

INTRODUCING APPLIED INFORMATION SCIENCE

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PRETORIA

ONLY STUDY GUIDE FOR **AI S 1501**

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STUDY UNIT 1

Introducing Applied Information Science

This study unit will give you an idea of what the module, *Introducing Applied Information Science*, is all about.



LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR THIS MODULE

After studying this module, you should be able to:

- discuss the field of applied information science and comparative studies in the field
- discuss the history and development of libraries and information services
- discuss the environments, mission, aims and functions of different types of library and information services
- discuss public, community and school libraries
- discuss academic libraries
- discuss special libraries and information centres
- discuss museums, archives and records offices
- discuss publishing and the book trade
- discuss national libraries, cooperation between libraries, networks and the virtual library

You should be able to:

- explain the concept of applied information science
- indicate the relationship between information science and applied information science
- identify various library and information institutions
- explain what is meant by the terms “information control”, “information institution” and “library and information services”
- explain why the study of libraries and information institutions is important
- indicate why, in the South African context, it is still important to pay attention to the study of libraries and information institutions

KEY CONCEPTS

**applied information science
management
information science**

**electronic library information
information institutions
library and information services**

1.1 THIS MODULE

This module introduces you to Applied Information Science. This study guide will guide your studies of this field.

1.1.1 Purpose of this module

The purpose of this module is to give you insight into the library as an information agency in general, and the different types of library and information services in particular.

1.1.2 Focus of this module

In this first module on Applied Information Science (AIS1501), we focus on and introduce you to library and information services, and also look at other information institutions. The module forms the basis for other courses in Applied Information Science and covers the various institutions that work with the management of information. In studying Applied Information Science, you will learn more about the relationship between information science, applied information science and other disciplines.

1.1.3 What you will be studying in this module

The aim of AIS1501 is to familiarise you with the library as an information institution, its aims, functions, history and development, and how it has adapted to the changing environment. We cover the following key areas:

- applied information science as a subject field, comparative studies in the field and related concepts (study unit 1)
- the history and development of libraries and information services (study unit 2) the environment and structure within which the library functions and how it is adapting to a changing environment (study unit 3)
- the aims and functions of public, community, school, academic, special and national libraries, information centres, museums, archives and records offices; their users and the needs of these users; the role of publishing and the book trade; cooperation and networks between libraries; and virtual libraries (study units 4 to 9)

As this is an introductory module, certain aspects will be studied in more detail in subsequent modules. Our discussion consists largely of a generalised outline and is by no means complete. You should certainly supplement your knowledge of this study guide by consulting other sources and completing the assignments and exercises diligently.

1.2 HOW TO USE THIS STUDY GUIDE

This study guide is your basic source of information for this module. As you don't have much prescribed reading material, it is all the more important for you to make a thorough study of this study guide. Once you have read through this study guide, study each study unit again carefully as well as the accompanying figures and diagrams, which have been designed to help you understand various theoretical concepts and aspects.

The text of each study unit contains **exercises** for you to complete in order to test your understanding of the work. Please do not submit these answers to us, as these exercises are for your own self-assessment. Check whether your answers are correct by consulting the relevant sections in this study guide.

Self-assessment exercises at the end of each study unit are intended to test your knowledge of the most important aspects identified in the **learning outcomes** at the beginning of each study unit. You may also be asked to answer **essay-type questions**. Work through these questions and study them together with the assignments when you prepare for the examination.

1.2.1 Applied Information Science as a subject field and related concepts

Applied Information Science and its related concepts are defined and the most important aspects of the subject are explained.

1.2.1.1 Clarification of concepts

Applied information science can be defined more easily once we have defined the discipline of information science.

Information science may be defined as the subject that scientifically studies information as a phenomenon. Information is the central object of study in information science. Information is not studied in isolation; its place and role in society are also covered. This is a brief and relatively simple clarification of the concept of information science.



EXERCISE 1.1

List some other institutions that supply information or make information available.

Read through the following section and consider the examples given.

The word “applied” refers to the fact that something is being put into practice, that it is being used. Applied information science therefore deals with the use or application of information in society. This definition is rather broad and can be defined more narrowly. The term “applied information science” refers to the way in which information is dealt with in institutions, and specifically in information institutions.

(a) Information institutions

An institution may be described as an agency or an organisation that performs certain social functions. The social task of “education”, for example, is performed in institutions such as schools, colleges and universities, and also through archives, libraries and museums.

Information institutions are those institutions that are concerned with the use and management of information in society.

(b) Information control

Information control refers to the activities performed by various organisations and information institutions to exercise control over existing information sources and to make it possible to retrieve information from such sources. Information control takes place in a number of different ways, including through bibliographic control.

In this context, “control” relates to the function whereby the information institution arranges information and sources of information; it does not relate to “control” in the sense of prohibiting the publication, possessing or use of information. By exercising control over information and sources of information, the information institution is enhancing and ensuring optimal use of information.

In modern society, there are a number of different institutions that supply information. These include banks, travel agents, tourist information bureaus and libraries. Would these all be information institutions in terms of our description?

The answer is no. We need to distinguish between those institutions that supply information as a by-product of their activities, and those that have the supply of information as their primary purpose. Banks and travel agencies, for example, supply information incidentally to supplement their main purposes, namely finance

and travel respectively. A bank has to supply information on account balances, interest rates on investments, and so forth because these form part of its functions.



EXERCISE 1.2

With the example of a bank in mind, list other institutions that provide consumers with information. Use the space provided.

Libraries and information services, archives, museums, information centres, the publishing industry and the book trade are regarded as information institutions. In contrast with banks, these are the social institutions that primarily supply and control information in society. In this module, we will focus on library and information services.



EXERCISE 1.3

Take another look at the institutions you listed in exercise 1.2. Now indicate whether each of them qualifies as an information institution.

1.3 LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

There is no consensus on what the term “library” means. If we were to ask a number of people on the street what they understood by the term, they would give us widely divergent answers. Some people would say that a library is a building filled with books, others might mention the types of books in a library: books read for leisure and/or books used for study. Other people might mention that in libraries books are arranged in a particular way. It is unlikely that many people would describe a library as a collection of information material arranged or categorised for use – and yet this is the description that most librarians would prefer.

Traditionally, a library was referred to as a collection of books and periodicals. It can also refer to an individual’s private collection, but more often it is a large collection that is funded and maintained by a city, institution or municipality in countries such as South Africa. The books or periodicals are shared and consulted by many people who could not afford to purchase them themselves. However, with the invention of media other than books for storing information, many libraries are now also repositories and/or access points for maps, prints or other artwork, microfilm, microfiche, audiotapes, CDs, LPs, video tapes and

DVDs, and provide public facilities to access CD-ROM databases and the internet. Thus, modern libraries have been redefined as places where one can access information in any format, whether it be stored inside the building or not.

Harrod's librarians' glossary of terms used in librarianship, documentation and the book crafts and reference books (2000:440) gives the following description of a library:

- (1) A collection of books and other literary material kept for reading, study and consultation.
- (2) A place, building, room or rooms set apart for the keeping and use of a collection of books, etcetera.
- (3) A collection of films, photographs and other non-book materials, plastic or metal tapes and disks, computer tapes, disks and programs. All of these, as well as printed and manuscript documents, may be housed in departments of one large library or they may be found in collections restricted to one type of material.

In the report by the Arts and Culture Task Group (1995:6), a library is described as

an agency which collects, organises, preserves and makes available books and other information material (eg periodicals, audiovisual materials and electronic media). It helps its users to find and use information in its collection or obtains information for them from other sources. Libraries are mainly concerned with information materials that have been produced for general distribution, in other words published material.



EXERCISE 1.4

Study the quoted definitions of “library and information service”. Make a list of the similarities between the two and another list of the characteristics mentioned in only one of the definitions. These aspects will represent the differences in the definitions.

In short, we could say that a library is a collection of information material that is organised to be used. A library is an information agency or institution concerned chiefly with all forms of published records. Such records include books, compact discs and DVDs. When we speak of published records, we mean that multiple copies are made of the records for distribution to all who wish to read, watch or listen to them – in contrast to records in archives and objects in museums, which are frequently unique.



EXERCISE 1.5

Think of the library you know best or often visit. Tick off different types of records kept there in the space provided:

- | | |
|------------|--------------------------|
| Books | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Magazines | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Newspapers | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| CDs | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Videotapes | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| DVDs | <input type="checkbox"/> |

The modern view of a library and information service is that of a collection of information material in various forms, such as printed material like books and magazines; audiovisual material like compact discs, sound cassettes, CDs and DVDs; and other electronic information sources. The concept of the electronic library is clarified in section 1.4 below.

The term “library” also refers to a place where material is stored and from where it may be borrowed, consulted or retrieved. A library is an institution that offers a service and which performs a variety of functions to put the information material at the user’s disposal.

The word “collection” has appeared repeatedly in definitions. An additional common theme is the organising of records for use. In the past decade, there has been a definite shift in emphasis from collection to use to service.

The following key components can be identified from the definitions: collection, information material, organisation and use. These are all related and interactive parts of any effectively functioning system.



EXERCISE 1.6

Formulate your own definition of a library and information service using the four components mentioned above.

Please note:

When asked to define or describe a term or concept, do not merely copy definitions from the study guide, internet or other sources. We prefer you to study and understand the definitions. Once you have done this, you should be able to write down the meanings of the terms or concepts in your own words.

Note the similarities and the differences between the definitions you have studied and then comment on them.

In conclusion, note the following elements that distinguish a library and information service from other information agencies:

- (1) A library and information service collects, stores, organises and preserves records for use.
- (2) A library and information service fulfils a cultural role whereby cultural experiences in fixed forms, such as books, tapes, CDs and other materials that capture cultural experiences are made available to people.

1.4 THE “ELECTRONIC LIBRARY”

The above definitions mainly incorporate the notions of a physical entity. However, as we have mentioned, the library of the 21st century contains not only traditional materials but also provides access to information in electronic form not locally held, but available from outside or remote sources (offsite).

An electronic library contains information in the following formats:

- digital information, which exists in a form that a computer can store, organise, transmit and display without any intervening conversion process
- analogue information in any format (print, microfilm, sound and video recordings), which requires an intervening conversion process before a computer can store, organise, transmit or display the information
- digitised information of any type or format that has been converted from an analogue source (e.g. a scanned page or image) to a digital form

You are all familiar with analogue coding. An example is the traditional gramophone record on which sound (the information) is captured in a track that assumes the same shape as the sound wave. A computer cannot handle analogue information unless it is first converted to binary coding. Binary coding uses two numbers (0 and 1) to represent information. Computers use digital (binary) techniques to store data electronically.

The analogue information in a traditional library collection includes books, periodicals, microfilms, analogue sound recordings, maps, manuscripts and so on. The library's digital resources will include analogue material that has been digitised, digital information, and access via electronic gateways to remote digital and digitised databases. The latter is also known as networked information. Networked delivery mechanisms include online services and internet applications such as the worldwide web.

You will learn more about the internet and other electronic information sources in other modules. The virtual library is discussed in the last study unit (study unit 9) of this module.

1.5 ASPECTS STUDIED IN APPLIED INFORMATION SCIENCE

From the above discussion of concepts, it should be clear that in Applied Information Science we study information institutions and related aspects, such as their aims, types, activities and history.

Information is contained in and on concrete objects such as books, magnetic tapes or records or, increasingly, in a "virtual" form such as computer databases. Such information objects are called records and form the basis for the existence of most information institutions. Applied Information Science therefore also looks at aspects such as the origin, nature, types of and uses for records.

To control information, certain activities or tasks need to be performed. It is necessary, for example, to become aware of the existence of information and sources of information such as books, to locate and acquire these and to retrieve information from such sources. All these activities are studied in Applied Information Science.

The activities referred to here involve people who perform certain tasks. Practitioners who work in information institutions are therefore also discussed in Applied Information Science. We also discuss a variety of related information occupations such as those of librarians, archivists, publishers and booksellers.

Information is not only collected. It is also made available and accessible to users. The ways in which users use information and the reasons that they do or do not use information are studied in Information Science. This knowledge of the user is applied in developing user guidance programmes and offering information services to users in library and information services. User guidance programmes and services are thus an important field of study in Applied Information Science.

In information institutions, records are collected, organised, made available for use and used by users. All these processes need to be coordinated, and this

exercise is known as “management”. Management is also studied in Applied Information Science.



EXERCISE 1.7

Explain what you understand by the term “information control”. List all the aspects that are relevant to the concept of information control.

Applied Information Science may therefore be defined as the discipline that studies information institutions and their:

- sources (stock)
- activities
- (functions) user
- services
- management

1.6 CHARACTERISTICS OF APPLIED INFORMATION SCIENCE

In terms of the above definition, the discipline of Applied Information Science has certain characteristics, including the following:

- It is a social science. Information, information science and information institutions are studied from the perspective of the social sciences. The reason for this is that information institutions are established by people, because the need for information is a human need and because communication of information is largely a human exercise or endeavour.
- It is an applied discipline, namely an applied social science.
- It may also be regarded, to some extent, as an artificial discipline. It was created to provide professional training for information professionals and does not have an absolute central object of study as in the case of sociology or psychology.

