

THE NETHERLANDS

KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK

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In the past year the Koninklijke Bibliotheek achieved several significant goals. Firstly, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek continued developing the Deposit Library of Dutch electronic publications into an operational service. In January 2001, IBM installed the equipment for the deposit system in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. It is the first of its kind worldwide. Furthermore, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek entered into an agreement in principle with Elsevier Science, by which the number of electronic periodicals to be deposited in the Koninklijke Bibliotheek by Elsevier Science will be increased from 351 to all 1,500 electronic periodicals being published by Elsevier Science.

Secondly, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek strengthened the public focus. In 2001 the number of visitors to the Koninklijke Bibliotheek rose by almost fourteen percent, thus surpassing the goal of an annual ten percent increase by a comfortable margin. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek dossiers, put together in response to topics of current interest, constitute a new part of the website. They enable the Koninklijke Bibliotheek to show how diverse, up-to-date and representative the collection of the Deposit Library actually is. Furthermore, under the title Boulevard van het Actuele Verleden (Boulevard of the Present Past), the first ideas were developed for a major public presentation on history and current affairs, initiated by five cultural institutions. The Ministry of Education, Culture and Science has indicated its support for this project.

Thirdly, digitization is becoming increasingly important to make the collections of the Koninklijke Bibliotheek accessible and to preserve the original documents. The second phase of Metamorfoze, the national preservation programme, was started. New elements in the follow-up part of the programme are the preservation of important collections of cultural, historical and international value in Dutch heritage institutions and the preservation of periodicals. Furthermore, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek launched the English-language website Medieval illuminated manuscripts. Almost 8,000 unique reproductions can be viewed on the site from 325 medieval illuminated manuscripts owned by the Koninklijke Bibliotheek. At the end of 2001, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was given an exceptionally fine book of hours by an anonymous donor. The value of the manuscript is estimated at almost six million euros. The donor was advised to name the Koninklijke Bibliotheek as beneficiary because of the importance that the Koninklijke Bibliotheek attaches to researching and preserving medieval manuscripts.

Finally, as national library, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek is responsible for promoting coordination among other academic libraries. For this reason, the Koninklijke Bibliotheek has taken the initiative to develop a plan for supplementary collection building within the humanities on a national level. The Koninklijke Bibliotheek has assumed responsibility for the coordination of consultation, monitoring and reporting results. After being subsidized by the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research for the first phase of the project in 1998 and 1999, a follow-up subsidy of € 2.5 million has now been awarded.

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