The Teaching Library[1]

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Introductory Remarks

This paper is written from a distinctly German point of view. Hopefully, however, some of its aspects, although dealing with German developments in particular, may be helpful for decision-making in other countries, too.

1. Research library versus teaching library

German universities have since the 19th century used the so-called Humboldt-concept. This means that the university professor in a research-oriented university will be a researcher as well as a teacher.

This Humboldt tradition had started much earlier, in the 18th century already, with the foundation of the university of Göttingen in 1737. The idea of a research-oriented university was here combined from the very beginning with the idea of a research library. Every book which showed progressive and new academic

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insights would be bought by the library. The library was thus both the basis and the tool for Göttingen professors who would continue to write and do research and would publish works of excellence increasing their own fame a well as the glory of the university. In other words: the main user of the library was then the professor. The students would only be allowed to enter the library if a professor had sent them there. Until today the paradigm of a research oriented library in Germany remains in place.

The idea of the teaching library, on the other hand, which was developed in Germany, too, was to be realized not in the central libraries, but in departmental and institutional libraries instead. This process began at the end of the 19th century when the governments of the different German states would give special funds to professors so that they may acquire decentralized study collections. However, as the professors used the money they received in order to build up highly specialized libraries in their own main areas of research, these departmental libraries almost immediately diverged from the original concept of the teaching library. They became specialized libraries. The "universal" central library, on the other hand, was less and less sufficiently provided with all the most up-to-date specialized literature. This closed-access central library thus became increasingly obsolete for professors as a research tool. And yet, on the other hand, its remaining emphasis on specialized rather than general studies of use for the beginner, decreased its attraction for students as well.

2. The teaching library of the sixties

A true change of paradigm came as late as the 1960s. The increase in the number of publications on the one hand and in the number of students (and professors) on the other, led to a complete restructuring of the traditional German university library system:

- Cooperation in acquisition-policy between all the different libraries within a university made it easier to cope with the increasing number of journals and monographs.
- Local union catalogues made this shared acquisition-policy possible. They also simplified the allocation and the use of holdings in departmental libraries.
- Central libraries began to establish teaching-oriented collections with a grant from the Volkswagenstiftung, so-called "Lehrbuchsammlungen" (open access collection with 10-15.000 titles which were frequently used by students). The number of copies of these heavily-used materials would start from three and go up to 30 and more copies.

For the first time, German university libraries now looked at students in the appropriate manner: they were their main clients. The "Lehrbuchsammlungen" became an overwhelming success in the more and more overcrowded German universities. Sometimes some 300.000 loans a year would be realized in collections of 30.000-50.000 volumes. The value of the central library was more and more appreciated by students and professors alike (they would give advice on the titles to be acquired for these collections). And since they would now be using the teaching collections in the central libraries, students would also become interested in the research collections held in these libraries. These were used much more frequently than before, too. Due to the introduction of the union catalogue, the central library became the true centre of book-provision for the university. German students and professors relived the American experience: it became evident, that intensive use of the library lead to higher success rates in the exams.

The new concept of a combined teaching and research library made it easier to apply for investments for new central library buildings, not only in the new universities, but in the old

universities as well. Flexible air-conditioned open-access libraries would be built at new universities. Nevertheless, there was constant criticism concerning the space and energy needed for these overtechnicized buildings. The new buildings of central libraries in the old universities are often a compromise between the traditional German closed-stack library and the modern open-access library.

The main floor plan of "my" library in Göttingen may serve as an example. It is the newest university library in Germany right now. Coming from the entrance you can see at the left-hand-side the circulation desk combined with the open-access "Lehrbuchsammlung". Many users come in only for quick access to these books. The stairs lead up to two floors with working space for 600 readers and a selection of about half a million journals and books in open access. This is the second favourite choice of the average library user. Researchers who are interested in using the entire collection of the library, some 4 million volumes, will go straight for the computer catalogue, using the OPAC or receiving special help at the information centre.

Due to this staggered supply-system the library has become the most successful teaching entity in the university. There is no teacher who would give lectures for as long as the students read books from the teaching collection. There is no lecture or seminar which has as many participants as people using the reading rooms of the library. There is no better way of moving from study to research - a way that every German student has to find for himself - than the self-guided choice and active use of the literature provided in the open-access collections. The example of the Göttingen building shows that the development of the teaching library from the basis of a research library was indeed a success story in Germany.

3. The teaching library in the digital age

But how can libraries be a success at the end of this millennium, in the turbulent age of information? Looking around, there are a great number of projects and activities to help the researchers. Starting with the international electronic document delivery using ARIEL, there is a lot of cooperation with scientists in electronic publishing, there are projects of retrodigitization of books and journals, there are new developments of retrieval systems for internet-communication etc.

Just like teaching libraries in the Germany of the fifties, the electronic research library today is mainly a possibility, and an aim for the professor as user. And this is a hard job. We have to compete with publishers, agencies and other serial providers in order to serve the research community in the future as well as we do now. But is this sufficient? What would be our policy for students in the future? Will there be a teaching library in the electronic age, too?

3.1 As a first step towards the future, some librarians have begun to improve the provision of study material to students. Textbooks were digitized giving every student access to this material at any time via the campus-network. Due to copyright concerns, there are only very few projects of this kind in Germany at the moment, however - one of them is the MEDOC project. There is one particularly positive effect of electronic usage of heavily used material: there is no theft rate in the electronic collection and vandalism can be avoided.

