

Summary



Ongoing Crisis Management Rather Than Welcoming the German Library Conference / The City Library of Hanover in Times of the Coronavirus (Carola Schelle-Wolff)

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1.54 million visitors per year, one main library and 17 neighbourhood branches, a bookmobile and daily events for young children, schoolchildren and adults, a collection of over one million items, 4.56 million loans per year, 205 staff members holding 168 full-time equivalent positions – that is the City Library of Hanover, an organisation employing well-functioning, clearly delineated collaborative work processes. As a result it was well-situated to deal with the coronavirus crisis of recent weeks. At the beginning of March 2019 the virus was detected in the Hanover region, and within a week it became clear that we would all need to shift into crisis mode. Within the city administration, the crisis management procedures of the fire brigade were set in motion. Experience had been gathered in dealing with terrorism, flooding and massive accidents, but not with the massive spread of a previously unknown virus. Yet the response went quite well. Not only the heads of government, but also heads of the various departments and the general staff council sat down together and agreed upon the measures to be taken. The critically important elements of the city infrastructure had already been established in the city's 2009 Pandemic Plan, which now only needed to be revised and brought up-to-date.

Recognizing the many contacts which staff members have on a daily basis led to an increasingly strong sense of uncertainty from the beginning of March onwards. The behavioural guidelines issued at that time by Germany's Federal Centre for Health Education, frequent and thorough hand-washings and regular room ventilation were not really sufficient to maintain calmness, especially as more and more positive test results become known every day.

In the meantime the City Library of Hanover, like all other libraries in Germany, has had to temporarily close its doors.

Interconnected Narrative and New Directions in Digital Spaces / Erika Mann. Kabarett Artist – War Reporter – Political Speaker – An Exhibition at the Monacensia in the Hildebrandhaus (Anke Buettner)

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In October 2019 the first solo exhibition devoted to the oldest daughter of Katia and Thomas Mann opened at the Monacensia in the Hildebrandhaus under the title »Erika Mann. Kabarett Artist – War Reporter – Political Speaker«. As a prestigious research centre holding items from and about the Mann family, the Monacensia has excellent international connections. It has made Erika Mann's literary »Nachlass« available to the public in digital form via its website, monacensia-digital.de.

With this exhibition the Monacensia treats digital and non-digital means of presentation and mediating with the same degree of importance, and places emphasis not on the use of technical equipment, but rather on cross-media, interconnected narrative and intensified communication with the target audience.

As a nine-month long pilot project this exhibition serves as a principal impulse for future efforts to promote cultural mediation at the Monacensia. Contrary to the usual practice of long-term planning, this pilot project was rather like jumping in at the deep end, following a very short period of preparation. Throughout the duration of the project, its conceptualisation can be readily modified or, if necessary, completely altered. Along with their participation in the 2019 cultural hackathon »Coding Da Vinci Süd«, this digital/non-digital cultural presentation project is a further building-block in professional development for all of Monacensia's staff, which takes the form of immediate learning-by-doing.

[Careerfield.rebooting...] / What Does the Career Field Library and Information Stand for Today? Developing a Contemporary Definition of Library (Ute Engelkenmeier, Luis Moßburger, Frauke Schade, Wolfgang Stille)

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It is impossible to imagine libraries without competent staff members. High-quality training, regular professional development, identification with target groups, equitable job classification and modern management all factor into the success of libraries both now and in the future. But in these times like these with a shortage of skilled workers, even the library sector has not been spared. Too often job advertisements yield too few or no suitable candidates. There is often a lack of interest in the explicit target group or lack of openness toward new technology.

One reason for the poor pool of candidates for training positions or new jobs is assumed to be the outdated career image, which remains too print-centred and not sufficiently reflective of the diverse areas of service and fields of activity found in libraries – which are increasingly attractive to specialists in other career fields. Outdated images of libraries are to be found not only in Wikipedia, but also in the dedicated portals for career counselling as well as in the minds of decision-makers, partner institutions and the general public. Germany's national umbrella organisation »Bibliothek und Information Deutschland (BID)« has founded a task force on personnel acquisition that will encompass all library professional associations. Its goal is to develop steps toward modernizing the career field's image. As one of these first steps BID and the task force have initiated a series of workshops serving to present this career field in a nutshell and form the basis for future forms of communication. The development of an identity which everyone can accept, adopt and proudly wear requires the involvement of all actors within the library career field.

Translated by Martha Baker