Summary

Libraries Are More Cherished Than Ever / An Overview of the Norwegian Library Scene (Almuth Gastinger)
(pp. 574 – 579)

Libraries in Norway are more often visited today than ever before. The latest statistics speak of 22 million visits, or the equivalent of five visits per resident per year. Norway passed its first Public Libraries Act in 1935. In a later act, in 1947, it was established that each community or town must maintain a library. In the act's preamble it was stated that »public libraries should be nonpartisan meeting places and an area for public discussions and debates«. In a legal act regulating universities and colleges it was also established that all institutions of higher learning must maintain a separate library.

In 2014 the Ministry for Culture tasked the National Library with the development of a strategic library plan at the national level. The resulting strategy sparked heated discussion because it was focussed for the most part on the National Library. Public libraries are in fact the responsibility of the local authorities and funded by them. And academic libraries which fall under the Ministry of Science were not mentioned in the strategy paper at all. At present a new library strategy paper is in the works which intends to shift the focus on libraries as cultural arenas to centres for enlightened education and information. These two concepts are seen as being shared by both public and academic libraries.

The founding of the National Library as an independent institution traces back to an edict issued by the Norwegian parliament, the Storting, in 1988. Until the year 1999 its functions were carried out by the University of Oslo library. After a long period of renovation, the National Library was re-opened in August 2005 on its main location in Oslo.

Digital Credibility / Introducing: Media and Technology Trends at the Frankfurt Book Fair (Boris Hänßler)
(pp. 590 – 593)

Artificial intelligence (AI; in German: KI) is an ongoing topic in today's media. Nowadays some businesses even claim that their products use AI because this will boost sales, even when AI is not actually included. Sometimes AI involves a simple algorithm that gives the impression of intelligence. Hence society is faced not only with the question of whether to trust AI, but also whether it can trust those who supposedly generate AI and promise miracles. Herein lie the two core media trends of recent months: AI as a potential but often overestimated driver of innovation, on the one hand, and the basic trustworthiness of fellow humans, on the other hand. Perhaps it is even on account of the increasing presence of AI systems which we encounter more and more frequently in daily life that people happily continue to listen to audio books and podcasts – the voices and the topics seem quite human. Classical media are especially fixated on these two topics, offering steady -- often sensationalised -- coverage, even while journalists need to work with or even compete with AI.

There is a consensus that AI is a useful tool, but there is still the danger of becoming dependent upon KI and no longer doing independent research. This would weaken the trust in the media and strengthen the dissemination of fake news. Nic Newman, of Reuters Institute for the Study of Journalism, reports that the number of online subscriptions is constantly rising because many people are turning away from social media such as Facebook. That platform tried to win over journalism and made a massive effort to encourage classical media outlets to publish articles directly on the Facebook website. But after Facebook's algorithms repeatedly malfunctioned either by failing to recognize fake news or by presenting readers with a homogenous mush, the social media company began to lose its credibility.

The Role of the School Library in Schools of the Future / Focus on Pedagogical Function (Sofia Malmberg)
(pp. 602 – 604)

Many school libraries limit themselves to the lending out of media and primarily focus on the goal of providing students and teachers with fiction and non-fiction literature. In the minds of law-makers, decision-makers, and even school librarians themselves, the idea of what a school library can and should do is predominantly based on this image. By and large there is little appreciation for concepts that extend beyond the provision of good literature for students who are already interested in reading.

A school library that fulfills a pedagogical mission is located in an appropriately functional space in close proximity to classrooms and teaching departments. A comprehensive media collection includes current works of fiction, non-fiction and digital information sources, tailored to the needs of the curriculum and the preferences of the student body. The school library ensures that students can complete information searches for their classroom assignments, as well as find leisure reading matter. A school library with a pedagogical mission needs to be integrated into the instructional schedule and actively involved in the learning process.

Are school librarians prepared for all the consequences of such a transformation? It is necessary to develop a clear profile for the school librarian that specifies the requisite social and pedagogical tasks involved. At present pedagogical skills are not a part of the curriculum of library and information science in Germany. The responsible authorities need to initiate an intensive discussion of these issues. It is obvious that we school librarians need to become better in making our skills and the positive effects of our work better known.

Translated by Martha Baker