

# **Transformation in Libraries and Librarianship in Germany:**

## **Report based on a Professional Visit**

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### **Introduction**

With the Financial Support from German Goethe Institute in Mexico<sup>1</sup> and Bibliothek Information and International (BII) in Germany<sup>2</sup>, I undertook a Professional Visit to selected Libraries in various German cities during 12 – 26 August, 2006. **Dr. Tamara Pianos** from German Vascoda Virtual Library Project<sup>3</sup> (German National Library for Economics at Kiel) was my Visit coordinator and arranged a very good schedule matching with my learning interests, along with colleagues from different German Libraries in Hannover, Gottingen, Kiel, Cologne, Heidelberg and Frankfurt.

### **Library at the University of Veterinary Medicine (TiHO), Hannover**

*Dr. Friedhelm Rump*, the Director of TiHO Library<sup>4</sup> was the coordinator for my stay in Hannover and, on the first day I had a tour at TiHO Library. I was provided with a presentation by *Mr. Axel Karsten* on ViFa Vet<sup>5</sup>, the Veterinary Science virtual Library developed and maintained by TiHO for Vascoda. ViFa Vet has several records of Internet Resources selected by TiHO, and provides another services like AnuVet<sup>6</sup>, a search engine searches around 14 Library Databases from different countries. *Dr. Alexander Kossovoi* demonstrated their Library Portal<sup>4</sup>, which integrates lots of services like new customized search engine created through Gigablast<sup>7</sup>, links to German based services like Hobsy<sup>8</sup>, Subito<sup>9</sup> and GBV<sup>10</sup>. Tiltio Portal is a Z39.50 based shared searching of catalogue from different libraries. They also created a depository of Electronic Theses and planning to digitize lots of valuable materials available at TiHO. *Dr. Rump* explained me about the ways to find out hidden sources on the Internet based on his proposed course in EAHIL Conference<sup>11</sup>. He demonstrated from different Browsers, Search Engines, Meta Search Engines, creation of Specialized search Engines, and finding the disappeared sites through Way Back etc. He also showed the latest applications of Web technology in Library Services like RSS Feeds etc.

**Observation:** TiHO Library acts as the leader in Veterinary Information in Germany and also collaborates with lots of Veterinary libraries around the world. The specialized collection, specialized services and specialized professional staff in this library should be utilized more effectively by declaring it as the German National Library for Veterinary Sciences and Animal Husbandry.

## **German National Library for Science and Technology – Hannover University Library (TIB-UB), Hannover**

This University started as a Technical University, then various Departments added to it, but the library has the strongest collection on Science and Technology and is proclaimed as German National Library for Science and Technology<sup>12</sup>. *Mr. Bernhard Tempel* was my local organizer for the Visit to TIB-UB. I was taken for a Tour to three different Library Buildings, which constitutes the TIB-UB by *Mr. Jens Olf*. Then *Ms. Gernnat* gave me a Power Point Presentation about the upcoming Document Delivery Service from TIB-UB called ‘TIB-Order’<sup>13</sup>, with the support of strong Journal collection in S&T as the base. TIB-Order is an Integrated System, which consists of free catalogue search from TIB-UB Catalogue and different Publishers, ordering and payment system and tracking system. *Mr. Tempel* demonstrated the Digital Mathematics Library – RusDML<sup>14</sup> which is a Global effort of GPNTB, Moscow and TIB-UB, SUB and TU from Germany. *Dr. Elzebieta Gabrys-Deutscher* demonstrated ViFa–Tec<sup>15</sup>, the portal developed by TIB-UB for Vascoda, which contains Information sources and services in Engineering Science and Technology. It uses the Meta Search Engine called GetInfo<sup>16</sup> and offers structured access to relevant technical online information for engineers, technicians and scientists. *Mr. Rainer Schinzei* demonstrated the development of Electronic Depository of German Research Reports<sup>17</sup>, Extracts etc from all over Germany sponsored by Governmental Organizations. There is one more Virtual Library developed by TIB-UB called ViFa Phys<sup>18</sup> for Physics and related resources.

**Observation:** TIB-UB will be the one of worlds biggest Science and Technology Library, and a real National S&T Library for Germany in terms of collection, resources, services and staff. Accidentally, I met a lawyer *Mr. Markus Brammer*, who works as ‘*Legal and License Affairs*’ for this Library. I never heard about a lawyer working for any other Libraries anywhere in the world. His appointment was the result of various copyright and other licensing legal problems with digital and online documents, faced by TIB-UB recently from various publishers. It shows TIB-UB’s commitment to provide seamless access to information to users, with out any hindrance and to be safe guarded in the rights management and copyright issues in the technological advanced society.

