

A photograph of the Cologne Public Library building at sunset. The building is a multi-story concrete structure with large glass windows, illuminated from within, showing bookshelves and reading areas. The sky is a mix of orange, yellow, and blue. In the foreground, there are bare trees and a street with a few people. A black text box is overlaid in the bottom left corner.

**Cologne
Public
Library**

2020/2021



Stadt Köln



Die Oberbürgermeisterin Stadtbibliothek

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Foreword by Dr. Hannelore Vogt

An extremely difficult year is behind us. For the first time, the Library and all its branches had to close. We were in an unprecedented situation, facing very significant challenges. Our staff was extremely responsive and offered a wide range of services, even during pandemic peaks: The Cologne Public Library has well established digital collections and offerings. E-books, streaming, database access, digital daily newspapers, e-learning courses, and online language courses have long been part of our portfolio. As a result, the Library acquired several thousand new members during the lockdown, despite the closure. City staff working remotely from their homes were also able to access the Library's digital training programs.

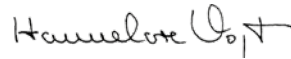
During this time, numerous new services were created: online tutorials, a digital children's program, a virtual reading club, staff book recommendations, and translation of PR materials by the multilingual Library staff. Digital versions of research methods trainings, programs, and class tours came to life – a hybrid use that will continue to be promoted in the future.

Topics such as fake news, climate change, reorientation of public spaces, and diversity are important program components.

As educational institutions, libraries fortunately remained open during the partial shut down from early November to mid-December. Since August, the Central Library has also been open on Sundays.

All of this inspires us. We look positively to the future. The well established will continue and the new will be confidently planned in 2021. This is made possible by our numerous supporters, cooperation partners, friends groups and many volunteers. Our heartfelt thanks go to all of them!

Dr. Hannelore Vogt and the entire Library staff

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Hannelore Vogt". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

*Dr. Hannelore Vogt
and the entire Library staff*



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Open for Everyone – Now also on Sundays

The time had finally come. At 1:00 p.m. on the dot, on August 16, 2020, the first Sunday after summer holidays, the Library opened its doors for the expectant crowd. The Cologne Public Library thus became the first large public library in Germany to be open seven days a week.

The variety of programs, the quality of service, the range of media, and the number of workstations, particularly in demand among students, ensure that on Sundays the Library is very well visited. Additionally hired and trained Library assistants support the new venture and help make certain that the Sunday opening is a resounding success for the entire Library system.

The Sunday program series kicked off with a concert by the Cologne-based band StadtRand. Sundays offer a wide range of activities, from storytimes, theater, music, and stand-up comedy to digital and interactive hands-on-activities on STEM topics such as „Smart City – Smart Home“. A mobile Italian coffee bar is available for refreshments.



Due to COVID, special hygiene concepts had to be implemented at the Central Library and have continuously adapted to the applicable regulations in order to allow for programming to take place. Until November, when physical events were prohibited, it was possible to provide a safe venue for everyone – and enable artists to perform in front of a real audience! A small contribution to the promotion of Culture could thus be made.

To allow libraries to open on Sunday, the North Rhine-Westphalia (NRW) Bibliotheksstärkungsgesetz (Library Strengthening Act), was passed by the state parliament in October 2019. NRW in this respect is a pioneer among the federal states in Germany. The Sunday opening of the Central Library is initially set up as a pilot project for the years 2020 and 2021, and will be continued if successful.

The Cologne City Council provided the Library with special funding for this socially relevant undertaking. Additionally, the Sunday programs and events are supported with a six-figure sum by the state Ministry of Culture and Science through its „Program to Strengthen Sunday Opening in Libraries“ (ProSiB).







