

# Summary



**I'm a Library, Change Me! / Thoughts on the Changing Identity of an Ancient Institution (Henning Bleyl)**  
(pp. 388 – 391)

Are libraries really stuck in a legitimacy crisis? The 10 million people who are active users of libraries today surely can't be wrong. They want and are clearly seeking what is offered by our various kinds of libraries. But the motto »Never change a winning team« – or rather: a winning institution – would be the wrong conclusion to draw from these positive statistics. After all, the user statistics would not be what they are if libraries had not been continually adapting themselves to new roles over the past years.

But how to proceed now? Will libraries become simply free-of-charge »co-working spaces« with integrated databases, places where the medium paper has only a decorative function in the medium term? It seems a little like that at Dokk1, the central library and cultural center of Aarhus, Denmark. But paper shouldn't be underestimated. On the other hand, Aarhus has paired the strong dominance of digital media with decidedly physical offerings, creating a kind of indoor playground. In future it will be completely normal for the library to be permanently in operation – even if librarians aren't around.

The main stimulus for a continuing, systematic democratization of this ancient institution needs to start, obviously, with those whose expertise, though not authority, is still urgently needed – the librarians. To give up space, turn over power, lose authority – is this desirable? At first glance, no, and then only under the condition that the transformation of the library profession is still recognized, in turn, as being oriented in a fundamental way towards an ever stronger democratic identity.

**»Libraries Are Key Players in Digitalization« / In a Guest Article the German Minister for Education and Research Describes Libraries as a Symbol of the Ideals of an Enlightened Society (Johanna Wanka)**  
(pp. 397 – 399)

The library is a place that spreads education and culture, a symbol of the ideals of an enlightened society. For that reason its role and its self-image are the subject of, at times, heated debate.

How knowledge is generated, stored, and passed on is changing in this digital age. The transformation is also touching upon the power of libraries. Nonetheless, Germany's Education Minister, Johanna Wanka, is convinced that libraries neither need to re-invent themselves nor to renounce their identity. If they go about it properly, they will be able to position themselves as key players in matters of digitalizing knowledge; after all, they pool together the central faculties which remain most important in this period of transformation.

Libraries can bring together media competency and IT competency. This is true not only for individual staff members, but also entire library teams. Digital transformation entails rapidly moving processes of innovation. It leads to new questions regarding data protection and data security. Dealing with huge amounts of data presents a challenge that is not only technical in nature. The wide range of different skills in which librarians are trained provide libraries with the opportunity to take a stand and apply their knowledge.

**Digital Strategies for Libraries – A Necessary Evil or a Formula for Success? / A Podium Discussion With Library Directors from Germany, the Netherlands, and the U.S.A. (Maiken Hagemeister, Esther Israel, Theresa Joest)**  
(pp. 416 – 417)

At the 2017 German Library Conference in Frankfurt am Main four library directors gathered for a podium discussion on the question of »Digital Strategies for Libraries -- Necessary Evil or Formula for Success?« Nearly 200 visitors attended the event sponsored by the German Library Association (dbv), which planned and conducted it together with the service agency »Network for Excellence in Libraries« (knb) and the three-year library campaign project »The Networked Library«.

The goal of that campaign, which ends in 2017, has been to call wide public attention to digital offerings, modern formats for cultural events, and current trends in the library world. As sites of digital learning libraries encourage and support media and information competency, cooperate with other local organizations and institutions, and work together on jointly developed projects. Libraries are initiators and help contribute to a vital cultural network in their communities.

In Frankfurt the podium participants – Arne Ackermann (Director of the Munich Public Library), Hildelies Balk-Pennington de Jongh (Head of Marketing & Services at the Royal Library of the Netherlands, KB), Brian Bannon (Commissioner & CEO of the Chicago Public Library, CPL) and Achim Bonte (Deputy General Director of the Saxony State Library and State and University Library Dresden, SLUB) – presented the digital strategies of their institutions and discussed issues which have developed from them, such as staff development and training, and offered their visions of the future.

*Translated by Martha Baker*