## **Hannover Medical School Library (MHH), Hannover**

Hannover Medical School is one of the world's leading university medical centres and its Library<sup>19</sup> caters to the Medical Faculty, Students and patients. *Ms. Sigrid Schmidt-Rohland* of MHH Library took around the Library for a tour and demonstrated their online and other services. They have subscription to E-Journals Library (EZB)<sup>20</sup> an E-Journal consortium of University of Regensburg from publishers like Ovid, EBSCO, Elsevier and several others along with the Open Access Journals. I could also met the Director of MHH Library, *Dr. Annamarie Felsch-Klotz*, who also told me about German Medical Library Association (AGMB)<sup>21</sup>.

**Observation:** MHH Library gives a real picture of German Special Libraries with special collection and users. Their Multimedia resources and Digital Library collections are excellent, but the real usage by faculty and staff should be increased.

During my stay in Hannover I also visited State Library of Hannover<sup>22</sup> and Gottfried Wilhelm Leibniz Library<sup>23</sup>.

## **Goettingen State and University Library [SUB], Goettingen**

Here I met *Mr. Stefan Farrenkopf*, the Subject Specialist of Agriculture and Forestry at Goettingen State and University Library<sup>24</sup> and he explained his Library's involvement in Vascoda Project and the specialized projects of the R&D Group of this Library<sup>25</sup>. This group is the leading R&D Supporting Centre for several new innovative services and systems of LIS in Germany. It includes Kopal project<sup>26</sup> aimed at long term preservation of Digital document, GEO-LEO portal<sup>27</sup> which provides subject specific holdings of Geology and related subjects, Vascoda II project for incorporating Federated Meta search applications and finalizing new Meta data elements for Vascoda, virtual Library for Library and Information Science ViFa BBI<sup>28</sup> and Meta Lib Project<sup>29</sup> which provides guiding principles for German library community with a Meta Data server, Meta Guide, Meta Form. He also demonstrated me the new sets of Meta Sets being prepared by this group for Vascoda and other German Portals, by comparing all available international Meta sets. After the discussion he took me for a Library tour of SUB Goettingen, which was awarded with the German Library of the year 2002 by German Library Association and ZEIT-Foundation Ebelin und Gerd Bucerius<sup>30</sup>.

**Observation:** With a half day session at SUB Goettingen, I could gauge the dynamism of this Library in the emerging technological advancements and research frontier in LIS. This Library has its importance in German Librarianship and R&D division tries to fill up the gaps between international and German library technologies in terms of language, systems and services. Several professionals in Germany agreed to my observation and added that SUB is the leader in technology development of LIS in Germany.

### **German National Library for Economics (ZBW), Kiel**

ZBW<sup>31</sup> is the world's biggest library in Economics literature and also act as the Library for Kiel Institute for World Economics. *Dr. Tamara Pianos*, my visit coordinator is working here for Vascoda as Knowledge transfer for Subject Portals and Kiel is her native place. *Mr. Olaf Siegert*, an Academic Librarian at ZBW narrated the history and various activities of ZBW starting from its establishment in 1914. ECONIS<sup>32</sup>, its Online catalogue has around 3 million records and around 50,000 records of Internet resources. ECONIS uses Fast Search engine with meta search functionalities and the it is linked to Document Delivery Services like Subito, GBV and Direct ordering from ZBW. *Mr. Siegert* told me about the Nationalization of Electronic Media<sup>33</sup> through a single national License for whole Germany, like a consortia for whole Country. *Ms. Nicole Kruger* demonstrated ECONBIZ<sup>34</sup> the Subject Portal developed by ZBW in collaboration with University and Municipal Library of Cologne USB Cologne<sup>35</sup> another part of Vascoda. Its Meta Search Engine developed based on SISIS Elektra<sup>36</sup> searches ECONIS, OPACs of several German and other Libraries with huge Economics collection, various subject gateways like SOSIG, Intute, RePEC, Electronic Journal Library etc. It uses Academic LinkShare<sup>37</sup> to create and share Meta Data and they are planning to change to FAST Meta Search Engine<sup>38</sup>. *Mr. Jan Weiland* showed me the ZBW Document Server<sup>39</sup> a repository of around 4500 documents in Economics, classified according to JEL Classification System<sup>40</sup> and has around 40,000 downloads per month. It uses OPUS System<sup>41</sup> developed by University of Stuttgart, an digital document management system like DSpace. During her orientation, *Dr. Tamara Pianos* informed me about the new developments in Vascoda and the future they are looking for as a collaborative Subject Portal of Germany and cooperating with Portals of other countries. The research is on the way for an effective Meta Search facility, which searches all the 40 Subject portals from Germany, portals from other Countries, Licensed and Free databases from various Publishers, Library Catalogues etc at the same time. She believes that the development in the National Level Single Licensing Policy will help in

overcoming the Political barriers of German federal structure and copyright challenges from publishers.