- It borrows from other subjects or disciplines. A great deal of overlap occurs between disciplines in the social sciences; the boundaries between disciplines are vague; and certain aspects lend themselves to study in more than one discipline.

Those aspects studied in Applied Information Science, however, are specifically selected to train future professional practitioners.



EXERCISE 1.8

In four key concepts, summarise the most important features of Applied Information Science.

Applied Information Science is a discipline offered for study by the Department of Information Science at the University of South Africa to train prospective practitioners in information control. It is an applied social science with control of information in society as its object of study.

Traditionally, the control of information was the domain of the library and the work of a librarian. Other equally established institutions such as archives and museums also worked with the control and dissemination of information. In due course, however, additional institutions and occupations which also work with information arose.

1.7 IMPORTANCE OF STUDYING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION INSTITUTIONS

Libraries form an integral part of the larger spectrum of any country's information services. The abbreviation LLS (library and information services) has already become generally known. In addition to libraries, the term "library and information services" refers to a large number of other information institutions that are:

- at various levels of development and technological sophistication serving people of all ages, regardless of educational attainment
- serving all fields of human endeavour, including education at all levels; research and scholarship in all disciplines; agriculture, mining and manufacture; business and commerce; health and social services; professional practice, including architecture, engineering, accountancy and jurisprudence; literature and the arts; and entertainment and recreation
- funded by the public and private sectors and by nongovernment organisations (NGOs)
- administered by structures at all levels of government

There are outstanding library services in South Africa and there is a well-developed and fairly sophisticated infrastructure for the provision of information. Yet a high percentage of the population does not have access to basic library and information services.

The distribution of and access to library and information services are characterised by disparities between rich and poor and urban and rural sections of the population.

Decision-makers are often unaware of the contribution that library and information services could and should make to the development of the country. South Africa has a high level of illiteracy and many people are severely deprived of access to literacy classes and education. Leaders in developing communities seem largely unaware of how library and information services can benefit their communities.

Information is a prerequisite for raising the educational status of the population, empowering communities to participate democratically in decisions affecting them, developing an internationally competitive economy, and enhancing the quality of life of communities and individuals. Information is a strategic resource for economic development, together with other strategic resources such as land, labour and capital. A healthy library and information services system is therefore essential for development.

If you consider the facts mentioned above, you should realise the importance of the information institutions that you will be studying in this module.



EXERCISE 1.9

Why are you studying Applied Information Science? Do you consider it to be an occupation that can make a difference to South African society? Write down one or two reasons that you are studying this field.

With this information in mind, write your own notes on the importance of library and information services in the society in which you live.

A particular sub-field of applied information science that could make a valuable contribution to understanding current problems in library development is comparative librarianship.

Current applied information science problems and development processes can be studied in comparative research.

Comparative studies in applied information science may be defined as the systematic analysis of library development, practices or problems as they occur under different circumstances (most usually in different countries), considered in the context of the relevant historical, geographic, political, economic, social, cultural and other determinant background factors in the situations under study. Essentially, it constitutes an important approach to the search for cause and effect in library development, and to the understanding of library problems.

Simply put, it is the study of one or more aspects of librarianship in two or more settings, identifying similarities and differences, and explaining these in terms of cultural, demographic, economic, educational, historical, political, social or other relevant factors.

A comparative study may cover the entire field of librarianship and information science in specific countries, or it may cover a specific aspect of librarianship and information science in specific countries. In exceptional cases, it may even deal with more than one culture within one country.

1.8 THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION PROFESSION

The transfer of information is a process that is culturally determined. Different individuals and groups of people have different needs and interests and have different demands when it comes to the supply of information. Furthermore, information is an economic commodity, and the needs of the labour market will also dictate the type of information service to be provided to the community.

The information profession therefore has to meet widely divergent demands and faces significant challenges. Rapid and ongoing changes in society and changes in the field of technology have brought about changes in the nature and content of the professional activities of the librarian and information worker.

As a result of changes in the attitudes and needs of users and the advent of new technologies, niches have been created that have necessitated other information services and activities in addition to those traditionally provided in information occupations such as those of librarian and archivist. In some cases, these occupations have found new methods and means of providing a service, but in other cases new information occupations have come into being to fill these niches.

Professional people from other fields have entered the information sector and brought with them new skills and approaches to processing and using information.

This has changed not only the nature of information work but also the profile of those who work within this field. One may say that many new roles and occupations have been created for information professionals.

The 20th century was characterised by the emergence of social sciences and an increasing emphasis on occupational training at universities and colleges. This resulted in, among other things, the rise of library science, applied information science and information science. The subject literature for librarians is increasing in academic and scientific status (as evidenced by the many books and journals in this field today), and the occupation of librarian is moving towards the same degree of professionalism.

Owing to the expansion of the information profession and the fact that libraries have become part of the larger information sector, we study not only the traditional information professions such as those of librarian or archivist, but also less traditional occupations such as record managers and record officers.

1.9 PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS

The occupation of the librarian and information practitioner was previously regarded as a profession in South Africa in the sense that only professionals with the necessary qualifications and experience could become members of the professional association. The former professional association, the South African Institute for Library and Information Science, was dissolved in favour of a more inclusive association called the Library and Information Association of South Africa (LIASA).

It is now no longer necessary for members to have a formal qualification and experience in order to join this association. Strictly speaking, therefore, it can no longer be viewed as a professional association.

Information workers, who provide services in special libraries and information centres, do not have their own association and may become members of LIASA as well as the Special Libraries Interest Group (SLLS).

1.10 SUMMARY

In this study unit, we have introduced you to the subject discipline of Applied Information Science and clarified its related concepts. We have explained how the information sector has grown and that many occupations other than that of librarian have become involved in the processing and control of information. Library and information services and other information institutions are becoming increasingly important in the development of any community. Comparative studies in the field offer a useful approach to the search for cause and effect in library development and in understanding library problems.

1.11 SELF-ASSESSMENT

(1) Test yourself to see whether you are able to:

- (a) describe the field of study of Applied Information Science
- (b) list the main characteristics of Applied Information Science
- (c) define applied information science
- (d) clarify the concepts of “information control”, “information institutions” and “library and information service”

(2) Fill in the missing words in the spaces provided:

- (a) Information institutions are concerned with the _____ and _____ of information.
- (b) Banks and travel agents supply information as a _____ of their activities.
- (c) List the information institutions that supply information as their primary purpose:
 - (i) _____
 - (ii) _____
 - (iii) _____
 - (iv) _____
- (d) Publications control relates to _____ the publication of information.

(e) Arranging information and sources of information relates to

_____.

(3) The following is an example of an essay-type question:

Explain the extent to which the library is involved in the control of information and how this information differs from the information furnished by a bank.

SOURCES

Arts and Culture Task Group. Library and Information Services Subcommittee (1995); Cronin, Stiffler & Day (1993); Debons, Horne & Cronenweth (1988); Harrod's librarians' glossary of terms used in librarianship, documentation and the book crafts and reference books (2000); Kong & Goodfellow (1988); Shields (2003); Verwer, Bruyns & Nijboer (1994); Wormell (1994)

STUDY UNIT 2

History and Development of Libraries And Information Services

ORIENTATION

This study unit will introduce you to various aspects of libraries and information services which are influenced by advanced technology. As people are becoming less interested in printed material and are more inclined to use technology as the fastest medium for accessing, receiving and sending information, it is clear that the functions of library and other information services in order to provide effective and efficient services to their users have gradually changed. Over and above this, we provide a brief overview of the history and development of libraries and information services, and consider how trends in the past have affected more recent developments. We follow the division into periods used in general history. When you read through this study unit, you should also consult a general encyclopaedia in which dates relating to the history and development of civilisations (timelines) are indicated so that you can acquire a sense of historical chronology. Although you don't have to memorise specific dates, it is important to be aware of the broad historical trends affecting the development of libraries.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this study unit, you should be able to:

- distinguish between the different periods in the history of libraries and information services
- discuss the development of library and information services in South Africa
- summarise the most important trends in the history of library and information services
- explain how information technology has influenced library services

KEY CONCEPTS

library history	clay tablets
invention of printing	papyrus scrolls
parchment	
information technology	

2.1 THE NEED TO STUDY LIBRARY HISTORY

It is generally believed that those who do not study the past are bound to repeat it. Only through a study of any profession's past can we gain a sense of where it is today, how it got to where it is and where it is headed in the future. A study of history gives us insight into what has gone before. It helps us gain a better understanding of the current situation. Although the past does not determine the future, knowing how things happened enables us to make better provision for the future.

Libraries have existed for more than 25 centuries. It is understandable, therefore, that the general principles of information science are well established. When making decisions affecting these institutions today, one may benefit from first going back to the principles established throughout history. Libraries, archives and museums are cultural institutions in society. Events that take place in society may affect them, and they, in turn, may influence society.

The different types of libraries and information services that we will be dealing with in study units 4 to 9 did not emerge overnight. They took centuries to develop. Needs for self-education and self-improvement as well as cultural and aesthetic needs in different communities gave rise to the growth of libraries, which in turn stimulated the growth of the societies in which they functioned.

Dividing the history of libraries into periods that are typical of significant trends that affected their development may be more meaningful, but you will study these institutions against the background of historical periods. We discuss the development of libraries from their inception in Mesopotamia in the Middle East to their expansion throughout Europe and Britain and other Western countries.

2.2 MESOPOTAMIA (FROM THE 4TH MILLENNIUM BC)

Libraries are probably just as old as the art of writing, which developed between 3500 and 3000 BC. Indeed, some of the depositories for records that have been discovered are up to 5 000 years old. The inscribed clay tablets were thought to be used nearly 5 000 years ago, as early as 3020 BC, to record theological issues, historical records and legends. Graphic records are the products of civilisation. One of the prerequisites for civilisation is the existence of cities. Cities come into being once agriculture has developed sufficiently to produce surplus food and the nomadic period has been replaced by a period of permanent settlement.

2.2.1 Earliest record collections in Sumeria, Babylonia and Assyria

The most ancient record collections appear to have been those in Mesopotamia in the valleys surrounding the Tigris and Euphrates rivers in modern Iraq. At

that time, there was no distinction between archives and libraries. The oldest records were marked on clay tablets.

Examples of clay tablet collections from the 3rd and 4th millennia BC have been found at Ur and Nippur, among other sites. Similar collections were also found at Kish and Babylon. The oldest graphic records were of official actions (e.g. business agreements and government proclamations) and not creative literary work. The oldest remains of an archive or library were uncovered at Ur and are attributed to the Chaldeans. Ashurbanipal (668–627 BC), an Assyrian king, also had a large library and archive in his palace at Nineveh.

FIGURE 2.1

Clay tablet



2.2.2 Library of Ashurbanipal (668–627 BC)

The Royal Library of Ashurbanipal was named after the great king of the Neo-Assyrian Empire called Ashurbanipal. It has been estimated that Ashurbanipal's library or archive originally contained some 30 000 clay tablets. It was housed in a large number of rooms in his palace, and there appears to have been some kind of arrangement according to subject.

It was maintained and developed specifically to educate the public. An attempt was made to bring together a complete collection of the records produced in the country, together with a collection of the works of other nations. At the insistence of Ashurbanipal himself, agents were sent to all parts of the Assyrian

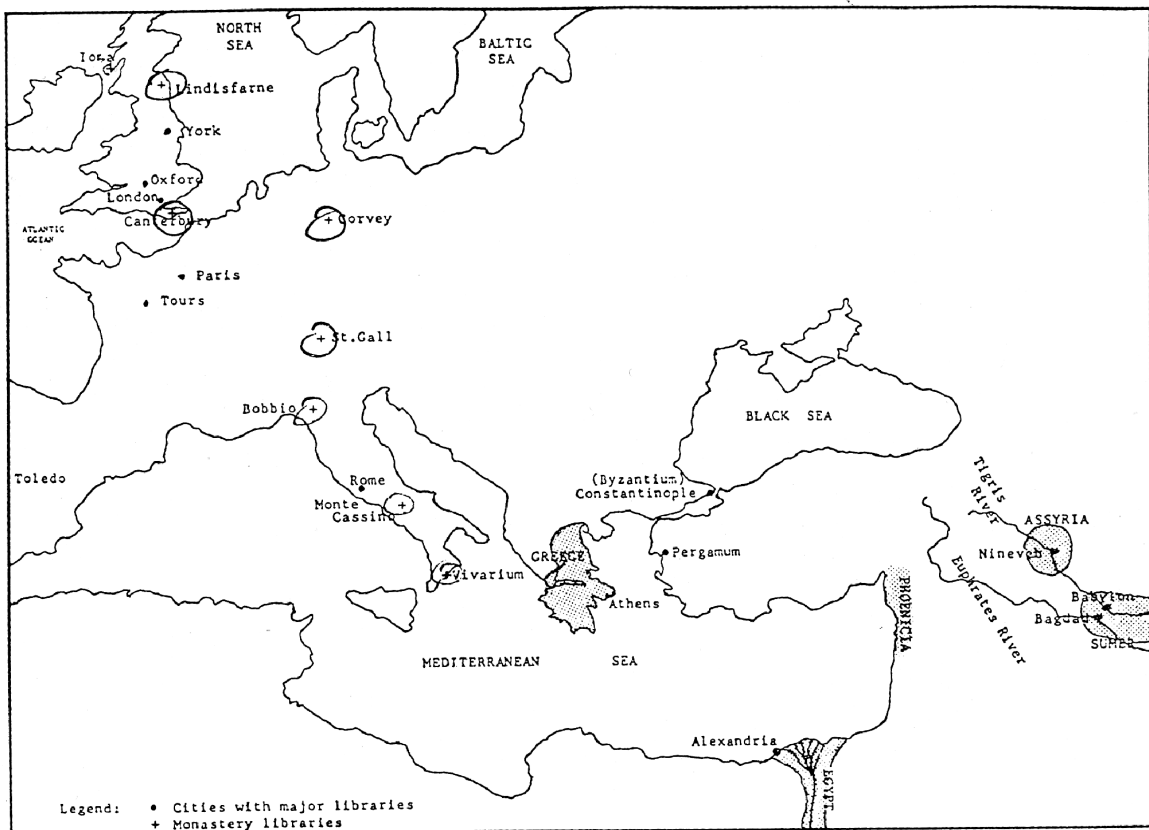
empire and abroad to collect written records of all kinds and on all topics.

