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German National Library

Annual Report 2020

Exemplifying digitality!

2020 was a very special year for the German National Library (DNB) in many aspects: Frank Scholze assumed his post as the new director general of the German National Library in January. Shortly afterwards, a new virus started to keep everybody busy. Like the rest of the world, DNB had to cope with the corona virus pandemic. Many of library staff members worked from home, DNB had to establish new digital formats. Although these are no substitute for face-to-face interaction and live events, they have still been very successful. Unfortunately, DNB was not able to celebrate two major anniversaries: the 50th anniversary of the German Music Archive in Leipzig and the 30-year anniversary of the united German National Library.

During the latter half of 2020 Germany assumed the presidency of the Council of the European Union. DNB had decided early on to mark the occasion with own events and activities, and thereby highlight the importance of cultural policy. The result was a very diverse programme with three conferences, a film series with actors reading texts about Europe, and a book - House of Europe - which illuminates the topic of "Europe" not just in words but above all with visual examples from DNB's collections.

With Campus V, DNB has been planning to create a hub on the plot to the north of its Frankfurt site in collaboration with the three local universities. The V stands for "Verantwortung", or "Responsibility". DNB wishes to establish a learning and research centre there dedicated to this very topic – from social and ecological responsibility, through to economic and commercial responsibility. As a national library, DNB will create "reading rooms of the future", in which its only presence will be in the form of DNB's digital collections. These reading rooms will be more like data laboratories in which academics and researchers can work with the knowledge archived in the library.

In 2020, DNB has already made big advances to support researchers and academics with its "Digital Humanities Call" in March and the launch of the DNBLab website in August. This is the library's new central port of call for accessing and reusing our digital resources, or at least those sections of it that are freely accessible.

While DNB's core business is still very much focused on printed and analogue media, the future will be increasingly digital. Digitality will affect every aspect of the library's work. This is very much reflected in DNB's Strategic Priorities 2021–2024, developed in 2020 and published exclusively online for the very first time. One core statement of the new strategy paper is that DNB wishes to examine everything through a "digital lens". This isn't a completely new development. It already began when libraries made the move from card indexes to electronic cataloguing. Now and in future, librarians must conceptualise digitality much more broadly as it permeates every area. Yet DNB has to take into consideration that it is an institution with an analogue tradition dating back more than 100 years. Therefore, DNB has defined most of the goals and set itself most of the objectives in a field of action called "Further developing the learning organisation". This is also because DNB wants to become an institution that truly exemplifies digitality. In this context, the Minister of State for Culture and Media commissioned DNB to oversee and coordinate a process designed to result in a governmental digitalisation strategy for the cultural sector. Last but not least, in 2020 the German National Library signed the WikiLibrary Manifesto which is also about the life of digitality. Together with Wikimedia and other partners DNB is flying the flag for a future-focused, freely accessible and open Semantic Web. And is thereby supporting the establishment of a data ecosystem that above all facilitates the sustainable use of cultural and research data.

All in all – despite and because of the pandemic – 2020 was a very busy and eventful year.

Collect & Preserve

In 2020, more than 2.35 million publications printed on paper, stored on electronic data carriers or published online were added to the German National Library's collections. With almost 1.7 million individually accessible media works in all, by far the largest share of the year's new additions consists of magazines, articles and issues of serial publications. The changes in the publication sector prompted a complete revision of the collection guidelines, which were reissued as "Explanatory Notes on Collection Structure". The DNB contributed around 4,000 archival copies of 300 websites to the "Novel Coronavirus (COVID-19)" collection of the International Internet Preservation Consortium (IIPC) as part of its work on their cooperative collections. In 2020, the DNB's collection preservation activities focused on recording the condition of its media works, specifically in preparation for the performance of digitisation measures. More than 4,000 media works were accordingly inspected to ascertain their overall condition and determine whether or not they could be digitised. In March 2020, a new transfer process for digitised printed works was implemented in the German National Library's long-term archive. Over the year, this alone facilitated the transfer of approximately 55 terabytes (TB) of data to the long-term archive.