**Observation:** The Online Reference Service ECONDESK<sup>42</sup> developed using OCLC Question Point Software is a notable service from ZBW. They are the leading partner of NEREUS<sup>43</sup>, a network of European Economics Libraries, which acts as a regional consortium in providing information and specialized services like Economist Online<sup>44</sup> etc. This extremely specialized Library of world quality collection, services and staff has attained a top positions in economics information services.

I had a short tour to the beautiful CAU University Library<sup>45</sup> which tells you “Manchen Leuchten. Wenn Mann Sie Liest” at its entrance. I also visited CAU Medicine faculty Library<sup>46</sup> for a short while.

During weekend, I could visit two cities in Denmark and the North Sea with the help of Dr. Pianos and Mr. Jens.

### **German National Library for Medicine (ZB MED), Cologne**

*Ms. Elke Roesner* was my visit organiser for ZB MED<sup>47</sup>, *Dr. Jürgen Gärtner* gave me an informative tour of German National Library for medicine, a library emerged from Medicine Faculty Library at Cologne University<sup>48</sup> and still catering to them by agreement. According to him, ZB MED spends 4.5 Million Euro annually for Acquisition, and staffed with around 150 people. Its strong Medical Journal collections make ZB MED one of the highest provider of Document Delivery through SUBITO, at an average of 2000 requests and 88% filling rate. *Ms. Roesner* demonstrated her project called GMS<sup>49</sup> – German Medical Science, an e-journal portal and an inter disciplinary e-journal of the Association of the Scientific Medical Societies in Germany (AWMF)<sup>50</sup> with the technical support of German Institute of Medical Documentation and Information (DIMDI)<sup>51</sup>. This is an Open Access initiative, based on Creative Commons and basically provides a platform to German scientists to publish their works or articles online. It uses Manuscripts Operating System (MOPS) and eGMS Editor, which allows online submission, online reviewing, editing and online journal publishing. *Dr. Silke Schneider*, a medical doctor turned information professional, who is leading MedPilot<sup>52</sup> the Online Portal being developed by ZB MED for Vascoda. It has a meta search engine, which searches around 28 Free Medical databases, 12 Fee based Databases, Library Catalogues of NLM, ZB MED etc, and other Portals. They have special agreement with Publishers where all these databases including commercial ones are searchable from anywhere in the world, and document delivery for German speaking countries through ZB MED or SUBITO. *Mr. Waldemar Dzeyk* and *Ms. Stephanie Paschthhe* explained the vascoda's new initiatives like introducing Fast search technology, Test studio for Usability study, Onsite studies, creation of separate workgroups, availability search and Online discussion like 'inetrn' all are meant for increasing the Quality and Usability of Vascoda.

**Observation:** Due to the integration, ZB MED is also responsible for ZBL, the German National Library for Agriculture based in Bonn. Inside the library, it gives an impression of archive, where all the Medical Journals are housed, the mailing system, theft prevention everything is automated. When go to the staff working area, one will feel the dedication of ZB MED towards proper supply of Medical Information through technologically balanced functions. With its huge coverage in both free and commercial databases, library catalogues, the vast Internet resources, the MedPilot emerges as the top quality portals I have seen in Germany, attached to Vascoda.

## Heidelberg University Library

*Ms. Nicole Merkel* from South Asia Institute Library was the coordinator for my Visit in Heidelberg University Library<sup>53</sup>. *Ms. Birgit Bauer* from University Clinic Library<sup>54</sup> explained me about the Medicine Faculty Library. *Mr. Nikolai Mileck* from the University Library explained me about their e-contents subscription, licensing and management. They have a vast subscription of around 10,000 e-journals and 3,000 magazines all together. They are trying to centralize the subscription and online services, to avoid the duplication in money and efforts because of the decentralized nature of University Faculty system.

**Observation:** I have seen only one building of University Library and Medical Faculty Library. I was told that there are numerous Faculty Libraries around the campus, and they are trying to centralize the activities. Even though it will be a difficult task, the online environment gives them sufficient support to attain the centralized services.

