

Annual report to CDNL 2014

Koninklijke Bibliotheek, National Library of The Netherlands

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Key facts and figures

Founded	1798
Status	Autonomous administrative body since 31 August 1993, financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture & Science
Budget	€ 47 million
Staff	271 full time equivalents = 322 employees (end 2014)
Holdings	6 million items = 110 km of library materials (books, newspapers, journals, microforms) 10,500 current periodicals, 425 licensed databases and e-journals
Acquisition	Annually the deposit print collection grows by approx. 50,000 books and 48,000 issues of periodicals. In 2014 7.4 million digital items and 2,600 e-books were loaded, and 12,000 websites were stored
Accommodation	Net floorspace of the building : 80,000 m ² - library: 37,000 m ² , including 28,000 m ² stacks - other institutions: 15,000 m ²
Capacity	500 study seats including 125 with a work station, WiFi available
Library use	14,648 issued library passes 91,960 library visits 804,000 publications made available 4.6 million KB website visits

Tasks and duties

The tasks, duties and operational limits of the KB are defined in general terms in Section 1.5 of the Higher Education and Research Act: “As the National Library of the Netherlands, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek operates in the field of libraries and information services for the benefit of higher education and research, as well as public administration, business and industry. In any case, the KB is responsible for the national library collection; it promotes the development and maintenance of national facilities in the above-mentioned areas and promotes coordination with the other research libraries.”

General overview of recent major developments

In every respect, 2014 was a year of preparation and transition on the way to ‘a new KB’. Not only did it form the run-up to a new strategic period, it was also a run-up to a completely new phase in which the KB will play a prominent role in the public library field, alongside its current function

as research and national library. The KB prepared itself intensively in 2014 for this new situation in which the role of National Library of the Netherlands will be realized in the broadest sense.

Great efforts were made both administratively and on the work floor to ensure the formal integration of the Sectorinstituut Openbare Bibliotheken – SIOB (Sector Institute Public Libraries), Stichting Bibliotheek.nl – BNL (Library.nl Foundation) and the Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren – DBNL (Digital Library for Netherlands Literature) on 1 January 2015. The formal challenges have been met, now we can actually integrate and look ahead.

The preparations for the 2015-2018 strategic period resulted in December 2014 in the Strategic Plan ‘De kracht van het netwerk’ (The Power of our Network), the core elements of which are a redefinition of the concept of national library through a focus on the customer and an emphasis on working within a network. This framework document, which incorporates the recommendations from the external consultation round, will be realized further in close cooperation with the new colleagues and the network partners.

The priorities in the long-term strategy The Future of the KB is Digital (a further fine-tuning of the 2010–2013 Strategic Plan) created the framework over the past years for the policy goals and reporting. The priorities are:

1. Digital: Full speed ahead!
2. Reaching a wide audience
3. Strengthening national and international cooperation.

Digital: Full speed ahead!

Digitization and infrastructure

Building the digital library is a complex, innovative process that requires a step-by-step approach. At the KB, this process is guided through the Digital Library programme, a collection of projects in the field of technical infrastructure, digitization, optimization of working processes and supply via digital services.

Technical complications, interdependencies, external factors and the limits to available resources and (IT-)capacity sometimes necessitate making interim choices and re-arranging priorities. Sometimes parts of the process had to be delayed, while others could be accelerated. Thus the construction of the new Digital Repository (e-Depot) is progressing more slowly than hoped and smaller steps are being taken in accordance with a phased planning. On the other hand, great progress has been achieved in the area of digitization and services. The realisation of the national full-text platform Delpher, which gives everyone in the Netherlands access to hundreds of thousands of books, periodicals and newspapers, in cooperation with the university libraries of Amsterdam (UvA), Leiden, Utrecht and Groningen, is a good example of this.

In part due to the public-private cooperation with Google and ProQuest, the digitization target of 10% was amply met for this strategic period. In the autumn of 2014, Google completed digitization of approx. 230,000 volumes of the KB. All the books are back in the KB and will be made available in digital form via Delpher, the national infrastructure for full-text access to books, newspapers and periodicals.