3.2 Nevertheless, the electronic delivery of study material is not as simple as the lending of a book. Users need hardware and software tools as well as viewers in order to be able to use the material offered to them. Furthermore, students do not only wish to read the texts on screen, they wish to download the information or to print it. Problems of hard- and software double and triple with the use of multimedial material. In short, students need much

more service provision than in the past, the wonderful past time of the simple printed world. Furthermore, the internet creates a new and completely different instructional environment: students have to learn how to use information that has not been refereed. edited or published in the proper sense. Students need to be taught how to evaluate these resources to discern the useful from the useless.

3.3 Competition is a problem both for the teaching library and the research library in the digital age. And not within the context of the libraries alone - the entire university has to compete with other universities and with providers of tele-teaching material. The virtual university gives easy access to courses from all over the world. Once it is possible to participate in seminars taking place on a continent different from your home, what do you need your local library for? My answer would be the same as it was in the age of print: the library has to provide the user with a range of material broader than what he could afford for himself. The library has to offer additional information which opens up the world of individual learning and searching activities. And finally, the library has to provide the students with a complete collection of technical facilities.

3.4 If we try to rethink our concept of the teaching library in this way: will we be able to realize it? Will not the computer centre or the audio-visual centre be the better teaching "library" in the future? In Great Britain, quite a number of universities are combining computing centres and libraries. There is only one director heading these formerly divided entities. In Germany, there is now a first draft for a new university-law in Hessen, in which the word "library" is no longer to be found. Instead, the term "information facility" is used. And there is no mention that a librarian is needed to lead it. Maybe here we have a new field of competition between librarians and computer specialists, although no doubt, there are special abilities required in both of these very different professions.

In any case, what universities need are learning centres in which some of the services of libraries and computer centres are combined in a new service-package. These centres should not only provide access and services for the use of certain materials. They should also provide advice on how to handle all kinds of publications be they printed, digitalized or multi-medial.

3.5 A number of great changes are necessary in teaching libraries for the digital age. Librarians who are used to work as exchange agents will have to act as such even more than before. I will not concentrate much on the question of challenges for the staff, but the combination of skills from two professions which is now required from each one of them means that continuous staff-education and the ability and willingness to engage in teamwork are greatly needed. Librarians, too, will have to accept what a successful student nowadays needs to acknowledge during his studies: that it is necessary to continue to learn new things and to acquire new skills and that one ought to expect to engage not just in one but in a number of different "careers" in his or her lifetime. The library as a virtual educational environment has the chance to serve lifelong to the former students of the university, too.

3.6 Library buildings will have to change, too. In the modern library readers and books had been combined. The library of the future will need to bring in more and more computers. This is why in the reading rooms of the Göttingen library building the floor is hollow. Computer cables can be installed wherever they are needed.

But libraries also need to be quiet places allowing for concentrated work. This will be so in the future, too. Thus future libraries will have to combine areas with a quiet working atmosphere with facilities for group and teamwork, where users can ask staff for hardware or help, where group discussions are possible and where the parallel use of different hardware is only natural. Future libraries will have to introduce devices for noise reduction and will have to create plans for buildings (and

rebuildings) with smaller and differently shaped units. At the new university library in Göttingen we will face problems with the large catalogue hall, for example.[2] The hall is equipped with wired tables which can be used for computers as well as for old-fashioned catalogue boxes. So the plain technical problems are solved. However, the direct connection to the first floor-reading room is causing trouble[3]. If we were to change the hall into a service center for modern information technology, we would have to think about redesigning even this just recently opened building. You can see a better solution at work at the new building of the Deutsche Bibliothek in Frankfurt/Main, where, in addition to the separation of different rooms, special materials for noise reduction have been used.

The hybrid library of the future, oriented both to the book and the computer, is a new challenge for architects as well as librarians. The LIBER architecture group at its coming seminar in spring 1998 in Sheffield and London will be dealing with the "multifunctional library", the concept of such a future-oriented library. The learning center at the Sheffield Hallam University where the seminar partly will take place, will be shown as one example for this new generation of libraries.

4. Conclusion

It ought to be a primary task for future libraries to become true teaching libraries. As explained above, the concept of the student-oriented teaching library has successfully changed the German University library concept since the 1960s. There will be

[2] The post-modern library between functionality and aesthetics. Proceedings of the Seminar of the LIBER Architecture Group Paris, 22-26 January 1996. Ed. by Marie-Françoise Bisbrouck and Elmar Mittler. Graz, 1997. Page 46 , fig. 3

[3] Page 46, fig. 4

no success for future libraries without this type of client orientation. Students are the major group of a library's clients and they need special provisions of textbooks, broad access to tele-teaching facilities and related printed publications. The libraries have to be service and competence centers for digitized as well as for printed information. As learning centers they will help users to cope actively with the turbulances of a changing world of ever-expanding information. However, these services ought to be allocated for students as well as for researchers. Thus, the service-centers will be useful to the university: here, the university will be able to promote its reseach results, to author tele-teaching courses or virtual seminars. Last but not least the library will archive all digital university publications - newspapers as well as dissertations.

1. The concept of creating a teaching library that is student-oriented and hybrid, digital oriented as well as print oriented is the only feasible philosophy for a future-oriented library.
2. New services will have to be built for the digital library. The library will be a competent service centre for all kinds of applications and all types of information.
3. The library staff will need new skills in the area of information technology. Librarians will have to set up teams with computer specialists.
4. New library buildings will have to be able to cope with the use of printed as well as multi-media facilities. Books, computers and readers will have to be brought together. Space for concentrated quiet work as well as for teamwork and technical services will be needed.
5. The multi-functional library of the future will provide services for users and researchers as well as for long-distance-learning. As a teaching library it will provide a virtual educational environment.

6. The concept of the teaching library will be a cornerstone of successful library management in the digital age.

In short: the teaching library is a must for every university hoping to survive in the coming competitive age of virtual campuses.