Document & Disseminate

During 2020, the German National Library generated bibliographic records for around 170,000 physical media works and more than 1.4 million online publications. Despite the special circumstances caused by the pandemic, the DNB succeeded in fulfilling its cataloguing tasks by increasing the amount of work carried out at home using digital editions. The German National Library's goal is to use cutting-edge technologies for cataloguing purposes. In this context, the DNB is also investigating the performance of "Annif", a promising software developed by the Finnish National Library. The steady growth in the use of data services testifies to the success of the

German National Library's efforts to realise a vision of a freely accessible "web of data". A further step towards the provision of open data has been taken by eliminating the remaining administrative hurdles: metadata dumps are now freely accessible on the German National Library's website, and no prior registration is required. The number of users who obtained data through the long-established online interfaces also rose again in 2020.

Present & Inspire

Due to the coronavirus pandemic, the German National Library was unable to offer services at its two locations on 45 potential opening days during 2020. Library operations were restricted between 4 May and 15 December and a comprehensive hygiene concept was implemented. The coronavirus prompted the testing and integration of numerous virtual services into the DNB's website over the year, including a booking software programme for reserving spaces in the reading rooms. General user fees were suspended from 1 March 2020. Around 12,000 library cards were issued during the year. Further progress was made with digitisation. By the end of 2020, the DNB's collection of digitised works consisted of around 162,500 media comprising some 11.3 million pages and 35,000 audio works. The collection of searchable digital tables of contents has now exceeded the 2.2 million mark. The new DNBLab facilitates access to licensed digitised versions of various collections in the public domain along with data sets that contain links to open-access online publications. It is the central portal for the presentation, access and reuse of free digital resources and will be successively expanded in the future. The project for identifying items of indeterminate provenance in the DNB's collections continued through 2019 and 2020 and has now been completed. In all, 15,256 items were examined in detail and some 100 provenance marks discovered which must now be investigated further.

Integrate & Organise

In the context of standardisation, the international RDA Toolkit Restructure and Redesign project for the restructuring of the RDA standard was completed at the end of 2020. At the beginning of 2020, the German National Library updated its prototype for the conversion of bibliographic data as part of the BIBFRAME project. Work on the Integrated Authority File (GND) continued to focus on opening and modernisation. November 2020 saw the German National Library publish its WikiLibrary manifesto in cooperation with Wikimedia Deutschland e.V., thus expressing its support for a future-oriented, public, freely accessible Semantic Web. In 2020, more than 3.4 million Uniform Resource Names (URN) in the namespace urn:nbn:de were assigned by the URN service of the German National Library and its 410 partner institutions. The number of items referenced using URNs has thus grown to more than 45 million. During the course of its networking activities with cultural, scientific, political and social institutions, the German National Library held intensive discussions at three virtual conferences organised in connection with Germany's presidency of the Council of the European Union. The incorporation of museums, archives and institutions in other cultural sectors is also important for the development of a federal digitisation strategy for culture. The German National Library took over the coordination of this process at the request of the Minister of State for Culture and Media.

Encourage & Enable

In view of the special circumstances that prevailed during the year, the main priority was to safely steer the institution with its users and staff through the pandemic. The crisis team held regular video conferences, which also encompassed the operational implementation of the special

regulations set out in the German Infection Protection Act. A hygiene concept was developed accordingly encompassing both the user and exhibition areas and the staff areas. 2020 also saw particular attention paid to staff recruitment and development, including the reorganisation of departments. 230 individual measures relating to staffing and organisation were prepared and implemented in all. In 2020, the German National Library managed a budget of approximately 56.4 million EUR along with approximately 1.6 million EUR in external funding. In addition to the DNB's operational consulting and contract business, particular attention was paid to monitoring the implementation of the EU Directive on Copyright in the Digital Single Market in national law and actively participating in the consultation processes. The first new services for the digital import of objects using agile methods were developed in the Infrastructure and Basic Services Domain.

Some figures

| 617,3 full time equivalents (of which 42,8 are limited in time)
| total budget: 55,971,000 Euro
| total holdings: 41,369,428 items
| new acquisitions in 2020: 2,352,693 items
| users per day: 631
| orders per day: 881

The complete annual report for 2020 can be found at: https://nbn-resolving.org/urn:nbn:de:101-2021051859 (in German only).