

From Quantity to Quality: Changes in Information Provision in a Medium-sized Dutch University Library

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This paper uses the library of the University of Nijmegen as a starting point; however, much of the information provided also applies to other Dutch libraries.

PROFILE OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NIJMEGEN

The Catholic University of Nijmegen is located in the south-eastern region of the Netherlands and offers a broad range of academic programmes in eight faculties, including a Science Faculty, and a Faculty of Medicine with a university hospital. The university has a number of research schools and institutes that produce research of a high standard, particularly in the field of cognition research and information technology, chemistry, physics, and language behaviour research. As a university with a catholic identity, Nijmegen strives to attach surplus value to all of its tasks, in particular by relating knowledge to philosophical insights.

The Catholic University of Nijmegen (KUN) offers sixty different academic programmes. The organisation puts much effort into promoting and guarding the quality of its teaching, and continually strives to intensify its international student exchange programmes, by, for example, teaching parts of its programmes in English.

There are five research schools within the University of Nijmegen that have all been recognised by the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences (KNAW): the Nijmegen Institute for Cognition and Information, the Nijmegen Son Research Institute (research in the field of molecular structure and synthesis), the Research Institute for Materials, and the Institute of Cellular Signalling. Finally, the Research School for Philosophy distinguishes itself by operating in a broad, inter-university context.

Traditionally, the KUN is well known for its in-house expertise in the field of Language and Speech Technology research. As a result, the Max Planck Institut für Psycholinguistik has a permanent location on the KUN campus.

The Faculty of Medicine and the University Hospital Nijmegen St. Radboud, which is closely linked to the university, specialise in areas that combine fundamental and applied clinical research.

The Institute for Dental Clinical Research Nijmegen (TRIKON) carries out national surveys to determine the state of dental health in the Netherlands, and is continually striving to analyze and improve dental health by developing new, preventative methods of treatment.

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE KUN

The establishment of the KUN in 1923 can be regarded as an important step in the emancipation process that Dutch catholics were undergoing at the time. The university started out with 189 students. It consisted of three faculties: Theology, Literary Studies and Philosophy, and Law. No other Dutch university suffered as much during the Second World War as the KUN. All its activities were brought to a halt in 1943, and the academic community lost many of its members in the war. Most of the university's buildings were destroyed as a result of unceasing military action. After the war, the Faculty of Medical Sciences was founded, and the university acquired the Heyendaal estate. In 1956, the University Hospital St. Radboud was established on this estate. The Faculty of Mathematics and Physics was added to the university in 1957. The Faculty of Social Sciences, which had originated from and initially formed part of the Faculty of Literary Studies and Philosophy, officially became a faculty in its own right in 1964; Philosophy was granted the status of a separate (inter-)faculty. Finally, the year 1988 saw the establishment of the Faculty of Policy Sciences.

At present, the number of students enrolled at the University of Nijmegen is slightly less than 13,000, while the university and the university hospital employ a staff of around 5,000.

PROFILE OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AT NIJMEGEN

Like the university itself, the library at Nijmegen was established in 1923. During the pre-war years, the acquisition of material progressed at a very slow rate; in this period, book donations by the catholic population formed a more sub-

stantial part of the entire collection than regular acquisitions by the library itself. It was only after 1960, when associate educational institutes were given the same official status as state universities, that a regular acquisition pattern finally began to develop.

During the final days of World War II, enemy troops in retreat greatly damaged the collection by setting fire to the library buildings. The catalogues were completely destroyed. Nevertheless, the library collections were quickly re-established and extended over the next two decades. During the seventies and eighties they expanded even further when a number of ecclesiastic collections were donated to the Catholic University as most of the seminaries in the Netherlands began to close down. Examples of collections acquired during this period include the collections of the Dutch Congregation of Redemptorists, the library of the Canisius Seminary in Nijmegen, which had been the most important Jesuit seminary in the Netherlands, the library of the Archbishop's Seminary in Apeldoorn, and the collection of the Dutch Dominican Order.

At present, the entire library collection consists of around 2 million items, of which almost 50,000 date from before the year 1800.

