Tender procedure was started at the end of the year.

### **Funding**

The cutback in expenditure, which has led to a reduction of twelve establishment posts in 2001, goes according to plan. New expenditure cuts from the Government will lead to a further reduction of personnel after 2001, unless compensation is offered.

The kb is negotiating with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science about three major financial bottlenecks: the Deposit of Electronic Publications, preservation & digitisation and the housing. All these bottlenecks need structural solutions.

### **Staffing matters**

In 1999, the first steps were taken towards the merger of the Union Catalogue Division and the Public Services Division into one User Services Division. More than 80 people (over 25% of the entire kb personnel) are involved in this merger. In the new division the services of the kb will be more user-oriented, in a more uniform presentation. Innovation and the improvement of products and services for the customers will be very important. Flexibility, employability and versatility are expected from the staff, for which a special training programme will be developed. The merger will be completed in the second half of 2000.

### **Information technology and networks**

The migration of all workstations from DOS to Windows NT was completed. Much effort was spent on the millennium problem. This resulted in a complete inventory of all equipment and services. If necessary, replacements were carried out. The entrance to the new millennium did not cause any problems.

The kb is working on the development of an integrated catalogue in which eventually the general catalogue, the catalogues of special collections, journal articles and digitised material and Internet resources are incorporated. It is expected that this service will be available in the second half of 2000.

After almost four years in use, the kb website needed to be restyled. Not only form, but also functionality and structure had to be adjusted to the latest standards in web technology. The new design had to be user-friendly and more attractive. At the end of 1999, over 2,500

documents were migrated to the new website, which was officially on line in March 2000 (www.kb.nl).

### **The digital library**

The digitisation of information has made it possible to bring the library to its users. Remote access has become the standard. The further development of the kb as a virtual library is one of the formulated marketing targets for the years to come. In the new User Services Division a special virtual desk will be established which will function as a signpost in knowledge land. It should be possible to consult digitised parts of the collection at a distance.

Several digitisation projects are in progress. In 1999 the kb and the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam started 'The Digital Historical Atlas'. This project aims to provide improved access to digitised seventeenth century Dutch pamphlets (kb), history prints and commemorative medals (Rijksmuseum) via a specially developed website. The kb has gained valuable experience in digitisation projects like this. In 1999 the kb established a digitisation laboratory and a National Digitisation Office. This knowledge and service centre can play a co-ordinating role in programmes to digitise Dutch cultural and intellectual heritage on a national scale.

### **Acquisitions**

Following a national plan, drawn up by the kb to strengthen the humanities collections in the Netherlands, the kb received nlg 850,000 (Euro 385700) from The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research. Almost 6,000 extra publications were purchased with this money, most of them unique material in the Netherlands. A follow-up application for further financing has been submitted.

At the moment, a structural raise in the collection building budget cannot be expected.

Therefore, the kb decided to sharpen the acquisition policy of the scholarly collection. More emphasis will be put on the Humanities. To distinguish the kb from the university libraries, more attention will be spent on popular culture, also called 'grassroots studies'.

The kb managed to purchase a very special collection of eleven beautiful alba amicorum from the end of the sixteenth and beginning of the seventeenth century. It was the most expensive acquisition in the history of the library; it would not have been possible without the financial support from several cultural funds.

### **Services to readers**

The aim of the marketing project is to attract more customers and to stimulate the use of the library. To reach the customer, it is important to know him. Therefore, two user inquiries were carried out in 1999. Former customers were asked why they did not continue their membership. It turned out that the kb could hardly influence the causes of membership cancellation. New customers were asked how they heard about the kb (public libraries, magazines, universities etc.). The kb will focus more on these media to reach new customers. At the moment the kb is experimenting with extended opening hours and preparations are made for an electronic newsletter for interested readers.

### **Cultural events, exhibitions and publishing**

The success of the jubilee exhibition in Amsterdam in 1998 proved that it is possible to get the general public interested in the treasures of a learned library. One of the strategic marketing targets for the years to come is to develop the role of the kb as a cultural institution by organising large exhibitions in, or in co-operation with other Dutch cultural institutions, developing a special programme for guided tours in the library, and working more closely with museums to become better acquainted with the cultural market.

Two special publications are worth mentioning. In September 1999, the bibliography *Incunabula printed in the Low Countries* was published. This book is the result of the co-operation between the British Library and the KB and describes the 2,229 incunabula printed in the Low Countries.

Another milestone is the publication, in print and on cd-rom, of *Dutch Printer's Devices 15th-17th Century*. Based on the information in the Short Title Catalogue Netherlands, over 16,000 Dutch printer's and bookseller's devices are ordered and described according to the special classification system Iconclass.

### **Library co-operation**

- National co-operation

The kb co-ordinates national co-operation in the field of collection building and subject indexing. On behalf of seven libraries, the kb co-ordinates the implementation of a plan to strengthen the humanities collections in the Netherlands. Based on this plan, the Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research provided nlg 5 million (eur 2269000) for additional acquisitions in 1998 and 1999. In September, the kb reported on the first phase of the implementation, the report included an overview of the purchases of the libraries. The decision about the follow-up application is to be expected in the summer of 2000.

- International co-operation

kb's Director General chairs the Foundation Conference of European National Librarians (cenl). The kb also provides its secretariat and the editor for Gabriel, cenl's Internet guide. The kb is participating in Cobra Forum, the standing committee for projects of cenl, and co-ordinating several European projects like Nedlib and Renardus. Together with the British Library and Die Deutsche Bibliothek, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek recently initiated the pilot project 'The European Library'. The aim of this ambitious project is to create a seamless network that will allow Europe's national libraries to present themselves and their treasures – the complete European cultural and intellectual heritage – as one coherent and transparent source of information and knowledge with multi-lingual access.

- Special co-operation

A special agreement was arranged with the Leiden University. In 1999, the Leiden University opened an auxiliary branch in The Hague. Students have free access to the kb and its collections and facilities. As of 2000, the kb will actually provide complete accommodation for the auxiliary branch. In a way this means the Koninklijke Bibliotheek will also be a university library.

### **Major celebrations**

The 25th anniversary of the Deposit Library of Dutch Publications in 1999 was celebrated with a publication and a special exhibition in the library.

The staff of the Office Short Title Catalogue, Netherlands (stcn) has been awarded the prestigious Menno Hertzberger price for its ongoing contribution to the Dutch bibliography until 1800. The price is issued every three years by the Antiquarian Booksellers' Association of the Netherlands to a brilliant study in the field of (Dutch) bibliography or the history of the book. The stcn Office has been established in the kb in 1982.