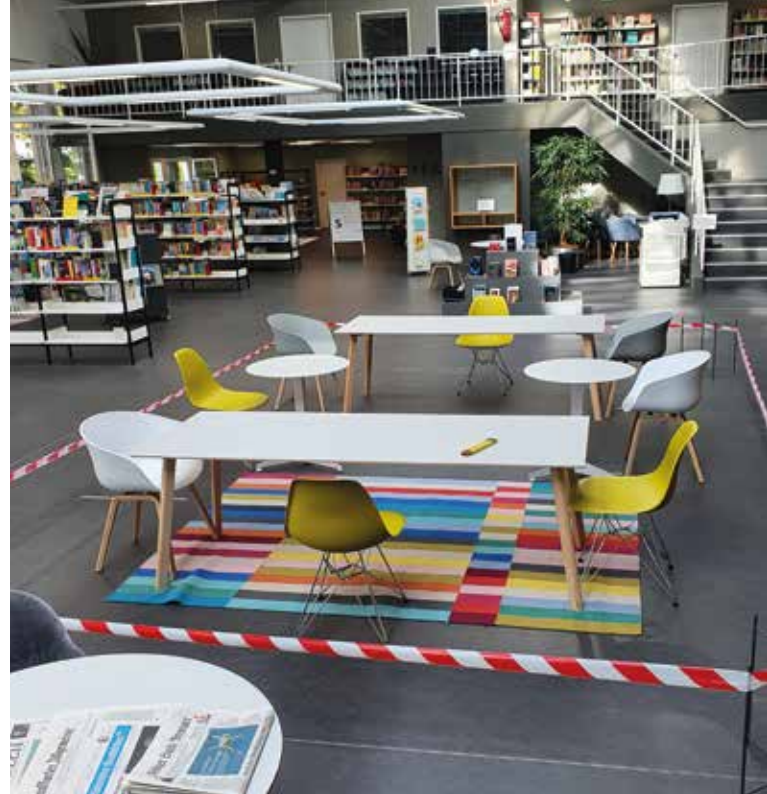
Active Despite the Pandemic

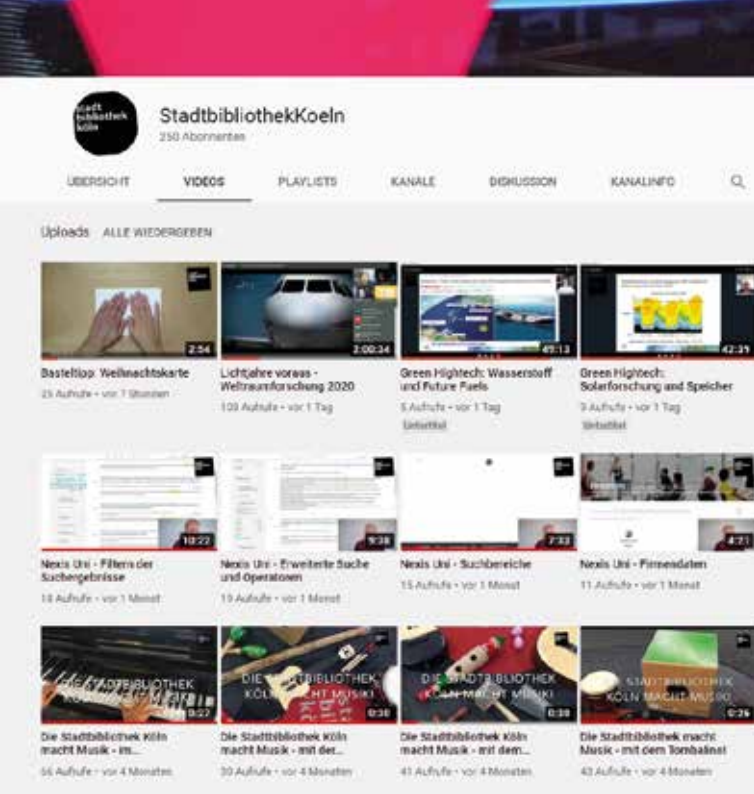
Friday, March 13, 5:45 p.m.: The order to immediately close the Library came at the worst possible time. Nevertheless, a constructive flurry of activity began right away: using all available communication channels, patrons were informed of the closure before the heavily-visited Saturday; IT solutions were found to automatically extend loan periods during the lockdown; extra shifts were organized to staff customer service and manage the outside book return; posters with all pertinent information were produced in multiple languages; and a sign language video was created as well. For every problem identified, an appropriate solution was quickly and unbureacratically found. Everyone helped each other and problems were solved together. While physical distance was kept between individuals, everyone worked together as a team.

Instead of complaints about the last-minute closure, the Library received the heartfelt reward of love, gratitude and encouragement from patrons on all social media channels: „Quick and easy problem solving,“ was posted on Facebook, „best library ever,“ or simply „I’m going to miss you guys so much.“

Library visitors largely accepted the safety and visitor registration measures that were required after the reopening on April 27, so operations were quickly able to return to normal. Safety measures were implemented to allow workshops and larger events to be held. The vital role of libraries was recognized and more highly valued in fall than in spring, therefore libraries were able to remain open during the partial lockdown. Events were moved online, if possible. Digital competence and continuous development are part of the Cologne Public Library's DNA and proved extremely helpful during the crisis.

For the majority of the staff, the switch to online staff meetings, remote work and use of e-learning offerings was easily done and already part of everyday life even before Covid. However, it was now time to onboard staff who had not had much contact with these things before. That meant software training, adding equipment, and developing new rules. Here again, team spirit and unconventional solutions were called for.





The citizens of Cologne also benefited from this. Every city resident was able to access the Library’s digital services free of charge and without any major registration formalities during the closure – an opportunity of which approximately 3,000 residents enthusiastically took advantage. The use of the Library’s e-media, film and music streaming services in particular doubled within a month.

The Library thus provided expanded online services and supported the #kölnbleibtzuhaus (#colognestaysathome) campaign.

Staff created short video tutorials to introduce new patrons to the Library’s most important digital services. These included videos on e-learning, film and music streaming, and using online magazines and newspapers. In order to help parents keep their children occupied in meaningful ways during this difficult period, staff developed a children’s program that was broadcast on YouTube and Instagram. It included STEM experiments, crafts, and virtual storytimes. In addition, a specially curated children’s movies collection was compiled on filmfriend, the Library’s film streaming service. Study aids were compiled for students preparing for their Abitur, or high school graduation exams. Book



recommendations were provided by Library staff in the Library blog entitled “Have you read this yet?”