The Digital Repository, the new electronic repository for long-term preservation, is being developed according to a phased approach (release-planning). With each release functionalities are enhanced or added. After the first set-up of functionalities for loading existing streams of digital publications, priority will be given to including new streams of born-digital material. This is a crucial step for the development of the born-digital (= originally digital) collection. The next step is making this accessible (on site).

Storage and maintenance of the digital collections

The born-digital and digital files are valuable and often used collections. They form the basis of almost all the services of the KB. That value and usage will only increase in the coming years, as will the risks. Long-term storage and management of digital collections aimed at this are an absolute precondition for providing access now and in the future. By 'long-term' is meant: extremely long-lasting and in good condition, that is, findable and usable. Authenticity, reliability and accessibility of textual and visual information are important points of departure in this regard.

In the past period a strategy with related policy goals has been developed for the storage of digital and digitized material at various levels of preservation. Measures are being taken for an adequate maintenance of the digital collection for the long term.

Provision of access

Providing access to material is subject to various limitations, because copyright law, licenses and legislation and regulations in the area of privacy must be taken into account.

The policy framework of the KB with respect to copyright was established in 2011. In 2013 an agreement was concluded between the KB, Stichting Lira (Lira Foundation) and Stichting Pictoright (Pictoright Foundation) – collective rights organizations – concerning the availability (re-use) of periodicals digitized by the KB within the Metamorfoze programme and published between 1900 and 1940. In 2014, a similar agreement was concluded with respect to the re-use of books published between 1872 and 1940. For material from 1950 onwards, new models are being developed and separate agreements will be made with publishers and right holders. In 2014, the preparation began for a pilot project for the digitization of selections of original Dutch literature – that is, not translated – between 1950 and 1995.

Reaching a Wide Audience

Renewed KB website

The website, which in recent years has drawn approx. 5 million visitors a year, is an important gateway to the collections and services of the KB, and functions, moreover, as a shop window for the collections. In the past year, the site was completely renovated, given a contemporary design and (re)-launched in December. The virtual books have also undergone a more up-to-date technical transformation.

Wikipedian in Residence

The Wikipedian in Residence project made an important contribution to the visibility of the KB. In 2013, the first Wikipedian-in-Residence of the Netherlands set to work at the KB and the National Archives. The aim was to increase the visibility of data and expertise by means of Wikipedia, the free online encyclopedia to which everyone can contribute. The cooperation with Wikipedia will be continued in 2015.

Usability Lab

The KB has constructed a Usability Lab to optimize the user-friendliness of its digital services. This is a physical space containing PCs, where reading room visitors can try out services in development and provide feedback. The Usability Lab is of great value for the further development of services, such as Delpher.

Dataservices and API's

Dataservices is a service with which the KB gives computers of third parties direct access to the data and metadata that the KB manages. Digital images, metadata and texts are made available through an API (Application Programming Interface) on the basis of SRU or OAI-PMH. Target groups for Dataservices are scholarly researchers, cultural heritage institutions, open-data initiatives, the creative industry and commercial companies, but also aggregators such as Europeana. Dataservices has been developed into a full-fledged service, used especially by researchers; for them, having copies of datasets available is of essential importance for their research and analyses (text and data mining).

Strengthening national and international cooperation

Netherlands Coalition for Digital Preservation

In the Netherlands Coalition for Digital Preservation (NCDD) the KB cooperates with Sound and Vision, Data Archiving and Networked Services (DANS), the National Archives and the Cultural Coalition for Digital Preservation under the leadership of the EYE Film Museum. Cooperation within and among the various parts of the public sector is necessary because the investments entailed in digital preservation are too large for individual organizations. On an international level the NCDD works together with the Digital Preservation Coalition (DPC), in which institutions from the United Kingdom and Ireland are also represented.

International e-Depot

The International e-Depot of the KB has functioned since 2003 as a long-term archive for scholarly information for scholars within the Netherlands. Until now, the costs have been covered completely by investments that are already being made for the construction and maintenance of the national e-Depot. In order to offer maximum service the KB must invest in a more extensive coverage (of 70-95%) of its holdings and work actively on further development of services. To facilitate this an agreement was concluded with Portico, an organization for long-term archiving in the US. In this way, the KB can save on the intensive preliminary work that is required to include publications from publishers, and increase coverage relatively quickly.

