



NATIONAL LIBRARY OF ARMENIA

COVID-19 REPORT

The Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) led government authorities across the world to implement public safety measures to prevent the spread of the infection, which had direct impact on the activity of library sector. After library buildings closures, immediate responses of libraries to the pandemic were required. Most of them had to move to providing services virtually. To adapt to the new work reality, the professionals of the sector had to assess the risks of working remotely, face challenges around how to offer services and how to provide access to the collections, as well as to get involved in community crisis response. The libraries worldwide attended to the prioritization of resources from physical to digital material and subsequently had to launch the process of digital services and electronic resources creation in order to deal with demand. In this regard it is to note that big range of them have moved to the creation of digital resources long before the emergence of COVID-19. [*Electronic resources*](#) of the National Library of Armenia have greatly facilitated the moving to remote work in response to the emergency measures across the world.

In this period of increased focus on e-services, information updates on terms of use for Library e-resources acquired new importance as a mean for giving people access to books without contact. To lead the customer in the process of online search, NLA librarians undertook the mission of information updating and customer guiding through the online spaces of Library's electronic resources in order to meet the educational needs of students and researchers, to match to the requirements of digital services' increased use and to anticipate future demands of customers. With the help of several customized hashtags, online books and exclusive publications became searchable for target audience. In conditions of limited access to the physical building, online registration and loan services were set up to ensure existing customers service, as well as to help the potential users deprived of opportunity to register in person.

The strong digital presence of the library and accurate use of social media platform are equally important for maintaining customer relations during lockdown. Guided by this principled approach, NLA launched a series of *virtual events and a social media campaign* under different headings:

Recommended by librarians: Librarians represent via videos a passage of their favorite book and advise on what to read during lockdown.

Bringing art to your weeks: Librarians hold online lectures on art literature or discussions on art-related topics.

Century old press releases: The series launched by NLA librarians provides an excellent opportunity to learn interesting news, receive information and make discoveries from century old press releases. Actual topics and press publications of the previous century, time-tested articles and learning tools on overcoming diseases and epidemics are presented on a daily basis.

Today in history: Browsing through the library calendar, the customer finds a detailed timetable of everything happened on that day: anniversaries of outstanding people, remarkable events, international and memorable days (World Theatre Day, International Children's book Day, World Book and Copyright day, International Museum Day, International Day for Monuments and Sites, Book Lovers Day, Reading Marathon, National Library Day, etc.)

Movie day: For about 2 years, bibliophiles and cinephiles had the opportunity to watch the screenings of literary works in Library's cinema hall. During the State of Emergency, film screenings become available through online broadcasting, thus ensuring interesting discussions between participants.

Armenian trace in foreign literature: NLA librarians present books in foreign languages, which include Armenian passages and reveal valuable information on Armenian language, religion, culture, literature and history.

Virtual exhibitions: Along with informational and educational series NLA launched virtual exhibitions of the Library and the Museum of Printing (museum exhibits, online tours of the library, exhibit "History of Armenian Book", exhibit "European Printing Museums (AEPM), etc.)

Cooperation: To facilitate access to content even when library buildings are forced to close NLA attempted to broaden indirect access to materials by cooperating with the State Puppet Theatre of Armenia. The gems of Western Armenian literature were presented by the professional actors of the theatre twice a week.

In the light of the above, plans and some necessary tasks for reopening were carried out to ensure this to happen safely. Due to the falls in rates of infection National Library of Armenia has already reopened its doors along with the implementation of strict rules for customers and employees: temperature checks and hand sanitizers at the entrance, intensified cleaning schedules, access to the gloves and facemasks, regular handwashing, limitation of the number of people in the library in order to ensure social distance maintaining. Returned physical materials are prioritized for disinfection. In case of its impossibility their return is

carried out by taking other precautions: wearing gloves, observing the materials quarantine period, etc. To avoid the diffusion of the virus, NLA continues to hold important events in online format. Virtual helpdesks continue to actively operate and manage customer needs through social media platforms.

The challenging times of COVID-19 pandemic affected the libraries across the world imposing them to adjust their services and collection development practices to the new conditions posed by the disease. The closure of library buildings and the delivery of remote services prompted librarians to find new approaches to face the situation and led to the increased use of digital services. Drawing lessons from our experience, anticipating future demands, focusing on the creation of more flexible library system are the main cornerstones of library uninterrupted and efficient operation in face of possible outstanding challenges.