A core focus since the spring were digital event and programming formats, using licensed platforms for online seminars, lectures, and discussions. Research methods training, learning circles, discussion groups for German learners, and the quarterly meetings of the entire Library staff soon took place partially – and in the last two months of the year, exclusively – online. The School Services Department’s solutions for digital instruction attracted a great deal of interest in the library field, and staff from several libraries in other cities observed the virtual class tours and instruction sessions.

There was also a positive side to the shift to a digital environment: New online platforms had to be quickly tested and licensed, and training and skill in their use had to be acquired. They are now routinely and flexibly used. Even after the – hopefully soon – end of the pandemic, online formats will certainly complement and expand the Library’s service portfolio.



A Behind the Scenes Look

Despite the digital offerings, STEM, and Makerspace that now enrich our services, the largest part of the daily load is still the collection. Every day it must be sorted, shelved and transported between the Central Library and 11 branches in different parts of the city. The staff is happy that this work is appreciated by the patrons, as evidenced by the high circulation numbers, long-standing library memberships, and the numerous new registrations that are received each day. Once in a while someone brings in something sweet to say thank you, but the appreciative words from our visitors such as „Super!“, „Great!“, and „Glad you are here,“ are amongst the greatest gift we receive. Not to speak of the enraptured looks of the children when they hold the book or medium they've been looking for in their hands.

Liebe Bibliothekskundin, lieber Bibliothekskunde, sagen Sie uns bitte Ihre Meinung, damit unser Service für Sie noch besser wird!

Anregung

Lob

Kritik

Ihr seid alle Spitze
hier in der Bibliothek.

Please share your feedback, so we can improve our services. „You all at the Library are the best!“



Reorientation – Urban Society in Dialog

The implementation phase of the Central Library 's general renovation begins in 2022, with the challenge of bringing both the physical space and the technology into the future. The Central Library, in particular, is where contemporary, user-oriented knowledge dissemination occurs. Together with Dutch creative guide Aat Vos, who previously transformed the Kalk Library Branch into a distinctive space in a colorful and diverse neighborhood, the reorientation of the Central Library is intended to answer the question of how the Library can be conceptualized and designed as a public space that promotes a new social togetherness.

Creating such a space is not just about new ideas and creative approaches. What is most needed is perseverance, resilience, and determination. The architects, building management, city boards, and librarians are working to reach a common goal important to everyone: creating a unique and vital “third place” in the heart of the city.

NEUVER ORTUNG



The planning involves not only color schemes, the effect of light and space, and the materials concept, but the very mundane centimeter by centimeter measuring of cable shafts, door openings, accessibility, and a thousand other things. The creative part of the design is almost done. The curiosity is growing to see how this preliminary work becomes reality.

To bridge that time, the question of why we need new social spaces and what they need to be like so that people feel welcome is the focus of the new event series „NEUVERORTUNG Wohnen – Arbeiten – anders Leben” (REORIENTATION Residing – Working – Living Differently). It enables reflection and encourages dialogue with the people of Cologne, for whom this library is being redesigned, as well as stakeholders, experts and other interested parties.

The event series NEUVERORTUNG will resume as soon as the pandemic-related circumstances allow. A foretaste of what has already been developed will then be presented.

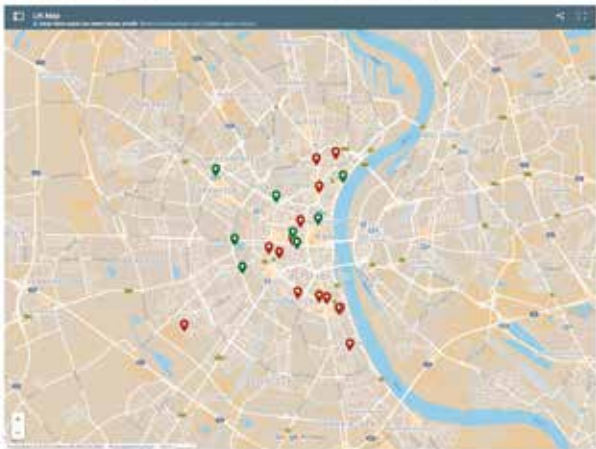




lik

Literatur in Köln

Wie verbindet die LiK Köln mit seinem räumlichen Fokus auf das literarische Köln, eine Verbindung mit Selbstverortung bzw. Einbettung in seinen Raum in dem Kartogramm der Kölner Literatur. Die LiK.Map verbindet dabei einmündig literarische als auch geographische Landmarken des lokalen Literaturgeschehens.



