The changing nature of the knowledge society also requires adaptive changes in the academic library. It will be to the library’s advantage to seek more efficient market placement as a high quality provider of information services to researchers. Although this will require appropriate restructuring and continual adaptation, it will also have enormous value for the competitiveness of German research at the international level. Libraries and librarians need to modify their roles and one such possibility is the so-called embedded librarian. The authors of this article describe that person as a librarian who becomes an integral member of a research group that has specific information needs and who delivers this information not only as requested but also pro-actively in a highly targeted manner. The embedded librarian accesses library resources and external data pools with the aim of facilitating the scientific process. These new duties require appropriate educational training – not only in new digital techniques and methods, but also in terms of local lobbying efforts, communication processes, and conflict management. The library can offer structural support for publication in open access mode, professional evaluation within the peer-review process, and agile project management to ensure that the research group remains at the cutting edge of research. In the end this accelerates and improves research and facilitates the international competitiveness and involvement of German scientists.

The Consortium of Music School Libraries (MHSB) has tasked itself with an internal study in order to respond to the paradigmatic changes in the field of music librarianship in an adequate manner.

Academic music libraries are unique and their complex, specialized services are perceived as a trademark that expresses their profile and also offers a sense of identity to both staff members and funders. A systematic expansion and positioning of this profile is quite essential, since they would otherwise not be distinguishable from other similar institutions. The core tasks of collecting, cataloging, systematizing and presenting both analog and digital media and information combines traditional and modern elements of librarianship. Quite a few music schools were founded in the 19th century and their libraries hold valuable historical collections which necessarily remain a part of their overall profile.

This change in paradigm is a shift in perspective. It is the user and not the collection which is now the main focal point, communication is no longer vertical but rather horizontal and dialog-based, staff specialists now act as partners, and the administrative hierarchy is a relative one. Subject knowledge is associated with navigational skills needed in today’s information jungle. Users expect to find a concerted array of complementary media and information, along with the appropriate working tools. Libraries are perceived as a network of various forms of communication while users are eager to participate by contributing new content (e.g., repositories, commentaries, tweets, desiderata lists, etc.). The library as a temple of learning (whispering only, disciplined order) has had its day.

Translated by Martha Baker