Digital Humanities

Research in the humanities has changed radically in the past ten years because of the availability of digital material in large volumes and of resources to approach and work on this material in a new way (Digital Humanities). The KB has sought to accommodate the new wishes and requirements of researchers. In 2014, the programme 'Researcher-in-Residence' was initiated in cooperation with the University of Amsterdam. The aim is to develop services together with researchers in short projects via embedded research in the KB research lab, where currently various tools and applications developed by the KB can already be found.

Linked (open) data

In the project 'A Gateway to European Newspapers Online' 17 European institutions will work together in the coming three years to make European newspaper collections more easily accessible. The project aims both to aggregate and enrich the newspaper material. The KB leads the work cluster 'Enhancement of digital newspapers'. A portion of the KB's historical newspaper material will also be offered in Europeana at article level via this project.

Network digital heritage

Under the supervision of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science (OCW) the KB has worked, together with other heritage institutions, on developing a national strategy for Digital Heritage. The aim is to create an open and effective infrastructure for digital heritage. Within this network the KB functions as hub in the library domain. OCW makes funds available for the execution of projects.

Shared information infrastructure and transition to Worldshare platform

An important development is the standardization and internationalisation of the information infrastructure and accompanying cataloguing and metadata standards. Within that framework, the KB participates in the Transition Project GGC-Worldshare (UKB-OCLC). Concretely, this entails a transition from the national, joint, automated cataloguing system (GGC) to the international Worldshare platform, which OCLC is developing.

Cooperation with Museum Meermanno

At the end of 2013, the KB and Museum Meermanno set down in a declaration their intention to intensify the existing cooperation by the exploitation of both collections from both institutions in a Centre for Education and Research, devoted to the history and culture of the book in society in a broad sense. It has been agreed to investigate the viability of such a centre further and should it prove viable to place the museum under the care of the KB in 2017.

European projects

Various European projects were successfully concluded. The tools developed within Scape and aimed at the long-term storage of large amounts of digital objects will be tested in the KB research lab environment. The European Library has implemented a search interface for historical newspapers. The open source tools developed in eMOP are available via the IMPACT Centre of Competence and the INL Lexicon tool for historical spelling is being implemented in Delpher.

Due to the fact that subsidy possibilities for European projects have been considerably reduced, it has become more difficult to start up new projects. At the moment, Commit Sealinc, WebArt and Futurebase are still running and the KB is participating in two centres of expertise: IMPACT and the Open Preservation Foundation (OPF).

Preparation integration tasks SIOB, BNL and DBNL

SIOB and BNL

The preparations for the integration of the SIOB and BNL took place in the period running from spring 2013 to December 2014. The aim of the integration is to lay the legal foundation for a strong and coherent library system and to create synergy by combining the forces of the KB as national and research library with those of the public library field, as well as to further develop and maintain the national digital library.

Preconditions for the integration were, among other things, continuity of activities and services and preservation of the existing expertise. In the case of the SIOB, moreover, the visibility and recognizability of its activities had to be guaranteed.

An independent process manager managed the integration track. OCW functioned as the client at a distance; the Association of Public Libraries was closely involved in the process. It was a complex process, during which meticulousness, involving the representative advisory bodies and external stakeholders in the correct way, as well as informing and involving the members of staff were of essential importance. For most of the KB members of staff the integration only became a reality with the actual arrival of the new colleagues in January 2015.

DBNL

The integration of the DBNL into the KB, also on the basis of the Wsob, formed a separate track. The Digitale Bibliotheek voor de Nederlandse Letteren (Digital Library for Netherlands Literature) is a website about Dutch literature, language and cultural history (www.dbnl.org). From 1 January 2015, www.dbnl.org has been included in the services of the KB.

The complete annual report is available at <https://www.kb.nl/en/organisation/organization-and-policy/annual-reports>.