On the Literary Road

Despite this year's special conditions, the Heinrich Böll Archive and the Literature in Cologne Archive (LiK) were able to host interesting book presentations, readings, and discussions with Eva Weissweiler, Norbert Hummelt, Bert Brune and Joachim Rönneper, among others. An event about Heinrich Böll's relationship to Ireland with Böll's son René was broadcast virtually for the first time.

The lik.map and an accompanying blog are currently in development. This new and innovative format provides an exciting virtual and interactive view of literary Cologne. The focus is on the localization and visualization of literature in urban space. The lik.map takes into account both historical and contemporary landmarks of local literary history.

At the beginning of the year, the sixth volume in the series „lik“ will appear, with unpublished texts by Ulla Hahn. The series „Literature-Tandem“ will see the light of day. Collaborations are planned with the Cologne City Museum and other institutions. An exhibition is also planned on the Cologne literary scholar Hans Mayer, within the framework of the commemorative year “1700 years of Jewish life in Germany.”



The City's Heart Beats in its Neighborhoods

The branch libraries are beloved and established focal points in the city's neighborhoods. The partnerships with a wide variety of organizations contribute to key area of strength – namely, age-specific and, in many cases, multilingual language and reading promotion. A wide variety of formats and programs are part of the standard offering in all branches. These include kindergarten and class tours, Paws to Read programs in Mülheim and Porz, baby storytimes in Nippes and Haus Balchem, and multilingual storytime programs in Mülheim and Sülz.

The branch libraries are highly valued by residents and in many cases, look back on a long history. The Mülheim Library celebrated its 90th anniversary, and in December the Neubrück Library celebrated its 50th. An orchestra concert on the St. Severin's church square to celebrate the Haus Balchem Library Friend's Association 25th anniversary in September included Jürgen Becker, Gerd Köster, Wilfried Schmickler, and Klaus the Violinist



The branch libraries are not only geographically close to their patrons. They also strive to improve and develop their services not only for their patrons, but with them as well.

Since the beginning of the year, the Nippes and Neubrück branch libraries have been participating in the Public Library Department NRW's qualification program „Strategy Development for Branch Libraries“. This year, they have worked intensively, along with nine other branch libraries from major cities, to focus their services. The results for Neubrück include additional opening hours on market days, and additional inputs for the renovation planned for the end of 2021. Results for Nippes include YouTube videos featuring craft activities and the popular picture book cinema-storytimes where the pictures book images are projected on a screen.

The patrons of the Ehrenfeld Library received a surprise after their branch reopened in mid-December, after a six-week renovation. In addition to the replacement of the water-damaged floor, the walls and window frames were painted, and the furniture replaced and rearranged. Porz Library's self-service area was also redesigned.

The motto for the 2020 Cologne carnival season was “The City’s Heart Beats in its Neighborhoods”. The branch patrons show this by their loyalty and the enthusiasm with which they embrace change and new programs. Their devotion to their branch is seen not only in high door-count and circulation statistics, but also in program attendance. One example was the particularly enjoyable and amusing Literamus carnival session held at the Rodenkirchen Library in February, featuring well-known Cologne carnivalists.



In 2021, the Porz Library will offer digital-media workshops with music, movement, and unconventional digital instruments. The Chorweiler Library is creating a Seed Library. Plant seeds will be distributed and materials on gardening topics provided. Two raised garden beds will be planted in the Library’s courtyard and workshops for hobby gardeners offered. The new service was made possible by the Querwaldein e.V. Association, with funding from the „Strong Neighborhoods - Strong Cologne“ program.





Children Welcome

As part of the initiative of the Office for Children, Youth and Families, all parents of newborns in Cologne receive a voucher for a six-month free Library membership.

Now, as a further welcome gift, parents will receive a reading suitcase. In addition to general information about the Library's services, it contains a brochure for parents about reading aloud, a first picture book, and a child-friendly reading growth chart, for parents to record their children's height.

The Friends of the Cologne Public Library and the Sparkasse KölnBonn jointly support the project. Additional funding comes from the German Federal Cultural Foundation in the 360° – Fund for Cultures of the New Urban Society program.

Reading Promotion: the Cologne Children's Book

The fourth year of the "Cologne Children's Book" campaign, a partnership between the Cologne Public Library, the Kölner Stadt-Anzeiger, and the Junges Literaturhaus Köln, featured the fairy tale comics of Ro-
traut Susanne Berner. Due to the circumstances this year, the fairy tale comics migrated to the web. On the Library's social media channels, they transformed into modern, lively picture stories and a virtual picture book cinema.

As we all know from the Grimm tales, the wolf eats Little Red Riding when she gets lost in the woods, Frau Holle shakes out her pillows, and Hans seeks his fortune. This is a wonderful book for anyone who wants to learn about fairy tales, is just starting to read, or who simply loves comics. We look forward to meeting Rapunzel and the Frog King again in real life as part of the many creative activities surrounding fairy tale comics in 2021.





Music – New Strategies, New Offerings

The digital transformation, in particular the rise of streaming, requires a new collection development strategy for the music library.