Official publications such as tax lists and official correspondence were also preserved. Ashurbanipal's collection was open to all scholars, and some historians refer to it as a "public library". One should bear in mind, however, that in those days only the privileged were able to read. In reality, therefore, only a small group could use the library. The people in control of the collection underwent several years of apprenticeship and had to learn a number of languages.

(Chernik 1992:4)

FIGURE 2.2

The development of libraries: famous early library sites



2.3 EGYPT (FROM THE 3RD MILLENNIUM BC)

After clay tablets, papyrus scrolls were the oldest records used on a large scale. They were used mainly in Egypt and date from the 3rd millennium BC. In time, collections of papyrus scrolls were established in the area along the Nile River, for example at Heliopolis, Thebes, Edfu and Philae, which were all temple or palace archives or libraries. The collections were small and were probably used only by priests. The ruler was often also a priest. Because the material of these records was perishable, less of the stock of these institutions was preserved than of the collections in Mesopotamia.

2.4 THE CLASSICAL GREEK AND ROMAN ERAS (7TH CENTURY BC TO 4TH CENTURY AD)

2.4.1 Book collections in Ancient Greece

During the Classical Greek period, prominent people owned their own private book collections. The great Greek philosophers, Plato (428–348 BC) and Aristotle (384–322 BC) each had a collection.

The first public libraries were established in Athens in the 4th century BC and by the end of the 3rd century BC, libraries had been established in several parts of Greece. Most of them were housed in temples and were used by only a small number of scholars.

The Hellenistic era made a contribution of considerable cultural importance. Large public libraries were established all over the Mediterranean area, for example in Antioch, Pergamum, Rhodes and Smyrna. However, the most famous Greek library and museum of antiquity was not situated in Greece but at Alexandria in Egypt.

2.4.2 Alexandrian library (295 BC–47 AD)

In approximately 290 BC, Ptolemy I established a centre for learning in Alexandria. At the time Alexandria was a focal point of academic and cultural practice. The centre was established in Alexandria mainly to promote the Greek civilisation and language, and it consisted of two collections, namely the Mousaion and the Serapeum.

FIGURE 2.3

Container with papyrus scrolls



Its main aim was research and it served as an institute for advanced learning; in other words, the emphasis was not on the collection of objects and information records. It is estimated that these two collections together contained the equivalent of 700 000 records on papyrus scrolls.

To extend the library, the Ptolemaic rulers acquired books from all over the known world. Agents were dispatched to other countries to purchase or borrow books to be copied. The Alexandrian library contained virtually all the existing literature of the period. Because papyrus perished rapidly, these works had to be reproduced continually in order to preserve them, and this period is said to have had a detrimental effect on Greek literature because very little new literature was produced. The scholars dedicated their efforts to collecting and preserving all-important documents. Once the literature had been collected, the scholars concentrated on editing, compiling and critiquing existing works instead of writing new works.

FIGURE 2.4

Papyrus scrolls partially unrolled



(Dunlap 1972:27)

Callimachus, a famous scholar, is said to have compiled a catalogue for the Alexandrian library. He divided his work into a number of main categories. In addition to Callimachus, the library at Alexandria was fortunate to recruit librarians who were often famous in other fields, such as Demetrius of Phaleron, a statesman and orator who had helped erect the Mousaion. These librarians combined their positions with important priestly or government posts. The position of librarian was the power base for other important roles. It was fully integrated into the existing social and political system.

This accounted for the outward vision of this antique library and for its support of and importance to government.

2.4.3 Library at Pergamum (197–159 BC)

In the Classical period, both the material and the form of records changed. Initially, papyrus scrolls were the most common type of library material, but by the 4th century AD they had been replaced by parchment (made of animal skins). Parchment had already been in use as early as 1500 BC. The present-day book form, the codex, came into existence in the 1st century AD and had replaced the scroll by the 4th century AD.

The term “parchment” refers to the city of Pergamum, where it was invented (in what was then Asia Minor and is now Turkey), the site of the largest library of antiquity (after the Mousaion). The term for “parchment” in Latin is *pergamena* (“of Pergamum”) (Pioch 1996). In addition to papyrus scrolls, this library also housed many parchment scrolls and dedicated a huge area to exhibiting statues of poets, historians and philosophers, which gave it the atmosphere of an historical museum.

2.4.4 Book collections in the Roman Empire

During the height of Roman civilisation, private book collections such as those of Cicero (106–43 BC) were more common than those in the Greek era. Julius Caesar (102–44 BC) intended to follow the Greek example of public libraries, but it was his successor, Augustus (63 BC–14 AD), who first implemented them. Libraries were started in their own buildings and in temples in many centres of the Roman Empire. Library records were divided according to language: Greek and Latin works were kept apart.

The Romans attached great value to the preservation of documents of state, and they laid the foundation for contemporary archive administration. They preserved the decisions of the senate in a tabularium built especially for this purpose.

2.5 THE MIDDLE AGES (5TH TO 14TH CENTURIES)

During the Middle Ages, people's lives revolved around the Church. The 5th to the 10th centuries became known as the "Dark Ages" after the fall of the Roman Empire when Europe was invaded by the Goths and Huns. Roman institutions vanished and the social, political and economic changes had a detrimental effect on learning. However, during this time, the clergy, who formed the only literate class, preserved writings and ideas in monastery libraries.

2.5.1 Monastic and cathedral libraries

As a result of the controlling role of the Church in Europe, the library of the Middle Ages was also primarily intended to serve the Church. The collections, which were usually small, were divided into Christian and heathen works. Cathedrals and monasteries had their own libraries. Monasteries, in particular, had a scriptorium attached to them in which books were copied, illuminated and bound as instructed by their librarians. This was the era of illuminated manuscripts. Most of the books, however, were intended to be used. The best-known monastic libraries were established in the 6th century: those of St Benedict at Monte Cassino and Cassiodorus at Vivarium in Italy.

Cathedral collections were also used to a limited extent by the public, but these were usually even smaller than the monastic collections, which were for the exclusive use of the clergy. The emphasis was on the preservation of library material, because producing even a single work was a difficult and time-consuming task.

Chained books (*Libri concatenati*) were in use until the 16th century. For safety reasons and to facilitate the arrangement of library stock, books were chained to desks. The cupboards, in which some library books were stored, were called **armaria**. Books were seldom lent out.

2.5.2 Differences between the libraries of classical antiquity and monastic libraries

The libraries of classical antiquity and the monastic libraries differed in the following respects:

Libraries of classical antiquity	Monastic libraries
1. This was a golden age of civilisation.	1. Intellectual exercise was very limited.
2. Collections were large and from all parts of the known world.	2. Collections were small and limited products of the Dark Ages.

3. Collections covered all areas of knowledge.	3. Collections were limited to religious works.
4. A librarian was a scholar – a prestigious position.	4. The librarian was an elderly man not capable of other work.
5. Libraries had an active acquisition policy.	5. Collections grew slowly once there was a book for every monk.
6. Libraries disseminated information.	6. Libraries were established mainly for religious purposes.
7. Access was granted to all who could read.	7. Access was restricted to monks, priests and the wealthy.
8. Scribes were scholars.	8. Scribes were copyist monks who had to be kept busy; hence the inaccuracies of copies.
9. The scholar scribes had subject knowledge and could copy scientific works accurately.	9. Monastic scribes had no scientific knowledge and copied few scientific works, which required accuracy and subject knowledge. The lack of scientific texts could be one of the reasons for the absence of scientific development during the Middle Ages.

Despite the many differences between the libraries of antiquity and the medieval libraries, there were some corresponding characteristics that were present in all the libraries that collected handwritten collections.

2.5.3 Similarities between libraries of classical antiquity and monastic libraries

- (1) These libraries usually functioned as library, archive and museum.
- (2) The library operated as a publisher and produced new copies of records, which it sold once it owned its own copy.
- (3) The library was the centre of learning. The libraries of antiquity were meeting places for scholars, and the lecture rooms formed part of the library. In monasteries, the books formed the basis of the educational system.
- (4) The library had a strong conservation function, because the records were rare items that could not easily be replaced.

When the political and social climates began to change in the 12th to 14th centuries, monastic libraries were ready to provide a basis for learning.

In contrast to the decline of libraries in Europe prior to that period, libraries in the Middle East flourished. In addition to the Byzantine culture, the Muslims established an Islamic Empire centred in Baghdad from 750 to 1050. Learning was encouraged and many medical and scientific advances took place. Paper was used as a writing material and books were highly prized. Many manuscripts were taken to Spain during its occupation by the Moors and these were translated into Latin. Eventually their scientific content reached the universities of Europe.

2.5.4 University libraries

The 13th century saw universities spring up all over Europe, which created a demand for textbooks, lending impetus to the book trade. University libraries, however, were established some time after the universities themselves. In France, for example, a university was established in Paris in 1200, but the university library was not established until 1250, when Robert de Sorbonne donated his private book collection.

University library collections were divided into two sections. One was a large collection for research purposes that could be lent out but had few users, while the other was a small collection for teaching purposes that had to be consulted in the library because its user corps was so large. The university library of the Middle Ages was open for only a few hours a week, with a student or lecturer acting as part-time librarian.

2.6 THE RENAISSANCE (15TH CENTURY) AND THE INVENTION OF PRINTING

2.6.1 Development of libraries

During the 13th to 15th centuries, economic trade between countries developed. Persons other than clerics began to read and feel a need for learning. New ideas were generated based on the classical writings returned from the East, and the Renaissance or “rebirth of learning” therefore flourished during this period. Conditions were favourable for the development of libraries. Classical and medieval works were freely available for the first time. The Humanists were interested in classical literary works in particular. Literacy was increasing. In Europe a new form of writing material, paper, was being used.

The book trade spread outward from university centres. Private book collections became more common. Pope Nicholas (1447–1455) owned a collection of some 5 000 manuscripts, which later formed the nucleus of the Vatican Library.

2.6.2 Effects of the invention of printing

The printing press was invented in the middle of the 15th century. Some collectors initially preferred manuscripts to printed books, which confirm that books were regarded as art or collector's items, rather than sources of information.

The invention of printing had significant effects. Some of these effects are dealt with in other modules. In this module we focus on its effects on libraries, literacy, reading and learning:

- (1) The printing press changed the world of books and libraries because it severed the long connection between the library and the scriptorium, which meant that libraries were no longer involved in the production of books.
- (2) Initially printed books brought about little change in the libraries, as many librarians and book collectors refused to keep printed books in their libraries. In due course, however, printed books replaced manuscripts, and, once this happened, books were kept on shelves for easy access rather than in chests or chained to desks.
- (3) Printed books were available in large numbers and could therefore be borrowed for use outside the library. Many libraries now had thousands rather than hundreds of books, and by 1600 the modern library made its appearance.
- (4) With larger library collections, new and more efficient methods had to be developed for classifying and categorising books. It became common practice to use the alphabetic sequence in library catalogues and indexes.
- (5) Printing made it possible for the vernacular to develop and grow, and this had an effect on the development of literacy and the reading habit. Printing also gave rise to standardised spelling and refined language usage, and, as a result, the printed word became the measure for correct grammar.
- (6) Secular and religious institutions no longer had the sole right to existing knowledge, and the autonomy of the individual started emerging. The transfer of knowledge became far more efficient. Clever students no longer had to learn at a master's knee, so to speak. Instead they could master a subject on their own by reading books.
- (7) The written word was now able to preserve ideas far more efficiently. In the past there had always been the danger or fear that ideas contained in only a few manuscripts could be lost or forgotten, whereas now ideas recorded in thousands of copies were more likely to survive and be distributed.
- (8) Title pages became more commonplace, and this made it easier to produce book lists and catalogues.
- (9) Hand-drawn illustrations were replaced by woodcuts, which made it easier to copy illustrations. This brought about a transformation in the field of technical literature, as the illustrations in all the copies of a book could be identical. Users in different places could use identical images, maps and

diagrams simultaneously. This ability to produce exact copies was particularly significant for scientific texts. Accurate versions of mathematical tables were just as important as accurate diagrams and maps. It is unlikely that exact copies would have been possible when books were still handwritten.

