The Library in Politics

The national library political environment

The National Library of Portugal is part of the Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro, formed in 1992, under the dependency of the Secretary of State for Cultural Affairs.
The Instituto has administrative but not financial autonomy. The official budget allocated for 1994 was of KPTE 1.796.226. As a result of its commercial activities (1) the Instituto obtained a further income of KPTE 69.662 thus the Global budget available was of KPTE 1.865.888.
Four major on-going projects had special investment budgets in 1994. These are:

- Automation of the National Library and the Portuguese Union Catalogue
  KPTE 55 000
- Preservation and Conservation of the National Library Collections
  KPTE 12 000
- Collection Building: Acquisitions of current and retrospective bibliography and special collections
  KPTE 20 000
- New Building
  KPTE 30 000

The national library political role

In terms of political impact, the National Library addressed, in 1994/1995, four particular issues:

- the Campaign Save a Book, with mediatic impact in TV, newspapers and current "open-air" advertising, which arose a large interest from the public in general.
- the Commemorations of the 200 years of the National Library, in 1996, with the preparation of the events, special publications, etc that will take place in 1996/1997. It will soon be made available to the media.
- the availability of the National Union Catalogue-PORBASE in the Internet, providing a greater visibility of the National Library collections and also of the 100 libraries that cooperate in the Union Catalogue. The mediatic impact has been very important in this issue and the image of the National Library has improved.
- the establishment of protocols of cooperation with "partners" from different but complementary areas mostly IT university research centres, university networks and museums. These have proved to be extremely convenient for the technological development of the National Library products and services and also provided a good image of the institution.

Automation, Data Processing, New Products

The automation process is, as we stated at Joint 1, a special investment project, and during 1994/95 the goal was to expand and renew our GEAC 9000 system to allow more data, on one hand, and to made it accessible through networking, on the other hand.

The facilities installed allowed us to inaugurate PORBASE's access via Internet and the creation of a Home Page regarding the Instituto da Biblioteca Nacional e do Livro's activities. Our own Web (2) will permit us, from October on, to distribute more information and to start a cooperative program on electronic publications.

The data processed in 1994 represented an increase of 30%, which is the highest ever achieved. The National Library is responsible for 42% of these new records, 6% of which are current bibliography, and the remaing are retrospective conversion and retrospective cataloguing records. The cooperative libraries respond for the 58% remaining records, thus showing a strong interest in participating in the Union Catalogue.

- The most important of these activities are: training courses, selling of publications, photocopies and microfilms.
- Adresses: Telnet PORBASE.IBL.PT

HTTP://WWW.IBL.PT/IBL

The retrospective conversion of the catalogues will proceed for the next years and we hope to finish it by the year 1998. The possibilities of accessing other databases via Internet and the participation in cooperative projects like the Consortium of European Research Libraries will enable us to speed our retroconversion procedures.

New products are to be launched in September: the CD-ROM of the Portuguese National Bibliography, distributed by Chadwick - Healey and the CD-ROM with the Directory of the Libraries participating in PORBASE, published directly by the National Library. They represent very hard work, considering the small human and technical resources available and are an important part of the automation project.

Conservation and Preservation of Collections

Two relevant issues occurred in this period:

- the effectiveness of the Campaign - Save a Book which enables us to restaure, up to this moment, a good number of rare and unique items of our collections.
- the setting of a Working Group on Preservation and Acess whose task is to study and decide the P A policies of the National Library.

There will be a new regulation for the readers, in order to prevent the access to high school students, and in general to rationalize the accessibility of the collections. Regulations for photographies and microforms are also being worked on, and a middle - term Programme for Microfilming has already been started.In 1996, provisions for Digitization will also start.

Public Relations

During 1994 the National Library has promoted seven major exhibitions.

International Cooperation

Cooperation whithin EC has had a strong impact in the National Library products and services. As a result of EC 2nd call for proposals the projects AIDA, INCIPIT and USEMARCON are still proceeding.

The creation of COBRA and, subsequently, the participation of the National Library brought new opportunities for cooperation not only at the Forum but also in projects, like AUTHOR, and in the chairmanship of Task Group 5 - Long term availibility of electronic publications. Participation in ABINIA - the Association of National Libraries from Latin-American countries also promotes a good opportunity for cooperation, and the CD-ROM "Novum Regestrum" was, in 1994/95, the most visible demonstration of such a spirit.

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Collections (31 Dec. 1994):
Books 2242869 volumes
784617 titles
Serials 312436 volumes
47856 titles
Manuscripts 71321 volumes
25800 individual documents
Microforms 12707 units
Cartographical materials 12386 items
Graphics 65121 items
Music C. 21000 items
Other (incl. audiovisual) C. 10000 items