The first results of this process have already been implemented. Active participation now takes its place alongside borrowing media: making music, trying out new instruments, such as e-drums, practicing or recording music together, and learning about new music technologies. A specialist librarian and a master's student from the TH Köln, the technical college, assisted this process.

The range of musical instruments available for lending has continued to grow. Loop synthesizers, e-violins, concertinas and, above all, instruments from other cultures such as a saz, daf, and doumbek were added to the collection and actively used – especially during the pandemic. Workshops taught the basics of sound engineering, DJ-ing, playing guitar and ukulele, music programming, and digitizing records.

Beethoven in the evening and Offenbach on the smartphone – with the comprehensive streaming service NAXOS, Library members can now indulge in classical music, jazz, and world music free of charge, whether on their home computer or via app.

Medici.tv, the leading streaming service for classical music, opera, and dance, helped a great many music enthusiasts weather the pandemic-related restrictions on concerts.

Starting in the spring, Musik am Sonntag (Music on Sunday) will offer an open stage at the Central Library to all citizens who would like to introduce themselves to a larger audience. The cooperation with the Cologne Philharmonic Orchestra „Impuls plus“ will allow attendees to receive an introduction to a musical piece at the Library prior to a concert. Lunch events combining music with the world of comics will also be held in the Library as part of the Acht Brücken festival. Planned are online learning circles on musical topics, music partner speed dating, and a new digital offering for sheet music.





© Tomas Rodriguez

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Experiencing STEM

There is no planet B, not even at the Library. The environment, climate, sustainability and the promotion of eco-friendly practices were the focus of this year's STEM festival, MINTköl'n. There were programs and events on promoting zero waste with homemade cosmetics and cleaning products, wild herbs, green high-tech, and the sustainable handling of wastewater and heavy rain in Cologne. The Central Library also installed a Powerbike. Visitors can climate-neutrally charge their mobile devices such as smartphones or tablets by using muscle power. The bike is emission-free, made of sustainable materials, has a comfortable seat, a work surface for reading material, and displays the amount of energy generated in real time on an LED.

A collection box for discarded mobile devices set up for the festival proved to be so successful that it has now found its permanent home at the Central Library. The collection box is made possible by a partnership with the city's Waste Management Department; the valuable raw materials contained are recycled, with the proceeds going to a good cause.





MINTkölön was under the patronage of Lord Mayor Henriette Reker; Ranga Yogeshwar was once again ambassador for the festival and Ströer Media Deutschland GmbH again sponsored the PR.

Featuring the topics mathematics, computer science, natural sciences, and technology, MINTkölön promotes STEM educational opportunities. The festival gears itself toward children and families, especially schoolchildren, but has something for adults as well. As in previous years, the festival offered more than 100 free workshops and information sessions during fall break. Registration for almost all sessions was full within days. The evening shows offered an impressive lineup, including the scientist duo from *Methodisch inkorrekt*, behavioral biologist Madlen Ziege, forensic scientist Mark Benecke and math YouTuber Daniel Jung, who made it clear that the path to the digital learning revolution is not difficult.

The STEM festival was able to be held safely this year, despite the uncertain times and difficult conditions. Only on the last day did the festival have to move to a digital format. All of this was possible thanks to the commitment and support of the staff and the cooperation partners.



Kurt Huettnier GmbH & Co. KG

Maker Boxes for the Library of Things

Enabling children to acquiring STEM skills in a playful way is the goal of the Library of Things. 225 new maker boxes were purchased for the collection, which is available at all library locations. The Library of Things contains all the materials, including accessories and instructions, for 14 different topics ranging from robotics to electronics to 3D printing, so that experimenting, researching, and tinkering can begin right away. As with everything in the Library of Things, the maker boxes can be borrowed free of charge.

Health education was also not overlooked. In February, Thomke Gerlich informed a large audience about „Eyestrain Relief in the Digital Age.”

The ecological focus of MINTkölN 2020 will now be reinforced throughout the year, starting with the element of air. An interactive wind power model will illustrate how differently shaped rotor blades can be used to generate and measure air currents of different strengths.

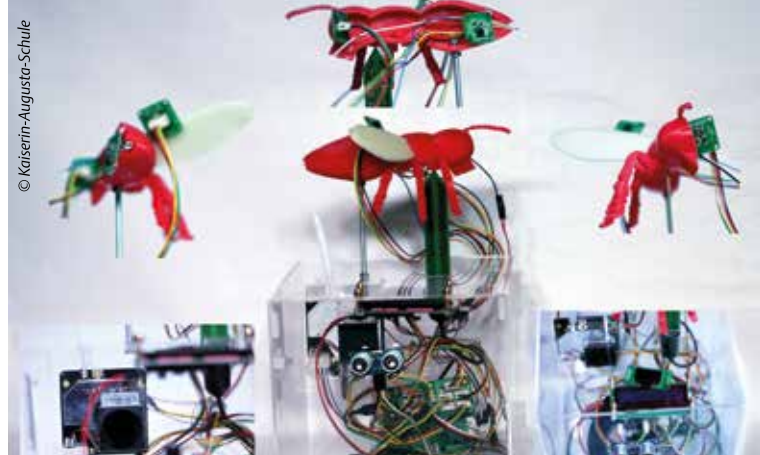
Producing Instead of Consuming

KAS Cooperation

In cooperation with the Cologne Public Library, the Kaiserin Augusta School (KAS) created a 3D-printed model of a wasp, composed of bio-compatible PLA plastic, complete with electronic sensors. Library staff advised and assisted the students and teacher with the printing. All the more reason for everyone involved to be delighted that the school's model won first place in the „DIGIYOU“ competition.