From its establishment, the core activity of the library, following the German model, was to establish and maintain departmental libraries. The central library primarily carried out administrative tasks in the areas of acquisition and cataloguing, and was responsible for storage and deposits.

In the sixties and seventies, the Dutch universities grew like never before, with respect to departments and programmes, as well as enrolment figures, budgets, and the number of faculties. At a certain point, the University of Nijmegen maintained no less than 75 departmental libraries. During the eighties, however, the library underwent a dramatic reorganisation. As a result, the university now has one single central library and seven branch libraries that form an organisational whole.

The central library (UB) incorporates the Catholic Documentation Centre. The Centre's aim is to collect and provide access to publications, archives, and so-called „categorical documentation“ relating to the history and development of catholicism in the Netherlands during the nineteenth and twentieth century.

On a structural basis, the library has the equivalent of about 100 full-time personnel at its disposal. It receives an annual subsidy of around Dfl. 22 million.

CHANGES IN THE WORK ENVIRONMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY AT NIJMEGEN

Over the past few years, the university has clearly put greater emphasis on the quality of its teaching. Dutch universities are increasingly being run on the basis of output financing. In regions where the demand for higher education is no longer on the increase, universities now compete for new students. Whereas research activities, to some extent, are allocated to Dutch universities on behalf of central government, these institutions have become more and more competitive in the field of education. It is this, among other things, which has led to the implementation of major changes in teaching methods. In turn, this has affected the way in which the library is used. „Problem-based education“ and so-called „study houses“ have become widely used teaching formats in undergraduate education. An integral part of these teaching forms is to train students to use information media in „multi-media centres“ located in the different faculties. These centres are large rooms containing multiple versions of only a limited amount of documentation, both in traditional and electronic form, which must be consulted and used by students to carry out assignments and to help them arrive at logical and verifiable results.

This type of training in a „closed“ environment reduces the need for these students to intensively use the library as such. Furthermore, it is difficult to integrate such „teaching laboratories“ into the library, because they are only used by very specific user groups. As a result, the library, which is oriented more to research than education, has lost an important part of its potential user segment.

The strong emphasis that universities currently place on education is reflected in alliances with Institutes of Higher Vocational Training (HBO), the fact that HBO students can now go on to university almost as a matter of formality, an increase in the number of post-doctoral courses on offer, and the introduction of „second-chance education“ courses for older students.

Research, which remains the most important guiding principle underlying the development of the library and its collections is paying the price, as it were, for the increased emphasis on education.

Scientific research is increasingly being financed from other sources than the universities themselves. The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO) administers funds on behalf of the government to subsidise research programmes that comply with the NWO profile. These programmes are usually carried out in association with research groups from other universities, and across institutional boundaries. In this way, it has become much easier for the government to manage and organise research activities. In addition, some

faculties, particularly the „hard“ and social sciences, have managed to generate substantial cash flows through contract research for external parties. Presently, the government directly subsidises the Catholic University for a total of 60% of its internal research activities. The remainder is financed through revenues obtained from research carried out for external parties. Thus, some faculties finance even more than 50% of research themselves.

For the library, this has meant greater pressure on structural finances as a fixed level of income is expected to become more and more uncertain in the long term. Furthermore, in the faculties' contracts with principals and customers, no mention is made of a financial contribution towards the maintenance of library facilities. As a result, the library gets more members, but receives no additional funds.

Another change that has taken place in the work environment of the library has been the introduction and implementation of integral management. As a direct result, faculties have gained greater organisational autonomy and have imposed greater and more diverse demands on centrally managed library facilities.

The library has frequently had to enter into separate agreements with individual faculties regarding special, or additional library services. Often, the parties involved in such agreements are vehemently opposed to the fact that they are charged for these additional services.

The last and most important change I would like to mention is the rapid „opening up“ of workplaces on campus and at home to Internet and intranet facilities. Each member of staff now has these facilities at their disposal, and more than 70% of students have a PC at home, and can usually access the campus network; in addition, the number of PCs on campus for students is still being increased. Technological obstacles that might once have stood in the way of meeting the demand for „distance“ library services no longer exist and in my view, it is obvious that an electronic library has certain distinct advantages over a traditional library.