- (10) In the 16th century there was an explosion of knowledge prompted as much by the invention of printing and increased availability of books as by the voyages of discovery and the Reformation.
- (11) Printing influenced the way people were thinking. The thoughts of a reader were guided by the arrangement and presentation of the contents of a book. In order to handle printed reference works, for example, readers had to master certain skills that are taken for granted today. Printed reference works were being arranged alphabetically, and since the 16th century memorising the alphabet has been the first step on the road to literacy in the West.



EXERCISE

Find the keywords in the abovementioned list of effects. Think about the results or consequences of the invention of printing. Arrange the keywords in order of what you consider to be the most important consequences to the least important consequence.

List the five most important effects in the space below.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

2.7 THE REFORMATION (16TH CENTURY)

Church property in Germany was confiscated during the Reformation. On the instruction of Luther, city libraries were established and education was encouraged. All Protestants were expected to read the Bible themselves. Literacy increased and progress was made in the creation of new libraries, although significant numbers of books were also lost. In 1559, the objections of

the Catholic Church to certain products of the art of printing were expressed in the first issue of the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*, a list of works that Catholics were officially prohibited from reading – an example of censorship.

2.8 THE BAROQUE PERIOD (17TH CENTURY)

The Baroque period was characterised by a passion for exhibition, luxury and elaborate decoration. This is reflected in book covers, printing and the housing of book collections. Beautiful private libraries, such as the Angelica in Rome (1604) and the Ambrosiana in Milan (1609), were opened to the public. Natural lighting through large windows was used for the first time during the Baroque period to the obvious benefit of archives and libraries.

The best-known work on librarianship was written by Gabriel Naudee (1600–1653), Cardinal Mazarin’s librarian, and was titled *Avis pour dresser une bibliothèque* (1627). In it, Naudee laid the foundation for library management. He considered it essential to have a book collection large enough to meet all reasonable requests, the simplest and most natural classification system, a catalogue of the library stock, and a well-managed library with the librarian being a learned and honourable person.

Encyclopaedic collections were accumulated at universities and played a valuable role in teaching students. These collections were usually attached directly to a library and dealt mostly with the natural sciences.

2.9 THE 18TH CENTURY

The motto of the French Enlightenment was “knowledge is power” and this benefited the library, because it was the obvious place to access recorded knowledge. The French encyclopaedists, such as Rousseau and Voltaire, wanted to reinterpret knowledge according to their own rationalistic views in order to free the French people from the authoritarian power of the Church and the monarchy.

The French Revolution took place in 1789 and all possessions of the nobility and the Church, including their libraries, were confiscated. These confiscated goods had to be accommodated sensibly in public institutions. Consequently, library, archive and museum collections were functionally separated for the first time at the beginning of the 19th century.

National libraries were established during the 18th century. The *Bibliothèque Nationale* was established in Paris in 1735 and was based on the royal library collection. In London, the British Museum Library was established as a national library in 1753, mainly from private collections and the royal collections. The Library of Congress was established in Washington DC in 1800.

It was in the 18th century that the precursors of today's public library first appeared. Book dealers in Britain and the USA operated circulating libraries and collected a levy for each loan made. Subscription libraries were also established. Only people who paid a membership fee were allowed to borrow books.

During the Industrial Revolution, which had its inception at that time, workers were able to obtain popular literature from mechanics', apprentices' and mercantile libraries by paying a small amount. In addition, there were parish, parochial and Sunday school libraries, which were small church libraries that could also be used by the public.

2.10 THE INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION (19TH CENTURY)

In the 19th century, the Industrial Revolution increased in momentum. There was a demand for educated people, and universities flourished together with university libraries. Primary school education was made compulsory. In industrialised countries, literacy became the rule rather than the exception. This directly benefited library usage. By the mid-19th century the public library as we know it today had emerged in Britain and the USA.

In 1870, communities in Britain were made responsible for establishing schools offering free education. This brought a considerable increase in the number of readers and a concomitant increase in the demand for public libraries. Financial donations by Andrew Carnegie (1835–1919) did much to establish public libraries in the USA, Britain and other countries where English is commonly used.

An important characteristic of the Industrial Revolution was the trend to institutionalise research and technology. This gave rise to the development of subject libraries. This trend found parallels in virtually all countries: Special libraries arose wherever industrialisation took place. They developed in reaction to the demand by business enterprises and industries for specialised professional literature and factual information. New perceptions of service, relating to the flow of information rather than its storage and conservation, were developed to provide for the needs of these users.

Until this period, libraries had not benefited from effective lighting. Oil lamps, candles and gas lamps were used as artificial lighting well into the 19th century. They all had the disadvantage of giving off heat and posing a major fire hazard. In the 19th century, electricity was introduced for lighting purposes. The British Museum was fitted with electrical lighting in 1879 and the South African Library in Cape Town in 1890. In the 20th century, air conditioning further improved the working environment in libraries and extended the life of library records.

Although order in the library holdings and retrieval tools had been present in the very first large library of antiquity, the foundation for increased international standardisation of these practices was laid only in 1876 with the publication of the first edition of Melvil Dewey's (1851–1931) decimal classification system and Charles Cutter's (1837–1903) rules for a dictionary catalogue.

2.11 POST-INDUSTRIAL SOCIETY (20TH CENTURY AND BEYOND)

In contemporary society, referred to as post-industrial society, information has become crucial. The important role of service occupations is obviously beneficial to libraries. At the same time, library and information services face increasing competition from other information providers.

As a result of increasing replacement of manual labour by machines, leisure time has become a notable feature of society. Recreational literature is being produced on a large scale. One of the consequences of this is the widespread availability of pornography, which has become an ethical issue of concern to the librarian. The public library is also facing increased competition from the mass media.

The development of the public library and the popularity of the paperback have combined to bring about the demise of circulation and subscription libraries. However, the social role of the book club has seen the expansion of a form of subscription book club.

Library services to children were first recognised in the 20th century as an essential part of public library work, but school libraries did not flourish until the 20th century.

The preponderance of literate people in developed countries in the 20th century undoubtedly played a major role in advancing the field of librarianship. Literacy was, nevertheless, not a prerequisite for using a library service, as audio and audiovisual information material appeared in the library alongside printed records.

Valuable records were destroyed during the two world wars, but beautiful buildings were erected to replace the destroyed buildings. Today, functionally planned library buildings are regarded as an integral component of efficient library services. Efforts are made to create pleasant and attractive surroundings for users and staff. State financing and open stacks (users are free to browse between the bookshelves) are a common pattern in library services these days, but these have necessitated improved security measures in libraries.

World War I (1914–1918) gave rise to a demand for technical information and the organisation and transfer of such information in Britain. However, the period in which the most intensive growth took place was during World War II, and this is still continuing today. The war gave rise to large research projects that

brought about new knowledge. This new knowledge has also been applied in civilian life and also created a demand for information in industry. A further stimulus was provided by the Cold War between Russia and the USA, especially in the space race. This competition resulted in a need for large research projects and the generation of a great deal of new knowledge.

In the 1950s, special libraries operating in the field of technology and science were faced with the task of controlling the large amounts of information being published globally. The material available to information users increased rapidly and it was the task of the special librarian to organise this material in such a way that it could be consulted quickly and in an orderly manner by scientists and company workers. Novel developments in the storage, retrieval and transmission of records and information relied on technological inventions (such as the computer) and were first utilised in special libraries.

In the present century, the holdings of a large national or university library may run into millions of items. Library collections usually grow to such an extent that difficulties are experienced in storage and preservation. Micrography (where records are reproduced photographically by being reduced and stored as images on a plastic medium such as microfilm or microfiche), CD-ROMs, DVDs and computers are used to address some of these problems.

Today, no library can exist in relative isolation and each is increasingly dependent on other libraries to supply missing records or information not held. Interlibrary loans and national and even international networks have appeared. The supply of records and the flow of information between libraries and to users in libraries are improved by photocopying, scanning and faxing, which in turn have given rise to copyright problems.

2.12 THE DEVELOPMENT OF LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES IN SOUTH AFRICA

Joachim Nicolaus von Dessin laid the foundation for the establishment of free public library services in South Africa. He arrived at the Cape in 1727 as an officer of the Dutch East India Company, and, when he died in 1761, his private book collection consisted of 4 000 volumes, which he bequeathed to the Dutch Reformed Church in Cape Town on condition that it form the basis of a public library accessible to all citizens free of charge. He also left a sum of money to be used for supplementing and maintaining the collection.

In 1818, Lord Charles Somerset established the South African Public Library in Cape Town (now the National Library, Cape Town Division, as shown in figure 2.5). Maintenance funds were obtained from taxes levied on the sale of wine. In 1820, Von Dessin's collection was included in this library, which remained a tax-funded, free public library until 1827.

The founding of the South African Public Library gave rise to the establishment of several public subscription libraries by private people in the towns east and northeast of Cape Town and later also in the Northwestern Cape, Natal, the Orange Free State and the Zuid-Afrikaansche Republiek (the former Transvaal).

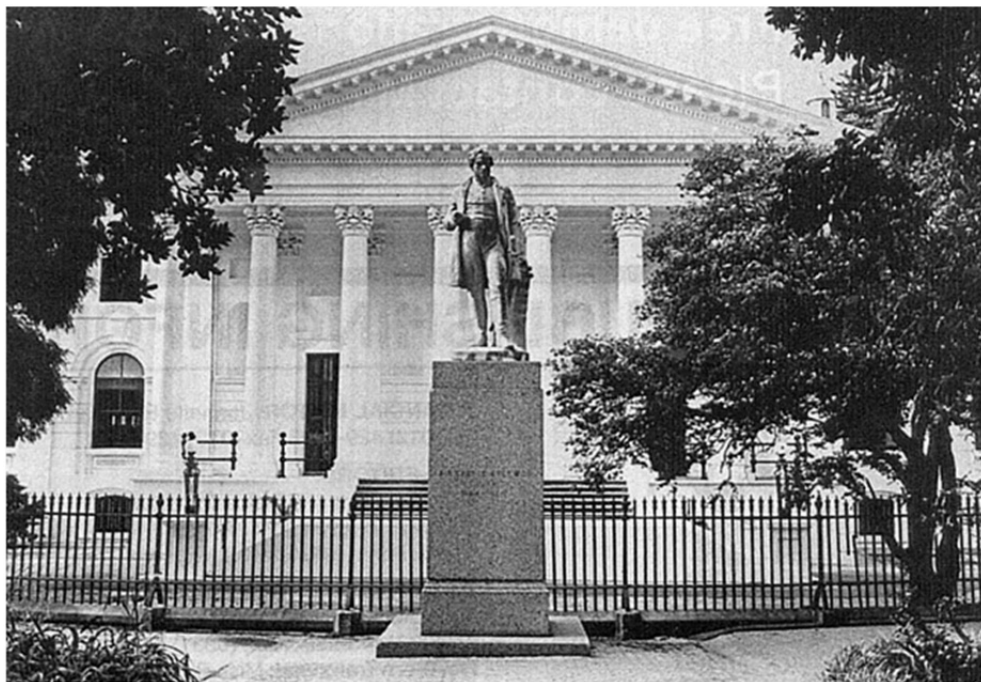
The Molteno Regulations of 1874 made provision for a subsidy to public libraries and resulted in many new public subscription libraries being established.

The development of public libraries in South Africa gained further momentum after 1900 owing to state interest and financial legislation (Financial Relations Act 10 of 1913), which improved financial assistance. However, the Act did not make provision for the establishment, control and management of public libraries, and their development was further hampered by World War I.

Between 1908 and 1923, the Carnegie Corporation of New York made funds available for the construction of public library buildings in South Africa. The development of public libraries was further stimulated in 1928 when two prominent librarians visited the country with the assistance of the Carnegie Corporation.

FIGURE 2.5

The National Library in Cape Town, South Africa's oldest library



They were Milton J Ferguson and SA Pitt, who conducted a thorough survey and called a conference to discuss the library situation. The following recommendations emerged from this conference, held in Bloemfontein:

- (1) that a free public library service that serves all communities in South Africa be introduced

- (2) that school library services be expanded on a professional basis
- (3) that special attention be paid to the development of all types of library services for the non-white population group on a separate basis
- (4) that university library organisation be improved
- (5) that an occupational trade association be established for librarians
- (6) that provision be made for training in librarianship
- (7) that a national library council be established

The conference resulted in the establishment of the South African Library Association in 1930 and in the report of the Interdepartmental Committee on Libraries of 1937, which recommended that public subscription libraries be transformed into tax-supported free public library services.