DIY Masks

Face masks were hard to come by at the beginning of the pandemic, and even the initially permitted visors were not available. Thanks to the sewing machines and the 3D printer in the Makerspace, it was no problem for dedicated staff members from various Library departments to jump right into production and supply coworkers with masks and visors. Four sewing machines are also now available for borrowing, so that patrons can sew at home.



© Kaiserin-Augusta-Schule

Makerspace Workshops

Despite all of the pandemic restrictions, some exciting workshops took place in the Makerspace. Creative topics from Sonic Pi software, to using the overlock sewing machine, to hand lettering were on the agenda. The Makerspace workshops are aimed at do-it-yourselfers, people who are curious, creative, and want to learn new things together with others.

Media Savvy

As a low-threshold center for competence and learning, the Library provides comprehensive digital services. It offers e-readers for lending, as well as tablets and notebooks for in-house use. It provides instruction in new technologies, advanced workshops, and last, but not least, personal guidance and support.

The Digibib of the NRW University Library Center, now in existence for 15 years, is a powerful research tool for school research papers, academics and hobbies. The new release, with its greatly improved functionality and clear layout, makes it even easier to find and download the right documents, as well as order them from other libraries nationwide.

The ability to debunk false or misleading information has become even more important during the pandemic than it was in previous years. The Library is active on this front in a variety of ways. In early May, a livestream discussion on “Corona Nonsense on the Net” with Simon Hurz, digital expert at the Süddeutsche Zeitung, took place.

Many of the approximately 600 participants took extensive advantage of the opportunity to ask questions via chat.

Assessing and evaluating digital and printed sources is an important part of the research methods training for school classes. In a very lively workshop, Manfred Theisen, author of books for young adults, gave students practical advice on how to deal with fake news. At the nationwide Digital Day, Library staff were on an expert panel and contributed practical online tutorials. The Library participated in the NRW Literacy Day as well.

The Deutsche Telekom Foundation is funding a new academically supported project to teach skills in using research sources in secondary schools. The Cologne Public Library will test the methods starting in 2021. The goal is a modular, age-appropriate instructional offering for practical use in libraries and schools.

On Board with Technological Progress

E-payment and Online Registration

Patrons can now pay usage and reservations fees online via Paypal, Giropay or credit card. Online payments are very complex, due to security and administrative issues. The changes were implemented in cooperation with the Office of Information and Communication Technology. Patrons will also soon be able to register for a library membership online and immediately start using digital services without having to visit a Library location.

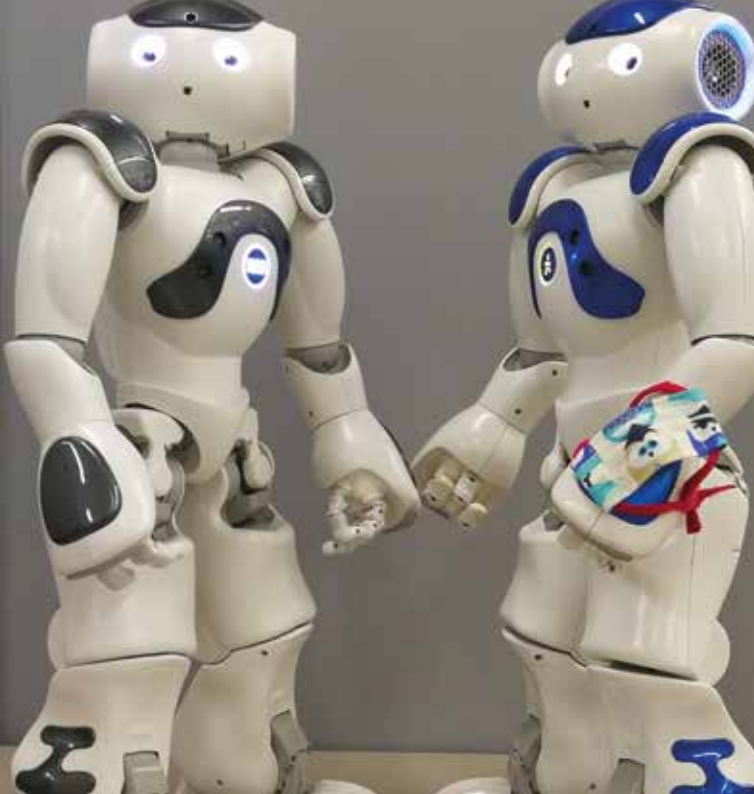
Network Expansion

The WiFi optimization and increasing of the Library's data network speed by a factor of 5, done in close cooperation with Netcologne, secured system operations and established technical prerequisites for the future. These improvements ensured the continued service oriented development of the Library's digital culture and enabled future educational offerings.