GENERAL CHANGES IN THE FIELD OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION

In addition to the changes listed above, other important factors which have strongly influenced the role of the library as an intermediary between supply and demand in recent years require only a brief mention here. I would like to mention the following factors, in no particular order:

- a) The increase in the price of scientific information. A recent German publication¹ reported that the price of scientific journals across all disciplines doubled, on average, between 1987 and 1997. In general, this has led to dramatic cutbacks in the maintenance and updating of collections.
- b) In addition to the advantages associated with computerisation, such as faster and easier access, manipulation of distributed use, and the use of facilities at a distance, computerisation has also caused a number of problems. Examples include: a huge increase of the number of products (offered in different formats and versions, and often running on different software packages); high additional costs for software, equipment, systems management, and instruction for users; and usually a higher cost price for the information product itself.
- c) The rapid increase in the degree of computerisation and the use of electronic networks has led to a „technology push“ which puts great pressure on libraries to supply all and any information in electronic form (and to foot the resulting bill). Not only does the establishment of an adequate ICT infrastructure cost an inordinate amount of money, its maintenance is also costly. Library staff have to be retrained, while extra staff have to be employed, and once in place, the infrastructure has to be managed and continually developed. This technology push has also brought about a lot of extra work, from retroconversions of catalogues to retrocomputerisation, and the creation of web sites and online instruction modules. Furthermore, user instructions have generally had to be presented from an entirely different perspective.
- d) The ever-increasing volume of information, in both electronic and traditional forms, has created additional problems for the library with respect to selection and quality maintenance. The diversity in information products and the different software they often require has made systems integration more difficult. The „opening up“ of sources is no longer restricted to user-owned sources, but increasingly involves access to potentially limitless sources on the Internet. Restrictions on finances has led to users having to pay for more and more library services.
- e) The above factors, together with shifts in the roles played by information producers, information mediators, and information buyers, as well as the increased tendency of the user to regard the library as a customer regards his/her supplier, has placed the library in a competitive position that requires intensive quality management.
- f) These developments have greatly impacted on the organisation of libraries, on educational policy, and on personnel management in general. There is not

a single job description which has not changed over the past ten years, and individual job requirements have changed as well.

FROM QUANTITY TO QUALITY

In 1990, we first began to assess the effects of price increases on scientific literature, in combination with cutbacks in higher education that had been implemented during the eighties². The effects for our library are clear from the following tables:

Overview of the acquisition volume per publication type 1978-1989. (The number of items is presented with respect to journals, series, books and total.)

year	vol. journals	index	spending journals (in Dfl.)	index	vol. series	index	spending series (in Dfl.)	index
1978	12,913	100	1,131,721	100	4,696	100	295,832	100
1980	13,600	105	1,289,558	116	5,008	107	354,987	120
1982	13,521	105	1,738,079	156	5,309	113	432,393	146
1984	11,805	91	1,874,705	168	5,026	107	395,727	134
1986	11,431	89	2,260,446	203	5,141	109	511,975	173
1988	10,692	83	1,999,074	179	4,818	103	511,809	173
1989	9,427	73	2,167,979	195	4,759	101	576,849	195

year	vol. books	index	spending books (in Dfl.)	index	vol. total	index	total spending (in Dfl.)	index
1978	38,999	100	1,291,618	100	56.608	100	2,701,171	100
1980	35,600	91	1,306,915	101	54.208	96	2,951,460	109
1982	20,542	53	977,357	76	39.372	70	3,147,829	117
1984	19,559	50	997,635	77	36.390	64	3,268,067	121
1986	20,610	53	1,094,700	85	37.182	66	3,867,121	143
1988	17,777	46	893,811	69	33.287	59	3,404,694	126
1989	15,212	39	838,269	65	29.398	52	3,583,097	133

Average volume price of all publications acquired by the KUN.

year	ave. price (in Dfl.)	index
1978	47.72	100,0
1980	54.45	114,1
1982	79.95	167,5
1984	89.78	188,1
1986	103.95	217,8
1988	102.22	214,2
1989	121.88	255,4

Even though spending with regard to acquisitions rose by 33% in the period assessed (from Dfl. 2,701,171 to Dfl. 3,583,097), acquisition volume, expressed in number of volumes acquired, fell by 48%. The average price per volume went up by more than 155% between 1978 and 1989.

