

International Conference Electronic resources

by

Livia Borghetti

I am very pleased to welcome you all and I wish to take this opportunity to give you some information about the National Library in Rome and in particular on the recent re-qualification and re-organization of spaces and services to the public.

As most of you know, the mission of any national library is on one side to protect and preserve the document heritage, that is great part of the cultural asset of any country, and on the other side to promote its diffusion and knowledge. Collections are continuously increased both by the legal deposit of all publications printed in Italy and by the acquisition of foreign publications and books that document culture and studies about Italy in the world.

This is one of the institutional duties of the National Central Library in Rome, as well as the editing of BOMS (Bollettino delle opere moderne straniere possedute in Italia), the union catalogue of modern foreign books owned by Italian State Libraries.

With the aim of providing new and adequate services to the users, over the last 3 years the library has gone through a radical process of transformation and re-qualification of spaces and services. The main objective has been to get a modern library, open to Italian and worldwide users, capable of providing quality services, also through an advanced technological infrastructure, at the highest possible level consented by state of art information technology.

The architectural and infrastructural works have been completed last March and with only 20 closing days an area of about 20,000 square meters for the public has been rearranged and completely refurnished.

The library has now new gardens, an open air theatre, a bookshop, a new café and restaurant, three meeting rooms annexed to the big Conference Hall, an enlarged Exhibition area, 3 new reading rooms (Sciences and Technologies, Multimedia and Music, Special Collections) and 9 rooms completely refurnished, with a total amount of 200,000 volumes and reference books on seven kilometres of shelves.

The rooms have been rearranged by similar disciplines in seven reading areas, each with a distribution desk for the claim of books and documents stored in the great depository tower. Reading tables are equipped with displays that alert the user when the claimed documents are available at the desk.

Special attention has been paid to information services for the readers: the area of bibliographic research has been greatly extended and the quantity of reference books available to the users has been increased.

All these functionalities are supported by new informatics applications: a new Local Area Network has been designed and installed, connecting over 400 computers, about 150 of which are available for the public. Of these, 50 have been installed in the great central Gallery and allow a direct access to the library's online catalogue, while the remaining 100 are located in the reading rooms to access Intranet (and in some cases Internet) applications.

The most interesting developments have been planned and are already in progress in the field of Multimedia applications: within next year documents, music sheets, sound recordings will be made available in digital format to the users in the newly created Sala Musica, already equipped with advanced multimedia workstations.

Also the new website has been implemented with the objective of being a reference point for the library users and of providing a series of useful information through a simple and intuitive graphical interface, designed also for non-expert users of library applications. Due also to its friendliness the website has been awarded in Lugano the European Community "Prix Moebius International" as the best quality website of Italian language area libraries.

The Library is also working on several innovative projects: some of these dealing with the area of electronic resources will be described tomorrow by Giovanna Cordani, responsible for automation and computing services at the Library.

For those who are interested, guided visits have been organized today and tomorrow from 13.30 to 14.30. The visits can be booked at the secretariat of the meeting.

I thank you all for the attention and I wish you a very interesting Conference.

Traduzione di Livia Borghetti

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