In-House Lending of Mobile Devices

Low-threshold digital access for all increases equity. Tablets will soon be available for patron use in several branch libraries. The tablets will be accessed with a library card using RFID technology and housed in self-service charging cabinets.

A new generation: NAO is a humanoid robot that is used not only for programming workshops. It demonstrates Tai Chi moves, provides updates on the weather, and relays the traffic situation at the Neumarkt, one of the main city squares in Cologne. A robot has been in use at the Library for quite a while, but its successor has much more potential. For this reason, it is time for a new NAO generation at the Library. The „old“ NAO handed over its place and all its knowledge to its successor and went into well-earned retirement.



High-Tech in the Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired

In addition to Daisy players, blind and visually impaired patrons can now also use the CareTec Colorino in the Library or at home. This talking color recognition device provides information about 150 different color nuances and can help, for example, in the selection of clothing.

The OrCAM MyReader 2.0, a practical, mobile, voice-controlled aid, will be available to blind and visually impaired patrons in 2021. This relatively new visual aid responds to finger pointing, automatically recognizes all texts, and reads them aloud – whether from books, newspapers, screens, street signs or posters. The small device consists of a mini-computer and magnetically attaches to eyeglass frames.

Social Media Studio – YouTubing in the Library

Influencers like Mai Thi Nguyen-Kim and Rezo have permanently changed the media landscape. Not only do their contributions shape public discourse, but through their work, the boundaries between consumption and production have become increasingly blurred.

The Cologne Public Library is keeping up with this change. In 2021 a new service will be inaugurated with funds from the Cultural Development Plan (KEP): In the fully equipped, stylish social media studio, patrons can easily and free of charge create high-quality videos and podcasts. High-resolution cameras, first-class microphones, variable lighting, and ergonomic controls ensure professional quality. The high-tech studio is designed so that recordings can be made with as little effort as possible. Workshops on using the social media studio will also be offered.

In this way, the Library remains true to its Makerspace philosophy: offer expensive technology in a non-commercial setting to empower people to realize their own potential.



Education Partner Award

The Cologne Public Library has participated in the „Education Partner NRW - Library and School“ initiative for the past 15 years and now cooperates with more than 40 partner schools of all kinds. The educational offerings range from library scavenger hunts in the first grade to various reading promotion activities, as well as research methods training for the upper classes. The Cologne Public Library was honored for its work on the 15th anniversary of the partnership.

NRW Minister for Schools and Education Yvonne Gebauer and Ulrike Lubek, director of the Rheinland Regional Council, presented the Cologne Public Library director the first Education Partner Award.

Libraries, with their diverse and contemporary offerings, are important partners for schools during the digital transformation. Reading is a key skill; inspiring children to enjoy reading remains our task even in a digitized information society. Reading and the use of literature, whether as books or e-books, decisively influences a successful educational path, active participation in social and cultural life, and independent use of all sorts of media.“

Minister Yvonne Gebauer



Renowned – Also as an Event and Filming Location

The new #DigitalCheckNRW makes it possible to quickly and easily measure one's media skills and also improve them with suitable training courses. State Secretary for media, Nathanael Liminski, head of the State Chancellery, launched the #DigitalCheckNRW on February 27, 2020 at the Kalk Library Branch.

The state deliberately chose the Library as a location for the launch event. Public libraries are centers of knowledge. They provide low-threshold workshops, guidance for the use of digital skills in everyday life, and support digital participation for all.

The branch libraries were also in great demand as locations for other events. The awarding of the German Reading Prize to Annette Frier was filmed at the Kalk Library. The Telekom Foundation used the Rodenkirchen Library for a photo shoot to illustrate its projects, thereby reinforcing the importance of libraries and the work they do.



The Volunteer Award from the city of Cologne, for exceptional commitment to working with refugees and immigrants, was awarded to the sprachraum's volunteer team. This was a very gratifying and well-deserved recognition.

International Connections

Collaboration thrives on meetings and exchanges between partners. This was, of course, more difficult than usual this year. However, through web conferences, online seminars and video streams, the Library was nevertheless represented at a large number of professional events, as well as at national and international conferences and functions.

These included presentations and workshops at the following: Occupy Library; European Code Week, Generation Code: born at the library (part of the European Parliament); the professional panel of Digital SkillUp (project of the European DIGITAL SME Alliance); the International Association of Music Libraries IAML Germany; Sustainability Action Days (part of National Library Day); the virtual art event Earth Speakr; and the national Library Director's Conference. The Library also contributed to international book projects and continued work with the ongoing EU project Learning Circles in Libraries. The Library was thus able to present its activities worldwide.