A discussion of these figures within the university led to the introduction of a procedure for the annual establishment of norms or standards, per faculty, that could be used as a basis for the acquisition of library material. These standards were determined by the University Library Committee, using a model which had originally been developed for Bavarian universities and was later adopted by the German Wissenschaftsrat⁵. The standards that were set by the library committee had an advisory status for the faculties, which were (and are still) largely responsible for financing library acquisitions. Unfortunately, the standards affected faculties differently and turned out to be unsatisfactory on the whole: on average, only 70% of target levels were realised. For a more detailed overview, the reader is referred to Table 3, which reflects the situation in 1993.

	target expenditure	real expenditure	% of target
Theology	150,290	98,880	66
Philosophy	93,930	77,270	82
Arts & Humanities	642,580	344,270	54
Law	292,190	273,060	93
Social Sciences	432,010	414,500	96
Policy Sciences	243,700	212,330	87
Medical Sciences	1,412,350	865,610	61
Physics	1,086,860	783,960	72
Mathematics & Informatics	460,960	224,710	49
UB	962,970	796,940	83
TOTAL	5,777,840	4,093,030	71

Similar discrepancies between target expenditure and actual expenditure formed no exception at the Bavarian universities, for which this needs assessment model was originally developed. In general, the older Bavarian universities remained at 30% to 50% below target level, while newer institutions exceeded target levels by an average of more than 20%.⁴

Recently, we again charted the development in acquisition volume for the period from 1993 to 1997, albeit in a different way. The study showed that spending has increased by 5% on an annual basis, which roughly corresponds to the increase in purchasing power that is taken into account for government subsidies. Nevertheless, acquisition volume is still decreasing, particularly with respect to monographs, as a desperate attempt is being made by faculties to counter the fall in the number of journals.

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Year	Journal Subscr.	%	Annuals	%	Series	%	Monogr.	%	Spending	%
1993	6.070	100	1,358	100	2,365	100	14,745	100	4,091,528	100
1994	6.185	101.9	1,336	98.4	2,311	97.7	13,194	89.5	4,224,415	103.2
1995	6.115	100.7	1,319	97.1	2,325	98.3	11,408	77.04	4,236,951	106.6
1996	5.734	94.5	1,202	88.5	1,919	81.1	9,722	65.9	4,550,620	111.2
1997	5.726	94.3	1,204	88.7	1,823	77.1	9,626	65.3	4,890,605	119.5

The article by Griebel⁵ that was referred to earlier describes a similar situation for German libraries in the period 1987-1997; while spending on journals, dependent on library type, rose by 50% to 80%, the number of subscriptions fell by 10% to 25%. However, the acquisition of monographs was affected even more as is evident from the fact that acquisition figures fell by as much as 40% in some instances. It was only the so-called *Sommersammelgebietbibliotheken*, which received extra funds from the federal government, that showed a modest rise of 16% in budget over a ten-year period for the acquisition of monographs.

WHAT MEASURES HAS THE LIBRARY TAKEN TO COMBAT THIS FRAGMENTATION?

Besides continuing to plead for additional budgets with Faculty Boards and the University Board, the following actions have already been undertaken or initiated:

Members of the faculty staff have been given almost complete responsibility for the selection and acquisition of collections, in order to increase employee commitment. The library supports the selection process by providing product information, giving suggestions for acquisition, and by offering information regarding budgets, prices, and the availability of products elsewhere, etc. In close consultation with the faculties, the library also constructs „collection profiles“ to facilitate and maintain the quality of the selection process. The acquisition and cancellation of journal subscriptions is dealt with by the library committees, which also evaluate the results of regular screenings of the subscription database. As far as this lies within its capacity, the library strives to share resources with other institutions. For example, we are presently looking into the possibility of sharing a collection of medical journals with the universities of Groningen and Maastricht.

