

THE NETHERLANDS

KONINKLIJKE BIBLIOTHEEK

DR WIM VAN DRIMMELEN — DIRECTOR GENERAL

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In 2002 an increase in the number of visitors to the Koninklijke Bibliotheek was realized once again, and the record of 80,000 was exceeded for the first time since 1995. The KB's largest public event of the year was Wonderland, a children's book exhibition held in the Kunsthal Rotterdam. The festive opening, honoured by the presence of the Dutch Prime Minister, attracted a great deal of media attention. The exhibition was visited by more than 100,000 people in a three-month period, an absolute record for a book exhibition and the fourth most well-attended exhibition in 2002 in the Netherlands. According to a survey, visitor reaction to the exhibition was very positive.

Use of the digital library (use of library facilities via the internet) increased enormously, in terms of both the catalogues, specific subject bibliographies and full content files. Important results have been booked in the expansion of this unrestricted access to library materials. Since November, a great number of limited access files have been available for reference by holders of KB library cards. In many cases this concerns files that are important for the study of Dutch history, language and culture, such as the Bibliography of Dutch Linguistics and Literature, the Repertorium of Dutch History, History in Titles and the Newspaper Bank. Currently, the KB is developing a knowledge domain for Dutch history, language and culture, in which various kinds of information will be made available thematically through the web in the form of text, image and sound, and databases.

The Koninklijke Bibliotheek is the first library in the world with an electronic deposit system for keeping digital publications in long-term storage and keeping them accessible. The system was developed in consultation with IBM. On the basis of the archiving agreement that the KB has drawn up with Elsevier Science, all articles from more than 1,500 leading scientific periodicals will be stored in the electronic deposit library. Comparable agreements with other publishers are in the works. Thanks to good working relationships with the publishers, the Deposit Library for printed Dutch publications is growing as well. The Special Collections (manuscripts, early printed books and valuable works) were enhanced in the last year with the addition of exceptional gifts, which included an extremely valuable medieval book of hours, the Trivulzio manuscript.

Finally, the KB coordinates two major national programmes for the preservation and digitization of the national cultural heritage: Metamorfoze and Memory of the Netherlands. Besides serving as coordinator the KB also participates with its own collections, which it records on microfilm or digitizes. Trans-institutional cooperation is necessary in order to build up an attractive digital Dutch collection. In the case of a massive amount of information from several different knowledge and heritage institutions, the groups involved can profit from synergetic effects. It is our task to keep the paper and the digital world firmly connected. This is the theme lying at the heart of all our changes and renovations.

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