By the end of the 1940s, following World War II, the provinces had established provincial library services in response to the 1937 report. The period from 1930 to 1950 was characterised by the transformation of public libraries into free libraries, improvement in book stock provision, more comprehensive financial support and the introduction of coordinated library services in general, and especially in rural areas.

The majority of public libraries were incorporated into or affiliated with the provincial library services. Only nine of the larger public libraries remained independent. These libraries were (in order of size) Johannesburg, Cape Town, Durban, Pretoria, Port Elizabeth, Germiston, Roodepoort, Pietermaritzburg and East London, which were largely funded by their municipalities.

In terms of the Financial Relations Act 10 of 1913, two libraries were excluded from provincial responsibility and placed directly under the central government. These were the South African Library in Cape Town and the State Library in Pretoria, which form the two divisions of our National Library today (see study unit 9).

2.13 TRENDS IN THE HISTORY OF LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES

In section 2.1, we explained that the history of libraries and information services may also be approached by looking at significant trends. Therefore, we now provide a summary of changes or trends in record-related, retrieval-related and user-related aspects in the history of the library.

2.13.1 Record-related aspects

We indicate briefly how changes in the physical characteristics of the record influenced the development of libraries. The information society and the effects of the invention of language, writing, written documents, codex, manuscripts, printing and the mass media are all important milestones.

The form of records may be used as a basis for distinguishing the precodex, codex and metacodex eras. The mid-15th century (or to be precise 1455) is an important dividing line for libraries and archives because that was when the transition took place from manuscript to printed book. The middle of the 20th century was characterised by a dividing line between analogue and digital records, which may well be of even greater significance.

The material of records has changed from clay, papyrus and parchment to paper and plastic (e.g. celluloid). Examples of plastic records include sound records and tapes, motion pictures, computer and video disks, as well as computer and video tapes.

The form of records changed from tablets and scrolls to codex and metacodex (e.g. sound records, computer and video disks). Journals have become important sources of information in the library.

The emphasis has shifted from the medium (the physical record) to the content of the record (the message). Information itself is emphasised to the extent that it is generally accepted that the library may be expected to access non-recorded information (e.g. from someone who knows) and to supply this to the user who needs it.

Authorship by individuals became important only after the invention of printing. Prior to that time, scribes were often seen as more important. The scriptorium was replaced by the printer, and the invention of printing gave rise to publishers and book dealers. In the present century, however, the state, semi-state organisations and supranational bodies (such as the United Nations) have become the largest publishers. Corporate authorship (e.g. publications by institutions) has gained momentum.

Today, both texts and illustrations may be encoded digitally. The transitions from written to printed messages and from analogue to digital encoding of information were watersheds in the history of libraries.

Digital encoding is used with greater frequency because it allows information to be stored, retrieved and transmitted electronically (by using computers and telecommunications). This saves a great deal of storage space as well as retrieval and transmission time.

2.13.2 Retrieval-related aspects

The provision of proper access to recorded information became increasingly difficult because the number of records increased dramatically. More attention was paid to retrieval methods, and technological devices were introduced to

assist in retrieval. The initial emphasis was on macroretrieval, in other words record retrieval. Tracing a book on the shelf by means of traditional cataloguing and classification is one example of record retrieval. Once journals became common-place, increased attention was paid to microretrieval, for example retrieving part of a record (such as an article in an issue of a journal). We therefore find a development from record retrieval to information retrieval. As a result, cataloguing and classification had to be supplemented by indexing according to terms used in the text, or frequently according to a standardised, systematised list of terms, called a thesaurus.

In record retrieval, the traditional emphasis was on the surname of the author. As attention was focused first on the natural sciences and then the social sciences, the emphasis shifted from retrieval by author to retrieval by subject. Subject knowledge (knowledge of the subject to which the information relates) became increasingly important.

These days information is located inside and outside the library. Thus, the emphasis has shifted from holding information records (information ownership) to having access to such records or information (information access). This has been made possible by the use of computers and telecommunications facilities.

2.13.3 User-related aspects

As a result of the inventions of printing and later photocopying, the emphasis in the work of librarians shifted from the preservation of records to service to the users of the records. Because library holdings now include books and many different types of record forms (some of which are not read but viewed or listened to), it is preferable to refer to library users – of whom readers are only one component.

The traditional static or passive library service (responding only to requests) made way for a more dynamic or active library service that anticipates requests for information, for example through selective dissemination of information in accordance with users' interest profiles.

In contrast to the cold and dark libraries of the 19th century, libraries today are colourful, attractive, purpose-built buildings in which temperature and lighting are regulated. Users can work in pleasant conditions and spend more time in the library, and this has brought about longer hours of service. Access has become unrestricted and open rather than closed.

2.14 INFLUENCE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES FUNCTIONS

2.14.1 WHAT IS INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY?

Any technology through which people can receive, store, process, transmit, retrieve and distribute information is called information technology (IT). IT can also refer to any device such as networking, hardware, software, internet or people working with technology. According to Massis (2016), it entails the application of computers and communication technology, in order to provide effective means of information in the form of electronic records, A/V signals, cables and telecommunication.

2.14.2 FACTORS THAT ARE INFLUENCED BY INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY IN THE LIBRARIES

Negotiating space and access to library holdings has been radically transformed in the advent of information technology advances. Library services have been improved by technological platforms that impact positively in the following four areas:

2.14.2.1 Collection development and management

Selection and development of information resources are done to add to the research collection. Information resources are selected by consulting various publisher sites and bibliographical databases. After searching and selecting, a librarian will place an order following the process shown in study unit 3, figure 3.5.

2.14.2.2 Cataloguing and classification

In the normal course of things, acquired books are given an accession number and then sent to cataloguing and classification for identification purposes. Information technology now plays a significant role in this regard since its implementation increased availability and accessibility of library material as never before. Resource sharing is effective and reduces duplication of copies which, in turn, leads to cost effectiveness. Storage of material is accurate and reliable.

2.14.2.3 Supporting and lending

The internet has revolutionised libraries and the type of services they offer to their clients or users. It has enabled libraries to deliver a wide range of services to clients or users effectively and efficiently, even when the library is closed. Electronic resources are more useful because they provide access to a wealth of information available online that can be used for further reading and conducting research. Users can download any information they need to use or that interest

them, and various users can use it at the same time irrespective of geographical location.

Through the web, these resources have pushed information to the fingertips of the library users and can be accessed through mobile phones and social networks.

The electronic resources are delivered through various platforms such as EbscoHost, SABINET and IEEE. These resources contain bibliographic references, full text articles, and links to scholarly documents that can be downloaded to any device or be consulted at the user's convenience. Libraries are no longer physical buildings, full of books situated somewhere on the campus, but have become digital within reach of everyone as long as they have internet access. The internet has transformed libraries into more portable information institutes. It has made lending services more convenient and effective than before. Library sources can be loaned and renewed through self-service.

2.14.2.4 User services

Information technology has broken down the distance barriers between library users and its services. The number of libraries has dramatically increased and attracts a wide range of people who use their services. Information technology has brought advanced facilities such as Skype and video conferencing that are used by librarians to facilitate workshops to students near and far at a low cost. Various communication tools and social networks are adopted by library workers to provide fast services to their potential users. IT provides speedy and easy access to unlimited information from different sources. Libraries are able to share news and events with their users. They are also able to provide formation about newly acquired material and marketing of their services is done easily.

2.15 SUMMARY

From the earliest times, people have felt the need to preserve the written word. With the growth in societies and trade, more documents were generated to keep records of transactions. The importance of depositories increased in accordance with these developments. During classical antiquity there was no real distinction between libraries, museums and archives. Only after printing was invented, and handwritten documents were distinguished from printed books did a clear division take place between libraries on the one hand, and archives and museums on the other. While libraries were gradually associated with records, of which more than one copy was available, archival records were unique.

Although the emphasis shifted from record preservation to record use, this does not mean that record preservation is completely ignored today. In fact, libraries today have an important role to play in the preservation of non-official records in particular.

Instead of the priest, scholar, custodian or bibliophile of the previous centuries, the contemporary librarian is an information manager who views library records and information mainly as a means of service to society. The librarian, in the advent of information technology, signposts users to electronic resources that are delivered through various platforms, such as EbscoHost and suchlike, with a view to enabling widened and much faster access through web directories. Users can access links at their own convenience in this IT-enhanced environment.

In spite of the change, it is worth noting that there has been continuity. As an institution, the library has existed for centuries, experiencing many changes yet adapting to them. At present, libraries are once again undergoing considerable change as a result of the effect of information technology, but they are adapting and utilising the new technologies to further their aims.

2.16 SELF-ASSESSMENT

Answer the following questions:

- (1) Significant developments in the history of libraries were related to changes in respect of the:
 - (a) characteristics of the record
 - (b) of records to to users
 - (c) retrieval to

- (2) Match the most common record forms found in libraries listed in 1 to 4 below with the historic periods in A to D:

1 Papyrus scrolls	A 666–627 BC
2 Parchment scrolls	B 290 BC
3 Clay tablets	C 4th century AD
4 Codex	D 1st century AD

Your knowledge of this study unit will be tested mainly by means of multiple-choice questions in assignments and the examinations. This means that you should study its content carefully.

SOURCES

Black (1998); Chernik (1992); Cox, Greenberg & Porter (1998); De Vleeschauwer (1955); Dunlap (1972); Duranti (1994); Edwards (1968); Eisenstein (1979); Gates (1976); Johns (1968); Johnson (1973); Musiker (1986); Pioch (1996); Shera (1976); Shuman (1992); Thompson (1977); Thompson (1957); Van Halm (1978); Massis (2016); Massis (2012); Ilo & Ifijeh (2010); Edem & Ofre (2010); Davison (2012); Khalid (2011)

STUDY UNIT 3

Library and Information Services: Environment, Mission, Aims and Functions

ORIENTATION

In this study unit, we consider the environment that makes it possible for library and information services to flourish or perish. We look at the broader environment-society, with its social, political and economic circumstances; the electronic environment; and the immediate environment, such as the parent body and library users. We study certain aspects of the organisation of library and information services, consider the way libraries interact with their environment, and look at the role of library and information services in society and people's views on this. There is also a general discussion on the mission, aims and functions of libraries. Subsequent study units concentrate on certain aspects of each specific type of library and the way these libraries differ. In this study unit, however, we use the different kinds of libraries to illustrate each function.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this study unit, you should be able to:

- explain how various environmental factors can influence the existence and functioning of a library and information service
- describe what the parent body or controlling body of a library and information service is
- explain what influence users have on a library and information service and how libraries endeavour to meet their users' needs by means of branch libraries
- discuss the different functions of a library and information service
- express your views on the library as a service organisation and an institution
- describe the vital influence that information technology exerts on the functioning of library and information services
- explain what is meant by a mission, an aim and a function of library and information services

KEY CONCEPTS

branch libraries
collection development
document delivery
lending
organisational structure

cataloguing and classification
collection management
information retrieval
library environment
user guidance

3.1 FACTORS INFLUENCING LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICES

The broader environment of a library includes social, cultural, economic, political, legal, technological and physical factors, which are likely to influence the functioning of library and information services in various ways.

3.1.1 Social and cultural factors

A library is an open social system that operates in interaction with its environment. The adjective “social” indicates that there is an essential relationship between the library and society in general. Jefferson (1969:xi) explains this interaction as follows:

The library is essentially a response to society as a complex system of inter-related groupings, institutions and individuals: a system that is in a state of constant change with implicit consequences upon the apparatus of communication developed to hold together the “web of social relationships”. The nature of this response can only be understood by the daunting or formidable study of the interplay between social forces and the library and its place in the total communications pattern of society.

In study unit 2, you learned that libraries have changed over the centuries in accordance with social conditions. Social conditions include educational and employment opportunities, industrialisation, urbanisation and levels of literacy. The rise in literacy levels, for instance, had a major influence on library use. Cultural factors include language, customs, norms, beliefs and patterns of behaviour, such as reading and library usage.

Although communities have developed differently throughout the ages, the broad characteristics of their information needs have remained largely the same. For instance, communities have found it necessary to preserve state and other archival documents and to support education, and religious and moral schooling or teaching. An educated and cultivated community craves information for self-education and self-improvement and usually has a cultural and aesthetic need to read literature and collect books.

History has shown that libraries develop when there is a stable social climate – when people have time for entertainment and when there is a literate society that emphasises intellectual creativity and the exercise of art and cultural activities. Urban communities usually stimulate scientific development and technological progress, and this progress encourages the existence and growth of libraries.