Furthermore, we have encouraged cooperation with para-university and neighbouring institutes and institutions to increase participation in university

library facilities. These institutes do not only become users, but also contribute to the financing and acquisition of collections.

Naturally, traditional media are being replaced more and more by electronic media in an effort to promote accessibility and usability, and to increase the cost-effectiveness of library use. Around 60 CD-ROM databases are now available via the campus network, as well as 1,400 electronic journals, and around 60 catalogues and bibliographies via the national Open Library Network. At the same time, the library offers facilities for electronic publication, which has proven to be a particularly successful medium for dissertations. The library has also made preparations, together with a number of other universities, to computerise older existing journals. Furthermore, more and more „links“ to selected Internet sources are being offered on the library's web site.

If we look at the use of electronic media, we can see that users are still primarily interested in reference material. In the exact sciences and in bio-medicine, interest in electronic journals and „electronic only“ products has greatly increased since last year. In 1998, the pattern of use of important electronic reference tools, which might be referred to collectively as our „meta-catalogue“, looked as follows:

• Online Public Access Catalogue consultations	ca. 1,200,000
• CD network with 60 databases consultations	more than 600,000
• National Open Library Network (including Netherlands Central Catalogue, Online Contents etc.)	more than 300,000 consultations

The accessibility of library property has greatly improved following the recent completion of the retroconversion. The entire catalogue is now accessible online. We are optimising the reach and accessibility of our collections further by improving, on a modest scale, the search facilities by subject (a mere 30% of library collections is presently accessible by subject), by actively extending the number of titles and abstracts that can be accessed via the national Open Library Network and our own CD network, and by displaying as much material as possible on open shelves. At present, around 40% of the library's entire collection can be consulted directly by the general public.

At the same time, we are continually striving to attain a high degree of integration with respect to the material we offer. For example, one of our projects is aimed at linking CD-ROM databases to the OPAC and ILL systems with their lending, ordering, and invoicing functions. As a result, a user will be able to localise bibliographical references via the catalogue and consequently put in a request to loan material or to have a photocopy made. We also want users to be able to access electronic full-text sources, primarily journals, directly from the catalogue. With respect to ordering copies of material, it will soon be possible for the user to choose either for a photocopy on paper or a scanned copy sent by e-mail.

It is obvious that such integration requires great effort on the part of the library and has, in some cases, not yet been possible. However, in our view, the „one-stop-shopping-principle“ is an important marketing instrument for library services.

Lately, we and other libraries in the Netherlands have put much work into improving inter-library lending (ILL). Guarantees for delivery between libraries have been agreed on with respect to more than 10,000 journals. Photocopies are generally delivered within 48 hours, and at fixed rates. There is a national database of contents including around 14,000 journals that incorporates ordering facilities for photocopies. End-users can consult the national databases themselves and can place orders for document delivery via the system. Payment is largely electronic, and is managed through personalised user accounts (ILL accounts). In only a few years, the processing time of ILL requests has been reduced from an average of ten days to three to four days. The ILL system is available around the clock.

In addition, library services have been improved by introducing „current awareness services“. Users provide information on the type of literature they are interested in (their personal „search profile“) and the library consequently informs them about any relevant new literature that becomes available. All our library locations have opened separate information desks, which can also be contacted by e-mail. More emphasis than ever before is being put on providing the general public with advice and instruction: we are negotiating with faculties about the possibility of incorporating explicit instruction for students into the curriculum. Up to now, the library has organised around 800 hours a year of instruction for faculties. We want to double that figure. In addition, the library offers group instruction sessions in the library, and individual instruction sessions for university staff; there is also a magazine which is published in association with the university computer centre, and visitors can pick up any of a broad scala of leaflets and short instructional brochures about library facilities.