Under the auspices of the Public Libraries 2030 initiative, the new EU project NEWCOME is developing a vision for the strategic development and global networking of libraries. Project members, in addition to renowned library scientist David Lankes, include the Koninklijke Bibliotheek Netherlands, DOKK1 Aarhus, as well as other renowned European libraries. A special focus is the exchange of best practices in the areas of lifelong learning and digital and social inclusion.

Understanding Diversity – Diversity Training

The goal of the 360° program is to sensitize staff to diversity issues. Together with the Berlin diversity consulting organization „Eine Welt der Vielfalt e.V.“, 30 staff members from all Library departments trained as diversity multipliers.

The focus of the training was on examining one's own perceptions, values, and behaviors. It examined raising awareness of discrimination mechanisms, structural exclusion, and the formation and impact of prejudice at the individual, organizational, and societal levels. The training was complemented by several compact online training sessions for all staff. In this way, the entire staff was able to expand and sustainably establish competencies in dealing with diversity.

In the coming year, a Diversity Steering Committee will be formed to sustainably develop diversity in all sectors of everyday library work.



Kübra Gümüşay powerfully demonstrated how, if people are only ever seen as part of a group, they become invisible as individuals. Gümüşay's discussion with Yalda Zerbakhch, about how language shapes thinking and politics, took place as an online event with over 350 participants.

„The diversity training made me think again about my own prejudices and preconceptions. What has shaped me? Where do I stand in society? How do I look at the world? I was not aware of some of my privileges before the training. Where would I be today without having had them?“ (Training participant)

Gaming and Virtual Reality

Kuti has all the charm of a classic gaming console, but looks completely different – like a cube, in fact. It is simple, robust, very easy to use and can be found in the children’s department at the Central Library.

Escape games can be played, even without a dedicated room. The gaming team developed various puzzle games and posted them on Instagram, Twitter, Facebook, and the Library’s blog. This was followed in the summer by an Escape Room game that used the entire Central Library as a setting.

Gaming is not only possible sitting down! For the RingFit Adventure that took place at the Nippes Library Branch, full physical effort was required: In this motion-controlled adventure game, opponents were defeated by performing actual fitness exercises – an interesting new approach to combining sport and games.

Virtual worlds have been a regular part of the Library’s repertoire since 2015. The VR collection at the Central Library was expanded significantly, with the addition of a VR station containing Oculus Quest and HTC vive, both available for in-house use; VR goggles are available to borrow.

Seven wireless VR goggles are also available for lending at the branch libraries

The gaming collection continues to grow! The Playstation 4 and Xbox One consoles will be replaced by the next generation starting November 2020, and very soon games for the Playstation 5 and Xbox Series X will be available for lending. In 2021, the VR collection will be expanded with new, higher-quality goggles that will be available for lending as well.



Facts, Figures, Data

Despite pandemic-related Library closures and access restrictions, approximately 76% of the usual number of patrons visited the Library. The Library implemented the strictest possible hygiene and safety measures. With these precautions in place, the STEM Festival, with more than 100 programs and workshops, was able to take place largely on-site, in addition to many other events, either in physical or digital form. The digital collection was considerably expanded and experienced a high increase in use. This is attributed to the many new members who joined the Library in 2020 during the two lockdowns. The addition of Sunday hours in August 2020, commencing seven day a week Library service, met with high acceptance.

Das Bibliothekssystem

Central Library	Children's Library, Music Library, Makerspace, MINT Space, sprachraum, Heinrich-Böll-Archive, Literature in Cologne Archive (LiK), Library for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Germania Judaica e.V. Library
Branch Libraries	11 branch libraries (Ehrenfeld and Porz partially closed for renovation)
Bookmobile	19 stops
Minibibs (minilibraries)	the Watertower in Kalk; the Book Kiosk in Chorweiler

Visitors	1,85 million
Virtual Visitors	2,8 million

2020 Most Popular Checkouts

Fiction	<i>Jussi Adler-Olsen: Opfer 2117</i>
Non-fiction	<i>Dorothee Bastian: Bergisches Land – Wanderungen für die Seele. 20 Wohlfühlwege</i>
Children's Book	<i>Jeff Kinney: Gregs Tagebuch 14 – Voll daneben</i>
Audiobook	<i>Delia Owens: Der Gesang der Flusskrebse</i>
Film	<i>Spider Man: Far from Home</i>
Children's Film	<i>Die Unglaublichen 2</i>
Music-CD	<i>Megahits 2020 – die Erste</i>

Programs and Events

Programs	1.642 with 18.000 Attendees
<i>Since the Sunday opening on August 16, 2020, a wide-ranging Sunday program palette has also been on offer, from stage programs to digital and interactive workshops on STEM topics. An Italian coffee bar is also available for refreshments.</i>	

Social Media

Twitter	5.400 followers (300 new)
Facebook	5.900 followers (400 new)
Instagram	3.500 followers (1.100 new)

Staff

Staff positions	161
Trainees	12
Volunteers	198

Publication in media

Local press and media frequently reported on the Cologne Public Library. The Library received national media coverage as well.



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