The social and cultural factors present in a community influence the demand for services required from a library. For example, a public library’s environment may be a large, multicultural city such as Johannesburg, where people from all parts of the world, who speak many languages, live and work together. This environment will differ considerably from that of a small rural library in the Free State serving a community that consists mainly of farmers speaking Afrikaans and Sotho.



EXERCISE 3.1

List the social and cultural factors you think could have an influence on the library you use.

3.1.2 Economic factors

One of the main financial factors influencing library and information services is the amount of money made available to the library by the government or other authority. Where a government or local authority demonstrates the will to educate, teach and enlighten its citizens and is prepared to provide the financial support for this, library and information services will flourish. A large public library system, such as the City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services, will have a much larger budget than a small rural library.

Because many books and other library materials are imported, particularly in developing countries, an economic factor that has serious implications for libraries is the exchange rate of the local currency in relation to the currencies of the countries from which the materials are imported. A poor exchange rate of the South African rand against the American dollar, for instance, means that libraries in South Africa can buy fewer books and other materials from the United States than would be the case if the exchange rate were more favourable.

3.1.3 Political factors

Political factors include the law of the country and the regulations of the parent body that the library must comply with. In the context of library and information services, legislation on copyright, legal deposit and public lending right affects the way in which the library functions because these laws affect information access.

For instance, copyright protects the labour, skill and judgement that someone expends in the creation of an original piece of work. If anyone copies the whole or a substantial part of a work that is protected by copyright without permission, he or she commits an infringement. Copyright infringements include the photo-copying of materials in the library and wholesale transmission or downloading from the internet.

Some countries also have censorship laws that must be obeyed by libraries in those countries. Under censorship laws, a government may restrict access to certain publications because those publications are viewed as a threat to the security of the country or regarded as politically or socially undesirable. For instance, in November 2001 Zimbabwe passed the Access to Information and Protection of Privacy Bill to provide for the regulation of the mass media. One of the aims of this Act was to curtail the so-called “abuse of freedom of expression” and “abuse of journalistic privilege”.

Pornography and blasphemy in the media are other controversial issues that are viewed as reasons for censorship in many countries. An institution has little or no control over its environment, and a library and information service cannot choose to ignore censorship laws. Librarians may campaign to change the laws, but until change takes place the laws must be obeyed. You will learn more about legal deposit legislation in study units 8 and 9.

3.1.4 Technological factors and the electronic environment

The level of a country’s technological development is an environmental factor, which has an increasing amount of influence on the libraries in that country. At a basic level, the availability of electricity and telephones helps even the smallest library to function within the expectations of a modern community: There is adequate light for the users of the library, users can make photocopies when needed and interlibrary loans can be requested from other libraries by telephone.

At a more advanced level, computers linked via networks through telecommunications channels, such as the internet, enable libraries to put their users in contact with information anywhere in the world. Librarians should keep in touch with new technological advances and developments to enable their users to access whatever information they may need to cope with changes in their environment.

The rapid changes in information and telecommunications technologies present libraries with great challenges as well as many opportunities. The scope and speed of these developments make it possible for libraries to expand their services to suit users' needs in a meaningful way.

Briefly then, how does the new information technology influence the traditional library? Today, sources of information that could previously be consulted only in a library are available on computer, and via a computer network, to all users who have access to the network. Thus, from his or her office, home or library terminal, a user can seek and gain access to information.

Computerisation of the library influences not only the activities taking place there but also the sources of information themselves. As information becomes electronically stored, individuals can gain access to it independently. There is, however, such an abundance of information that access to information that is really relevant is steadily becoming more difficult. Librarians are the experts who mediate between users and this mass of electronically stored information. As information systems improve, the amount of information stored increases exponentially, and librarians and libraries are adapting to the use of the new technology and the provision of the information stored.

The development described above has given rise to expressions such as “libraries without walls”: libraries that allow the user unlimited access to all the information in the world. The term that more and more people are using for this is the “virtual library” (see study unit 9). An example of this is a system in which physical information media are no longer published and all information can be obtained from a distance. As this happens, information often no longer has a physical manifestation. However, there is usually a continued demand for information in printed form. The library as we know it – that is, the physical collection of printed and other material – will merely be a part of the library of the future. The kinds of media that make up the “electronic library” have already been identified in study unit 1.



EXERCISE 3.2

Summarise the environmental factors that have influenced libraries in the 20th and 21st centuries.

3.1.5 Physical factors

Physical aspects of the environment in which a library is situated influence it in many ways. When a library building is designed, the architects consider variables of climate, such as temperature and humidity, together with the requirements for keeping books and audiovisual material under the best possible

conditions. The wider environment, outside the library building, is also considered in order to create the best possible internal environment.

If the building is designed to make the best use of daylight, sunlight, prevailing winds and other climatic factors, it may be expensive to erect, but it may be much cheaper to maintain for the length of time that it will be used than if those factors are not considered. If the library has not been designed to make optimal use of the climatic factors mentioned above, books and records may be damaged, for instance, because they have been kept in stacks where the humidity is too high and the temperature too low, or on shelves that are exposed to direct sunlight.

A library building in a hot, humid environment, such as the library in Durban, should be designed in a different way from a library in a hot, very dry environment (e.g. in Windhoek) in order to keep the books, papers and photographic material in a condition that will prevent deterioration. Good ventilation, efficient air conditioning and sufficient lighting contribute to comfortable working conditions for staff and help to preserve collections.



EXERCISE 3.3

Write down the climatic variables that should be taken into account when designing a library close to where you live.

3.2 ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

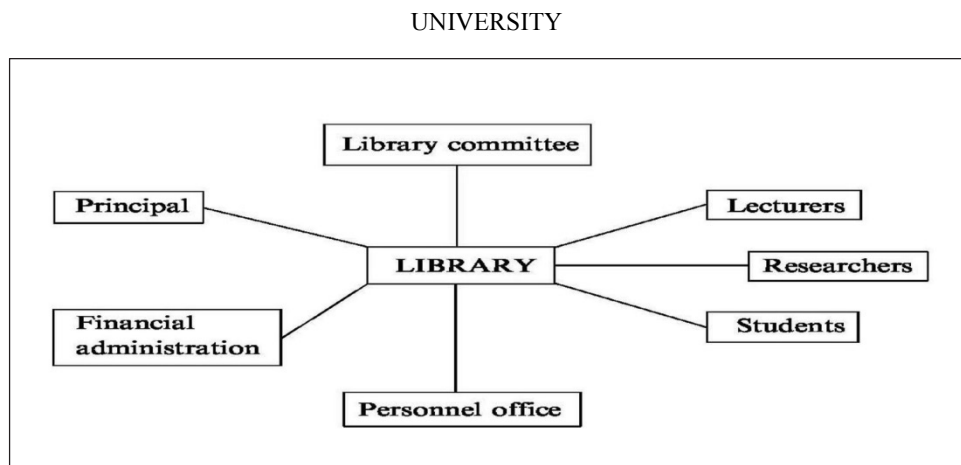
3.2.1 Parent body

A library is a subsystem of the organisation of which it forms a part. This organisation is called the parent body and all libraries are controlled and supported financially by their parent bodies. This may be the local municipality, such as the Polokwane City Council in the case of a public library; a university, such as the University of Port Elizabeth in the case of a university library; or an industrial firm, such as Eskom in the case of a special library. You will learn about different types of libraries later in this module.

The library responds to influences beyond its own immediate internal organisation. It forms relationships with the other components of the parent body as shown in figure 3.1. For example, a university library will form relationships with lecturers, students, research workers and administrators. These relationships help to preserve the system's inner dynamism, but the library should not become so enmeshed in the parent body that it loses its own identity.

FIGURE 3.1

The relationship between the library and other components of the parent body formed by the university



The relationship between a library and its parent body can be complicated. Consider the example of a university library. The university is the parent body: There are few other sections within a university that function so visibly and prominently as the library.

This becomes even more obvious when the university library collaborates with other libraries and institutions to form collaborative networks.

The parent body is usually proud of the library and the quality and status associated with it. In fact, the library is very often used when the university is the subject of some or other promotion. Yet, it is often the section within a university that is first to be considered in terms of savings, probably because the value of the service it offers is difficult to measure.



EXERCISE 3.4

Find out who is the parent or controlling body of the library you use.

3.2.2 Main and branch libraries

The term “branch” is used to refer to a component of a library system that is similar in most respects to the main component: There is a building, staff, a collection and services. There are two major types of branch libraries, namely branches that serve communities far from the main library and branches that cater for specialised groups of users.

A public (community) library establishes branch libraries in communities that are so far away from the main library that it is not easy for people in those communities to visit the main library to satisfy their library needs. A branch of a public library is likely to be a smaller version of the main library in that it will provide services for adults, children and senior citizens and have a separate reference collection. The collection in a suburban branch will be chosen to suit the needs of the community living in that area. The local branch of a public library in a suburb can be likened to the local branch of a bank.

A university library may establish branch libraries to serve particular faculties, such as the medical or architecture faculties, which may be situated on sites away from the main campus. The Unisa library, for instance, has several branches countrywide, which actively support the teaching, research and community service programmes of the University.

Some large public libraries also establish branches where the stock is specialised in one subject field. The City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services, for instance, has a separate Music Library. It also has a separate Local Government Library, which is a branch that serves the staff of the municipality with material related to their daily work.



EXERCISE 3.5

Distinguish between the two types of branch libraries. Classify all the examples mentioned above into one or other of the two subsections.

3.3 USERS OF LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES

As the primary concern of the library is the user or client, the library is regarded as offering a client-centred service. The users of a library are an important social element in the immediate environment of the library. Libraries are service organisations, in other words they are organisations that provide a service to society, rather than manufacturing goods, such as telephones or stoves. As service organisations, libraries have to meet the information needs of their users. Different user groups, each with their own needs, can be distinguished.

We now briefly examine an example of a large city library to illustrate the various user groups that may be served. The City of Johannesburg Library and Information Services serves a community made up of all the people who reside and work in Johannesburg. The main Reference Library provides reference and information services to individual users as well as businesses and industries. It also has a separate reference section for high school learners, the Young Adults Reference Library. It has specialised branches, such as the Michaelis Art

Library, the Music Library and the Local Government Library, with the last of these three serving municipal officials.

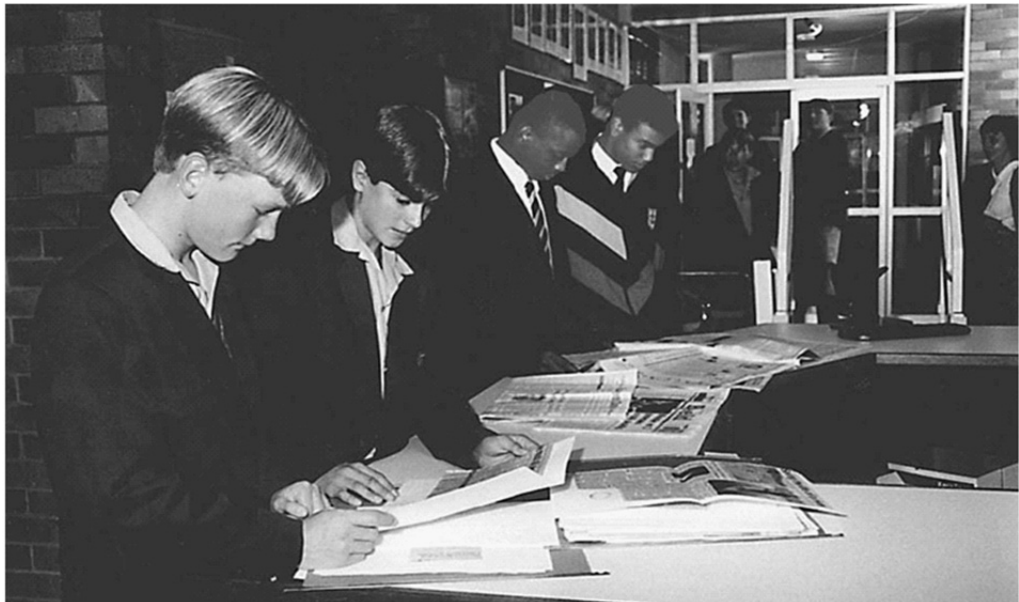
It also has branches in many suburbs that bring the library service closer to users. Each branch library serves a more limited community, which has needs that differ from the needs of library users in other suburbs. A branch in a community with many young married people will offer an extensive children's collection and present regular story hours for younger children. If many families in the neighbourhood have teenage children, the branch library may make special provision for them, such as setting aside an area for young people. If the composition of the community changes, the branch library adapts as far as possible. For example, if the number of unemployed youths in the community increases, the branch library adapts by developing a collection to support information needs related to formal and informal education, entrepreneurship and job skills.

3.4 THE ROLE OF THE LIBRARY IN SOCIETY

Society is a sociological concept that encompasses a number of communities. It can be delimited geographically or on the basis of elements such as development; and we can refer to developing or developed societies.