We give presentations about the library at relevant events (such as conferences), and we are in the middle of developing a „subject guide“ on the WWW, and an online instruction module for basic instruction on the use of the OPAC system, the Open Library Network, and the CD-ROM network.

Of course, these changes have greatly increased demands on human resource management. That is why we initiated a phased plan three years ago that aims to focus our organisational culture on quality, customer-orientedness, and expertise. To this end, all the library staff have since received extra training. Of course, educational programmes have also been established to promote professionalisation, and to increase knowledge about the digital library. In order to increase employability and mobility, job descriptions have been broadened, while a third of all library staff have moved to another function over the past three years. In the meantime, an effective system of departmental consultation and feedback has been established, and a long-term business plan has been formulated. Furthermore, the individual departments have formulated their own annual plans, using the library's business plan as a guideline, and all members of the library staff are appraised on a yearly basis.

At certain intervals, the quality of library services is evaluated through small-scale and large-scale surveys, and a detailed overview of internal performance and efficiency indicators is presented in a quarterly report. An external audit, commissioned by the University Board, was carried out two years ago. The results of this audit were incorporated into the library's business plan (1997), following consultation with all the university's Faculty Boards. In this way, maximum support for the plan was created within the university's ranks. The plan also forms the basis for special agreements with individual faculties, which are becoming increasingly frequent, as I already indicated earlier.

APPRECIATION OF THE CURRENT SITUATION AND „OBJECTIVES“ FOR THE FUTURE

The acquisition volume of scientific information has decreased by nearly 60%, from around 54,000 volumes in 1980 to around 25,000 volumes in 1998.

Acquisition expenditure during this period doubled, from Dfl. 3 million to nearly Dfl. 6 million.

Despite the reduction in acquisition volume during this period, library use increased. Lending rose from less than 150,000 to 200,000. The number of lending period extensions tripled to around 300,000. Although this may, in part,

have been the result of the introduction of a more convenient electronic lending system, offering the possibility of online requests for extension, it also reflects a more intensive use of certain parts of the library's collection.

In this respect, it should also be noted that more than 40% of the collection can be consulted directly in the library, which greatly reduces the need for ordering and borrowing books.

The use of inter-library lending facilities had increased between 1980 and 1998, from around 20,000 to 29,000 requests.

In 1980, online bibliographical services could only be consulted via intermediaries. Consultations took place on nearly 1,500 occasions per year. At present, the local CD network alone is consulted around 600,000 times a year, while the databases of the national Open Library Network are accessed around 300,000 times a year. At the same time, the number of users has not increased, while cutbacks have resulted in a decrease in staff capacity of 20%.

In my view, these figures indicate that the reduction in acquisition volume over the past few years has not yet had really disastrous consequences for information supply. Apparently, Bradford's law still holds (20% of our collections contain 80% of all the information on offer). At the same time, it is true that large investments have been made to improve selection and accessibility, and to increase user-orientedness through computerisation, digitalisation, networking, the concentration and integration of facilities, proactively supplying information, and involving primary users in the acquisition procedure. A very large number of our earlier acquisitions have turned out to be less necessary than we often made each other believe! Judging by the figures relating to the decrease in acquisitions and the increase with respect to library use, we can state convincingly that our library, and Dutch libraries in general, operate twice as effectively now as they did two decades ago. But...in the meantime there have showed up some dark clouds!

In 1998, we commissioned a large-scale user survey.⁶ The outcome of the survey provides us with a good indication of the degree of satisfaction regarding library facilities, experienced within different faculties and by different user groups. In general, two conclusions from the survey are immediately striking. Despite all our efforts, there is still a great need in all areas for both instruction and advice. In my view, this is an indication that there is still room to improve the effectiveness of using our facilities and collections. This will be one of our most important goals in the future.