## South Asia Institute, Heidelberg

*Ms. Nicole Merkel* and *Mr. Robby Geyer* gave me a detailed tour of SAI Library<sup>55</sup>, which has the biggest collection of South Asian Literature in Germany. No wonder why they have decided to start a Virtual Library for South Asian resources called, SAVIFA<sup>56</sup> as a part of Vascoda. SAVIFA does a Meta Search among selected Library catalogues from different Institutions with sufficient South Asian collection. SAVIFA Guide<sup>57</sup> is the Virtual Library of Internet resources, created by SAI Library. They use RSWK- the German Subject Heading System for indexing the resources. *Ms. Merkel* identifies the importance of having experts or volunteers in selecting more Internet resources, especially because of language constrains. The number of resources in languages other than Hindi, Sanskrit, Urdu, Bengali and Tamil are very less.

**Observation:** Guided search facility in Savifa Guide is a good feature of Savifa Guide. The real need for volunteers around South Asian region to develop this as the world's biggest South Asian Resources portal is felt during the discussions.

## German National Library (DNB), Frankfurt

*Ms. Natascha Schuman* was my coordinator for the visit to German National Library in Frankfurt<sup>58</sup>, which is the central archival library and national bibliographic centre for the Federal Republic of Germany. The actual German National Library (DNB) is the combination of the Deutsche Bücherei Leipzig (1912), the Deutsche Bibliothek Frankfurt (1947) and the Deutsches Musikarchiv in Berlin (1970). After the German reunification they were brought together and in 2006, with an expanded legal mandate got the new name 'German National Library'. I was provided with a Library Tour to the beautifully landscaped building, which follows 'the Urban Building Planning'. After the tour, *Dr. Thomas Wollschlajer* explained me the project aimed at Long Term Preservation of E-resources called 'Kopal'<sup>26</sup>. This project is initiated to store ETDs available at DNB and then moved on to other kind of materials on e-format, and aimed to solve both preservation and access issues. This is a joint project of German National Library, Goettingen State University Library, MBH Goettingen and IBM Germany. *Dr. Thomas* promises that once the Kopal project is finished, they will have a new Preservation system by taking care of DRM, File Format Registry, Emulator, Migration of Objects etc, which will be an improved version of DIAS (Digital Information Archiving System)<sup>59</sup> of IBM. *Ms. Natascha Schuman* demonstrated the DNB's national ETD

Project called Dissertation Online<sup>60</sup>. She told that most of the German Universities made it mandatory for electronic publication of Theses, and DNB has around 47,000 ETDs available for searching and downloading. It follows XMETA DISS metadata<sup>61</sup> and is indexed by Google. I also discussed with *Dr. Nicolas Flonas-Herr* and *Ms. Brigitte Bernhard* about various Digital and Virtual Library initiatives undertaken by DNB.

**Observation:** If some one wants to get the whole picture of German National Library, we should visit all three places (Leipzig, Berlin and Frankfurt). When we visit the Library staff area, it is visible that DNB is all set to act as the National Library by acquiring online and electronic resources along with traditional materials, what a National Library should do in the era of Information technology. I am sure that DNB will achieve its goals in this direction, in reflecting German culture and life to the world. I also had a short tour to Frankfurt University Library<sup>62</sup>.

## **Conclusion**

It is a fact that Libraries are facing lots of challenges, especially after the influence of Information Technology in society. German Librarianship, as a matter of existence, recognized the challenges and finding out the ways to contribute to the technologically advanced society. A chance to visit few important Libraries and energetic Library professionals from Germany made me confident in believing that there will be a widely accepted place for Libraries in future too. Seefeldt and Syre<sup>63</sup> surveyed several professionals and key figures in German Librarianship about the Future of Libraries by 2007 and 2015. They have received mixed opinions, but all of them said that there will be a place for Libraries in the Society. Today, the German Libraries and Librarians are working towards a necessary change in terms of sources, services and technology, and the results are more visible for a bright future of Librarianship in Germany. The concept of Vascoda should be a model for all countries, where different Institutions can develop Virtual Libraries in various subjects, and they can be integrated at national level. All these national Portals can be integrated at International level by Subjects. This can be a reply from Librarians to the challenges created by recent transformations in Search Engine business.

Germany, as a country has lots of close political, scientific, cultural, literary, economical and business relationship with India. Lots of German people spoke to me about their love towards India and Indian people, and I would like to thank all of them. They are interested in Indian culture and Traditional Medical Systems like Ayurveda, which has an authentic flavor at my own state in India, called 'Kerala'. As a famous tourist area, West Indian islands also have a place in their minds and almost of them have plans to spend a weekend in a Caribbean island, sometime in future. I believe that German Librarianship will extend their technological support to Libraries from developing nations like India, West Indian Islands and help us to achieve the advanced Library and Information systems. Goethe Institute and its LIS advancement activities in this direction will definitely help Librarians and Librarianship from other parts of the world.

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