Summary of the Evaluation of the Seminar „The Effective Library"

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BACKGROUND

The seminar in Leipzig was the 10th Seminar of The LIBER Architecture Group. During the years the Architecture Group has tried to organize the seminars in different ways, but every time with a strong focus on presentation of projects, library visits and to give room for the opportunity for the participants to exchange experiences between colleagues. Another main point is to bring librarians and architects together in order to create a better understanding between these two professions regarding library-building projects. The seminar venue in March 2002 was not in a library but the Leipzig Trade Fair (Leipziger Messe) in the outskirts of Leipzig and in connection with the annual Leipzig Book Fair. There were connections from town centre by tram.

The first one and a half day (Tuesday and Wednesday) was concentrated on presentations of papers. Tuesday evening: Reception and visit of the university library Leipzig (reconstruction of a late 19th century building). Thursday was reserved as a full day for a bus trip with library visits in Jena, Erfurt and Weimar. Friday was divided between a long morning with papers and the opportunity in the afternoon to visit the Leipzig Book Fair and the Deutsche Bücherei. Saturday morning there was another excursion to visit the new building of the state library in Dresden.

In all about 100 participants took part in the conference. Some of the papers are printed in this issue of LIBER Quarterly.

SUMMARY OF THE ASSESSMENT FORMS

The members of the working group of the LIBER Architecture Group are interested in the evaluation of the seminar by the participants. This

evaluation, the meaning and ideas of the participants about the seminar will be used in the preparation of the next seminar.

In order to collect information about the Leipzig seminar, an assessment form was sent to all participants in April 2002.
Over 30% of the participants returned this assessment form before June 2002.
The assessment form is focused on the following three themes:

I.   Organisation

II.   Contents of the seminar

III. Suggestions for a further seminar

In this summary I will outline the average of the responses to the questions per theme. The specific questions are quoted.

I. ORGANISATION

1. *,Length of the seminar'*
    For nearly all participants the length of the seminar was just right.

2. *,Did you attend the whole seminar?'*
    Nearly all participants attended the whole seminar. A few participants attended for 2 days.

3. *,Breaks'*
    The midmorning and midafternoon breaks were judged long enough and the time planned for lunch was appropriate.

,General comments on the organisation':

- The lunches were not well organised. For some participants there was no lunch available in the refreshment corners. Some participants expected all the lunches were included in the fee and ordered in advance, which showed out to be not the case.

- The congress location was considered too far outside of the town. The distance from the hotels to the seminar location was much too long. Arranged transport by bus would have made it more convenient.

- Detailed information about transport, hotels and cultural events was missed.

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- Positive remarks were made about the helpfulness of the technical staff, and the overall organisation of the seminar.

II. CONTENTS OF THE SEMINAR

1. *‚Was the overall level of the sessions:'*
The experience about the overall level of the sessions was good, for some even excellent; though three responses were ‚medium'.
The length of each session was considered just right.
The illustrations were by 80% of the responses considered as sufficient, while 20% responded inadequate.
About the discussion time after the presentations, this turned out to be considered from too short to appropriate. The average response on the interest of the discussions was ‚good'.

2. *‚Was the documentation, received by participants during the seminar:'*
For more than half of the respondents the documentation was insufficient, the others answered ‚adequate'.

3. *‚Visits to libraries'*
Most participants visited all the seven libraries and found these visits very interesting.

‚General comments on the contents of the seminar':

- A summary of each presentation would be very helpful to understand the presentation.
- Some presentations were not focused enough on the conference theme.
- The individual presentations were repetitious in content.
- The excursion program was overloaded.
- The variety of the aspects of the presentations was interesting.
- Stimulating contacts.
- Good; provided new ideas.
- Especially the evaluation-theme on Friday was interesting.
- The Roskilde presentation was a very perfect presentation by architects and librarians about the library building.

III. SUGGESTIONS FOR A FURTHER SEMINAR

1 *,Do you wish to participate in a further seminar on the planning and design of university and research libraries?'*
Most of the respondents are willing to participate in a future seminar of the LIBER Architecture Group.

Suggestions about subjects:
- How to prepare users, staff (organisational changes) and collections (how to present collections in a new manner) before the moving?
- Giving reviews from a visitor's point of view of an already presented project.
- Differences in views about libraries as part of a pedagogic process (Learning resources Centres versus Book collections in a silent surrounding).
- Teaching practices using information and communication technology and their influence on the layout of space and use of the library.
- User aspect.
- Flexibility for the future, the electronic library and building.
- Security related issues, access issues, heritage buildings.
- Use of alternative building techniques.
- Evaluation costs and problems in new and older buildings.
- Practical problems: noise, light, and interior design.
- Methodology and preparation (brief, space standards, building phases).
- Openness versus security.
- Reading areas and workplaces for users.
- 24 hours open.
- Historical building compared with new buildings - problems and possibilities.
- The British and French experience with the evaluation of building projects.
- Renovation and refurbishment of library-buildings of the 70's and 80's.

About eight participants would like to give a presentation themselves.

2. *,Spreading information on the building and planning of university and research libraries in Europe?'*
More than 50% of the respondents are willing to deliver an article in LIBER Quarterly, the Journal of European Research Libraries.

To make information on library buildings in progress accessible on the LIBER server or on the Internet is considered most necessary and interesting.

Most respondents are willing to supply information concerning the own library project on a server.

Most respondents are conducting or are involved in the construction, renovation or extension of a library building.

,General comment on the seminar:'

- A good seminar!
- Very interesting.
- Gave good ideas, especially the visits to the libraries.
- Very informative.
- Better coffee breaks and lunches facilities are needed.
- Program was too overloaded; too much in one day to keep up the attention.
- Meeting architects and librarians is very useful.
- Very interesting to see different types of libraries and library buildings.
- Very good; both quality of lectures and participants was high.
- Very important seminar for the profession of architect.
- More programming on the building phases (brief, selection of the architect, building design, interior design and moving) would be more interesting.
- Very useful in all aspects: theoretical, practical and in communication with colleagues from other countries.
- Good mixture between lectures presentation of projects and visits.
- It is always interesting to see plans and photos of new libraries and to visit built projects.

,Comment on the book „the effective library.". : documentation of the new library buildings in Europe, proposed to the participants:'*

- A general index would be a necessity.
- Useful and important, also for the students.
- Very good.
- Would it be possible to give one or more synoptically articles above the illustrations and technical features?
- For the work the documentation is very useful!