Another conclusion which is striking is that the library, in its acquisition policy, is increasingly, and in many different areas, failing to fulfill all information needs. Some 25% of users have voiced more or less strong criticism regarding the incompleteness and datedness of the collections. In this light, users are considerably more critical of our monograph collections than our journals. Significant differences have also been found between faculties. Users judged collections that are relevant for the Arts and Humanities, Policy Sciences, and Mathematics Faculties extremely negatively. Theology, Social Sciences, and Physics collections scored at a reasonable level. The Philosophy, Law, and Medical collections generally received a positive evaluation. Judging from these user evaluations, the reduction in acquisition volume seems to have reached its limit, and may have already exceeded it in some areas. The greatest evildoer in this respect is without doubt the „serials crisis“. Annual price increases of 10% or more will continue to be imposed. And although subscriptions are being cancelled, it is the monograph collection in particular which is destined to pay the price for these developments, as I already pointed out earlier.

Against this background, central issues in our strategic policy for the next few years relate to the following aims:

1. A further reduction in costs by concentrating physical facilities and all forms of „indirect service“.
2. Improving instruction and information supply to increase user effectiveness.
3. Improving end-user services and distance use through network services to improve user efficiency. This implies that we need to offer more information in electronic formats.
4. Continued development of the „one-stop-shopping-principle“ by integrating system components, as an important argument in support of marketing library services.
5. Resisting a further reduction in acquisitions in order to consolidate and strengthen our market position.

Without doubt, this last aim is going to be the most difficult to achieve. It cannot be achieved locally, but requires cooperation at both the national and international level. What options are open to us if we want to cope with the current acquisition crisis?

At a local level:

- a) Keep insisting on budget increases and, if possible, on standardised norms for the allocation of budgets.
- b) Improve selection by involving even more intensively scientific staff in the process and by improving support on the part of the library (e.g. by establishing „collection profiles“).
- c) Encourage electronic publishing on the Internet by offering user facilities in this area.
- d) Encourage an adaptation of employment conditions whereby the management of copyright is placed in the hands of the institute.
- e) Prioritise and standardise the acquisition of monographs; at the same time, assign lower priority to the acquisition of serial publications.

At a national level:

- a) Formalise agreements and delivery guarantees relating to inter-library lending. A number of recent initiatives have already been undertaken to prevent the cancellation of what is referred to as „unique“ subscriptions (cases in which only one library in the country subscribes to a particular product).
- b) Instead of coordinating acquisitions, cooperate with other organisations and institutes to form joint journal collections within disciplines.
- c) Raise funds to acquire complementary collections within all disciplines. This year, six Dutch universities secured an extra joint government subsidy of Dfl. 5 million towards supplemental collections for the Humanities.
- d) Form consortiums and define terms of delivery.

With respect to the latter, the following aspects should be kept in mind:

- Demanding regulation regarding fair use, open standards, the archive function, and beneficial conditions for „cross access“ between consortium members;
- Setting targets regarding the quality of secondary and primary information that is delivered, standardised formats, and speed of delivery;
- Acknowledging the university as the joint owner of property rights (other than intellectual) with respect to information that is produced;
- Unique price fixing for electronic products, on the basis of use rather than subscription.

- In my view, this process of altering price models could be speeded up considerably by switching from current library subscriptions to ordering journal volumes (including an entire year's issues). The order for next year's volumes should not be placed until shortly before the end of the year. This would greatly increase the degree of competitiveness among producers of such materials and this in turn is likely to have a favourable influence on the quality and price of their products.

At an international level:

In an international context, such as LIBER, licensing principles and terms of delivery should be formalised and standardised in order to create a broad basis for negotiations with publishers. Similar cooperation is necessary for negotiations with authorities about managing copyright.

In sum, one of the most important tasks that remains for libraries, if they are to operate even more successfully in the twenty-first century, is to promote cooperation to acquire scientific information at both a national and international level.

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- 4 Empfehlungen zur Sicherung der Literaturversorgung an den Landesuniversitäten vom 10. März 1989. Vom Beirat für Wissenschafts- und Hochschulfragen des Bayerischen Staatsministers für Wissenschaft und Kunst. München 1990. Tabellen 8 und 10.

5 Cf. note 1.

6 Gebruikersenquête universitaire bibliotheekvoorziening K.U. Nijmegen. Nijmegen, Institute for Applied Social Sciences, 1998.

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