FIGURE 3.2

Children and young people – very important user groups in libraries



3.4.1 The library as an institution

In study unit 2 you learned that the library, as the institution known today, did not arise until the mid-19th century, when public libraries became a common

phenomenon and the general public began to view them, like hospitals, schools and prisons, as among the generally accepted public institutions in developed countries.

When one speaks of an “institution”, one attaches a specific connotation or permanence to the term. This applies to both the organisation and the physical space or building wherein it exists. Libraries are essential components of the structure of any developed country because they support literacy and training. This is especially true of public and national libraries, which are financed by the government of a country or a local authority and exist as institutions in their own right.

There are also many libraries at large institutions like universities, scientific institutions, professional bodies or businesses. The degree of independence of these libraries usually varies. Some libraries and information services attached to industries frequently have no independent right of existence and are totally dependent on the rapid development and change of the parent body.



EXERCISE 3.6

Think of the role of libraries in your vicinity and of the people’s perceptions of libraries. Would you say that they are important social institutions in your area?

3.4.2 The library as a service organisation

Libraries are traditionally seen as institutions that provide a service to the group of people that the library was established to serve – a service in the sense that a collection of sources or books is offered to the community for use, with a catalogue as a key to the collection and a group of people who act as mediators between the collection and the users. In general, one could say that librarians are people who are keen to be of service to the community.

This attitude towards providing a service is perhaps not as direct as with social workers, nor does it necessarily take place face to face with the users. Yet this “service” connotation entails much more than providing support to users who require help with the catalogue or among the shelves, or with the borrowing of books. For the past few decades, there has been far greater emphasis on assistance to users. This may be ascribed to the fact that there is a general trend towards improved service and a striving towards consumer satisfaction in the developing world – something brought about by businesses in competition with one another. Public libraries compete for funds with other public services such as sport and recreation, and academic libraries compete with other university departments. Up to now the competition has been aimed chiefly at users: the

more users, the more funds the parent body is supposed to let them have. This does not necessarily happen in practice, however. In South Africa, public libraries are showing a constant increase in user numbers, and funding may not always be augmented.



EXERCISE 3.7

Think again on the question asked in the previous exercise. How do you, as a consumer, feel about the service attitude you have encountered at libraries in your vicinity?

Cross out the inappropriate words and give reasons for your opinion.

The service at my local public or community library is good/bad/could be better, because ...

3.4.3 Survival of the library and service ethic

As a result of the costs of the new technology and its influence on information services, some have postulated that the library, as an institution, is becoming a thing of the past. It would seem, though, that the use of terms such as “information experts” and “information managers” springs from a particular notion that the concepts “library” and “librarian” are obsolete.

The essence of the concept “librarian” is deeply embedded in the way we think about the world and approach specific problems. The primary role of the library as custodian of the social memory of humankind has many parallels with the way in which human memory arranges, stores and retrieves the information that is essential for its survival. The new technology has not altered this. Information technology has brought tremendous progress, but this does not make the term “library” superfluous. It is particularly interesting that the term is still used to indicate institutions created by information technology; we need only think of the terms “virtual library” and “electronic library”.

In the past, progress in communications technology frequently brought about a change in the physical media communicating information and the way in which information was collected and stored. Every change in media design and form has challenged the library to rethink its own design and layout and has produced

new problems. Just as clay tablets and papyrus scrolls required different ways of being stored and retrieved compared to the later codices, so each new mass medium that became popular was seen as a potential threat to the traditional library. Yet the library continues to survive – each new development has given rise to a new type of library such as a film library, a newspaper library and an audiovisual library.

Various authors on the future of librarianship have indicated that, if libraries and librarianship wish to survive as special institutions and as a profession, they will have to re-examine the importance of library service. This will have to be the guideline for planning the library services of the future and deciding what services should be rendered. Ethical values such as intellectual freedom, equality of access, privacy of individual users and user records, professional neutrality, preservation of cultural records, fair use of information (bearing copyright in mind), and users' right to a safe environment will have to be considered.

The abovementioned values may vary, and sometimes there is even controversy about which values to subscribe to. Librarians do not function in a vacuum but, as we have seen, in a specific environment. Despite the fact that free access to information is one of the generally accepted values, many libraries charge for membership and services such as copies and electronic searches. It is important to provide equal access to information to all, irrespective of their financial status. Intellectual freedom must be respected.

The development of information technology is changing many aspects of access to information. Atkinson (1996:239) warns that in our rush to adapt to the new technology, we should not forget to consider what a library actually is: The primary task of libraries remains to ensure that the basic services offered in a traditional library environment must be effectively transferred to a new environment.

3.5 DIFFERENT TYPES OF LIBRARIES

Different types of libraries have developed over a period of time to meet the needs of various groups or parts of a community.

3.6 MISSION OF A LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

A vision may be regarded as the idealistic image towards which an organisation strives. It represents the ideal situation, whereas the mission of an organisation is its broad aim or purpose, which serves as the basis for its long-term, medium-term and short-term planning. The mission is what the community perceives to be the primary aim of the organisation. For the purposes of this course, the mission of libraries in general may be regarded as “the organisation of recorded information for the benefit of humankind”.

Since libraries operate within the sphere of their parent bodies, the mission of each individual library will be influenced by the mission of its particular parent body. A university may state, for instance, that its mission is “to further knowledge through research and to transmit that knowledge to students through teaching programmes”.

The library of that university may then formulate its mission as follows: “The university library supports the mission of the university by striving to obtain the relevant information resources for research and teaching and to train students to be independent users of the library.”



EXERCISE 3.8

As a student of AIS1501, formulate your own mission for the academic year. Remember what has been said above about a mission.

3.7 AIMS OF A LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

An aim may be defined as a broad proposition that a group, an organisation or an individual strives to reach. An aim usually arises from a mission. An aim is vague and imprecise, although it is more concrete than a mission, and it is formulated with a long-term view (usually three to five years) in mind. Other terms often equated with “aim” are “goal” and “purpose”.

In the literature, you may find that “objective” is used in the sense of “aim”. However, we prefer to use “objective” to express something that can be measured. An objective is a more concrete and more readily quantifiable statement of what an individual or organisation wants to achieve. Objectives are set in order to realise aims, so they must be attainable. Some sources refer to “roles” or “functions” when in fact they mean “aims”.



EXERCISE 3.9

With the mission you have formulated for yourself in mind, formulate aims with which to achieve it.

When you study the different kinds of libraries, you will see that aims differ from one kind of library to another. You will also find that the aims are connected with the needs of the users of a specific kind of library. If a library does not meet the needs of its users, there is a danger that people will not use it.

We distinguish between the following broad aims of libraries:

- education
- the provision of information

- recreation
- preservation
- encouragement of aesthetic appreciation
- promotion of culture and art appreciation

The main aims of libraries in general are education and the provision of information. Yet each kind of library emphasises different aims, as can be seen from figure 3.3. For a school library, for instance, education is the main aim, while for a special library the provision of information is the main aim.

FIGURE 3.3

Main aims of various types of library

Types of libraries in society					
	A	B	C	D	E
Public library	5	5	3	4	5
School library	5	5	1	2	2
Academic library	5	5	5	4	1
Special library	5	3	5	5	1
National library	5	3	5	5	1

KEY

A Information
 B Education
 C Research
 D Preservation and transmission of culture
 E Recreation, entertainment and leisure

Functions of libraries in society on a given rating of one to five

Note 1

5 means very high
 4 means high
 3 means medium
 2 means low
 1 means very low

Note 2

These roles and functions could vary from society to society depending on the nature of the problems to be solved in each society and the emphasis given to each library at a particular point in time.

Preservation is an important aim of a national library.

Recreation, the encouragement of aesthetic appreciation and the promotion of culture and art appreciation are aims pursued mainly by public libraries, but even these aims will be secondary to education and the provision of information.



EXERCISE 3.10

Arrange the different aims of libraries, mentioned in this section, in order of importance as you see them.

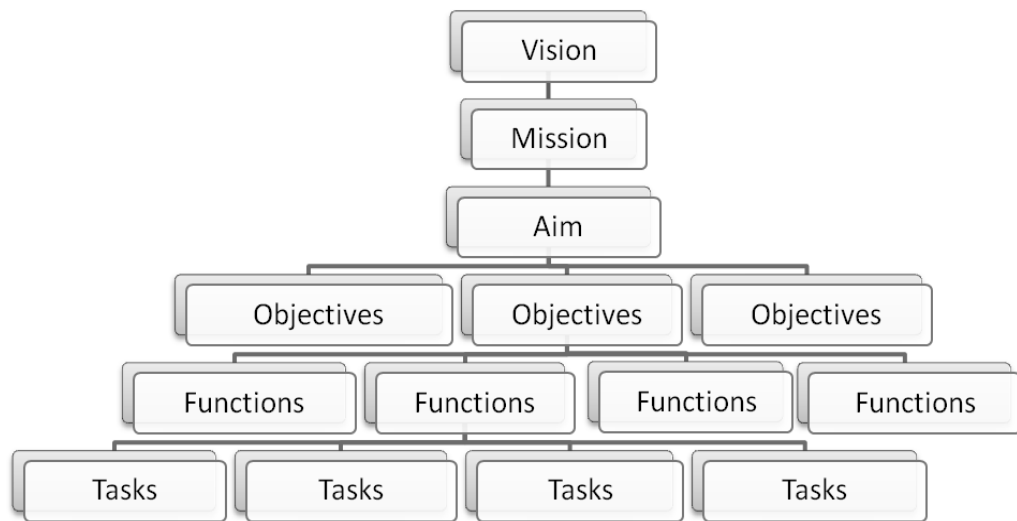
- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____
- (5) _____
- (6) _____

3.8 FUNCTIONS OF A LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE

Functions are the actions undertaken in order to achieve objectives. Functions are even more concrete than objectives and are very specific. Each function is further subdivided into tasks, which are the smallest units of action. The determination of vision, mission, aims, objectives, functions and tasks is done according to a hierarchical arrangement. We illustrate this graphically in figure 3.4.

FIGURE 3.4

Hierarchy of the mission, aim and functions in an organisation



The functions mentioned below are fulfilled to a greater or lesser extent in all kinds of libraries:

- collection development and collection management
- information organisation and retrieval (making information accessible)
- physical preparation and lending (making information available)
- user guidance and user services management

Library and information service functions can be categorised as:

- preparation functions (collection development and collection management, information organisation and retrieval, physical preparation of items for use)
- service rendering or user guidance functions (information provision, user education, user advice and bibliotherapy)
- management functions

These functions will be explained in broad terms. Other details of functions may become clear to you only once you are working in a library.



EXERCISE 3.11

In the table provided below, fill in the particular library functions in each broad category.

Library and information service functions

Preparations functions	Service functions	Management functions

3.9 COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Collection development refers to the addition of records to the existing stock of the library. It is the process of making certain that the information needs of people using the collection are met in a timely and economic manner by seeking out information resources held both inside and outside the organisation (Evans 2000:16–17).

Collection development comprises six elements, namely community analysis (needs assessment), collection development policy (including goals, objectives),

selection, acquisition, weeding and collection evaluation (including stock taking or inventory). Collection management is a broader concept than collection development. It involves several other functions, including the housing, preservation and storage of stock. It emphasises the systematic maintenance and management of a library's existing collections.

3.9.1 Community analysis and collection development policies

The term “community” includes everyone living within the community and not just active users. Thus, a community might be an entire political unit (region, state, province, city or town) or a more specialised grouping of people (university, college, government agency, school, parent company, business or institution). Different types of library therefore have different definitions of the word “community”. Community analysis is aimed at identifying various user and non-user groups and determining their characteristics, circumstances and needs.

The written collection development policy is a communication and planning tool. It provides a broad overview of users' needs and is based on the goals of the parent body and the information gathered from the community needs analysis. It specifies which areas of the collection must receive priority, even if funds are inadequate, and indicates those areas that should receive attention when funds improve. It communicates the current state and future direction of the collection to users, staff and administrative personnel.

3.9.2 Selection

Selection is the function of deciding what materials to add to the collection. It also involves identifying possible titles from published lists and evaluating the intrinsic merits of individual titles based on specific criteria. The selection of material demands knowledge and experience on the part of the library staff who carry out this process. The responsible persons are usually professional librarians who know the library's collection development policy, the users' needs and the library's existing collection. The users of a library may be involved to a certain extent in the selection of material if they are asked for their suggestions on purchases of material.

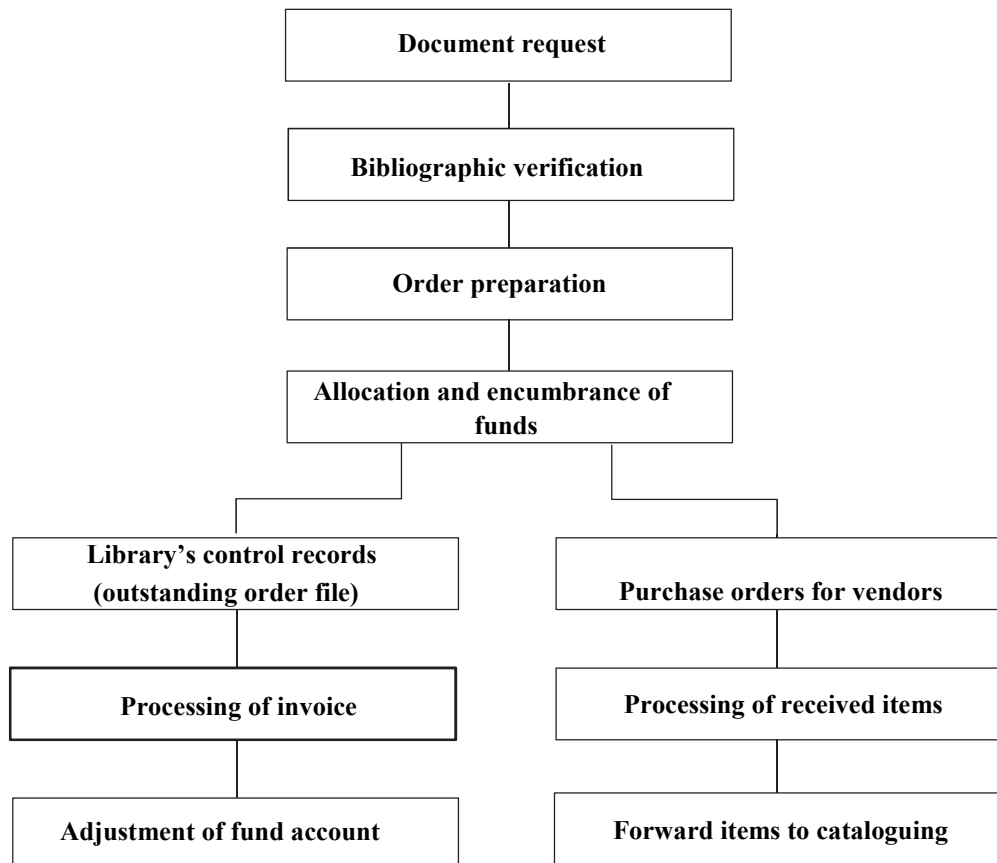
3.9.3 Acquisition

The acquisitions function implements the selection decision. Once an item has been selected, it has to be ordered from a bookstore or other supplier. Several tasks make up the acquisition process in a library as shown in figure 3.5. Acquisition includes ordering, receiving and noting the receipt of new materials as follows:

When the ordered item arrives in the library, the library staff check it against the invoice and order records to ensure that they have received the correct item. The item is given a unique identifying number, the accession number. If two copies of the same book are added to the collection, each copy gets a different accession number, which is recorded in each book and in an accessions register. If the received item is correct, the accompanying invoice from the supplier is submitted for payment and the account is paid accordingly.

FIGURE 3.5

The acquisition process



3.9.4 Preservation, conservation and maintenance

Preservation and conservation entail the protection of records against possible destruction and deterioration. To preserve the collection, we must also maintain the collection, in other words keep the various items in good physical condition.

3.9.4.1 Preventative measures

Factors such as the temperature and humidity of the air and the presence of pests, such as insects, need to be taken into consideration. For instance, efficient air conditioning is one of the best preventative measures where humidity is high, while pests can be controlled with fumigation, sufficient circulation of fresh air and brightly lit storage areas. Correct storage and handling of items will also prevent damage.

3.9.4.2 Maintenance

Maintenance may involve repair, restoration or binding. Restoration describes the repair of records to a condition as close as possible to their original form. Restoration is the work of highly trained specialists. The bindings of old or antique books may be valuable and may even be considered works of art. Experts must be consulted before a decision is made about rebinding such books. Only minor repairs are done by library staff.

Library staff should periodically check material to see whether it needs to be repaired. They can do this when books and other items are returned and before they are re-shelved. Books with torn or loose pages, broken spines or worn covers, and damaged journals should be sent for repair before they are returned to the shelves. Minor repairs should be done in such a way that later restoration is not impaired. It may be necessary to rebind badly worn books. Binding is often done by firms outside the library, or larger libraries may employ qualified binders to do the work. The main purpose of rebinding a book or journal is to extend its life because it may be needed in future.



EXERCISE 3.12

In the space provided, make a list of five tasks that form part of the acquisition process in libraries.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

3.9.4.3 Conversion to other formats

If the entire record cannot be preserved, the librarian will have to decide whether conversion to other record forms should be considered. “Conversion” refers to the transfer of information to a different format such as photocopy, microform or digital formats. Brittle books can be scanned to convert them into digital images. From these digital images, various output formats can be produced.

3.9.5 Weeding and collection evaluation

The stock of a library needs to be evaluated periodically, and stock that is of no further use to the particular library and is not worth preserving should be disposed of. This is essential as libraries have limited space, and material therefore has to be constantly deselected (selected to be discarded) or weeded.

When an item is disposed of, all records for that particular item are withdrawn from the catalogue and accessions register, and the item itself is marked to indicate that it is no longer part of the library stock.

Collection evaluation involves systematic stock revision (inventory). The librarian examines the library’s holdings in each subject area, weeds out useless items, studies the usage pattern of existing stock, identifies the most important works across the subject range and then selects and orders new stock. Stock revision ensures that funds are spent in the most cost-effective manner possible and that the number of titles selected in different subject fields relates to demand.

3.10 INFORMATION ORGANISATION AND RETRIEVAL

It is not enough simply to collect library material and put it on the shelves for people to use. Users must be able to find individual items they need. Making information accessible means preparing the records in the library so that users and library staff can find (gain access to) items they want. Two main processes are required to make library records accessible, namely classification and cataloguing. These processes are part of the function of information organisation and retrieval. When the users or the library staff search for an item and find it, retrieval takes place.

Library catalogues were developed in conjunction with classification schemes to help make library collections accessible to users. The catalogue is the key that unlocks the stock of the library. Catalogues and other retrieval aids such as bibliographies, abstracts and indexes provide control over information sources and enable us to find relevant sources. We call this bibliographic control. When we deal with the functions of national libraries, you will learn more about bibliographic control.

3.10.1 Classification

Material in a library must be arranged in some kind of order to make it accessible. This is generally done according to the subject content of the material. In this way, all material on a specific subject, for instance education, is brought together in one place. Classification is the process by which items in a library are sorted according to their likeness or unlikeness: Items with similar subject content are usually placed close together, whereas items with dissimilar content are placed further apart.

Libraries use a few well-developed classification schemes to arrange the material in their collections. The classification scheme used most frequently, especially in public libraries, is the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) scheme.

Classification in libraries has several advantages. Each item in a library's collection is marked with its classification number. This number makes it possible to arrange library material in a useful order on shelves, so that users can find individual items in the order of the classification system. However, there is a disadvantage: each item can be placed on the shelf in only one position. If an item deals with more than one subject, the classifier has to choose to place the item with one subject and then provide for the other subject or subjects through entries in the catalogue.

3.10.2 Cataloguing

The arrangement of documents on shelves is only part of the organisation and retrieval system. When browsing through material as it is arranged on the shelves, the user can see only the documents that are on the shelves at that moment. The user has no indication that the library possesses other similar material that may either have been borrowed by other users, be in the process of repair, or be placed under a different classification number. For this reason, there is a need for a tool to provide the user with information on all the documents held by the library and their location. A catalogue is this tool.

The catalogue contains descriptions of each item in the stock of the library.

The main catalogue entry for an item consists of five parts:

1. heading (usually the author's surname)
2. title
3. imprint (place of publication, name of publisher and date of publication)
4. collation (page numbers, illustrations and so on)
5. notes (if relevant)

The catalogue makes it possible to retrieve information by looking up any of the common search elements, such as names of authors, titles, subjects or keywords.

There may be several entries in the catalogue for a single record, whereas the record itself can be in only one place on the shelf.

The description of items in the catalogue is carried out according to a set of rules known as the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR). The process of describing library materials and building a library catalogue is known as “cataloguing”.

Before the advent of computerised cataloguing, the most common physical form in which library catalogues occurred was the card catalogue, which contained individual entries on cards measuring 125 mm x 675 mm (5 inches x 3 inches). Card catalogues are still in use today although most libraries have now adopted computerised catalogues.

The computerised online public access catalogue (OPAC) has largely replaced the card catalogue. The catalogue in Unisa’s library is an OPAC. OPACs have great advantages over the card catalogue. They can tell you if the item is out on loan and, if so, when it is due to return. The biggest benefit of the computerised catalogue, however, is that it enables the user to use a wider range of keywords to search for an item. This means that the correct choice of heading for an item by the cataloguer is less crucial than in the case of the card catalogue.



EXERCISE 3.13

Visit any library. Ascertain the following:

- (a) What classification system does it use?
- (b) What information about each book – for example, author, title and so on – is recorded in the catalogue?
- (c) Is the catalogue a card catalogue or a computerised catalogue?

3.11 PHYSICAL PREPARATION AND LENDING

When we say we “make items in the library available”, it means that we present them to people who may want to use them. Once an item has been classified and catalogued, it needs some physical preparation before it is ready for use. When the physical preparation has been carried out, the material can be issued to borrowers or used in information provision in the library.

3.11.1 Physical preparation

The preparation required for each item depends on various factors, such as the following:

- The kind of use expected: Will it be for reference use only, or will it be lent out?

- The amount of use expected: Will it be used heavily, or relatively infrequently?
- The form of the document: Is it a compact disc, a video, a book or a periodical?

Depending on the type of issue system, ownership labels and date stamp sheets, it is necessary to insert bar code labels or pockets for issue cards in every item. Various methods are available for marking location symbols (call numbers) on the spines of books and pamphlets and videotape boxes. The call number usually consists of the classification number and the first three or four letters of the author's name or the title of the item. Non-book material such as slides, films or tapes usually have some type of protective holder or container. If it is likely that a book will be used a lot, it may be put in a plastic jacket to protect the cover.

Some suppliers of library materials provide services such as insertion of labels, pockets, cards and plastic jacketing of books, but most libraries perform these tasks themselves. In the Unisa library, for instance, items that belong in the study collection receive yellow spine labels and yellow date stamp sheets to distinguish them from the items with white labels, which belong in the general collection. This helps the library staff when they have to sort returned material for these two major collections.

Certain material is kept for use on the library's premises for reference purposes and is never taken out of the building. Examples are encyclopaedias, which contain information on a wide variety of subjects, and dictionaries, which contain information that is read in short spurts rather than for an extended period of time. Reference material is marked clearly as such (REF in the Unisa library) and is usually kept separate from material that can be borrowed.

There should be clear signs and guidance in the library to lead users to the place in the collection where the catalogue shows that an item is shelved or filed. In addition, entries in the catalogue must be kept up to date and amended if the location of any item is changed.

3.11.2 Lending procedure

The aim of the lending procedure is to enable users to borrow library material for use outside the library. Every library has a system for recording items that it lends to its users.

In the subject literature this lending system is sometimes called an "issue system", a "circulation system" or a "charging system".

3.11.2.1 Purpose of the lending system

A good lending system should fulfil the following purposes:

- enable the library staff to establish which user has borrowed which item and show which items are held by a specific user
- show when the items are due for return, and which items are overdue
- enable the borrower to renew issued items without having to return the item to the library in person
- enable users to reserve items that are not immediately available
- make provision for the collection of various types of statistics from the issue system, for example statistics on the number of books in different languages that were borrowed

3.11.2.2 Types of issue systems

Two issue systems are in general use today: the manual Browne issue system and computerised issuing. We give you a brief description of these systems. These are not the only issue systems used, but many libraries use them.

(a) Browne system

The user receives an issue pocket for each item he or she may borrow. When the user wants to borrow library material, he or she gives a pocket to the library assistant at the issue desk for each item. The library assistant removes a card from the book or other item to be borrowed and places the card in the borrower's issue pocket. The library assistant stamps the due date on the date stamp sheet inside the book, so that the borrower can see when the book must be returned. The issue pockets with the book cards are then filed at the issue desk. When the item is returned to the library, the borrower has to wait while the library assistant finds the relevant issue record. The user's issue pocket is given back to him or her as a receipt, and the library assistant returns the book card to the book.

(b) Computerised lending system

Each item in the library's collection receives a bar code label that represents the accession number. Each borrower gets a borrower's card (usually made of plastic), also carrying an individual bar code. To issue an item, the library assistant passes an electronic "light pen" or other sensing implement over the user's bar code and the book's bar code to read the numbers into the computer system's memory. The library assistant stamps the due date on the date stamp sheet, as in the Browne system.

When a user returns an item to the library, the bar code is again read (scanned) into the system to cancel the issue record. The system automatically checks the accession numbers of reserved books against return transactions, so that the library assistant can set aside reserved books and not return them to the shelves.

The computer makes a noise (beep) to indicate that the loan transaction has been cancelled.

This is the system used in the Unisa libraries. At Unisa, the borrower can also get a printed receipt to show that a specific item has been returned to the library.



EXERCISE 3.14

List five things a lending system ought to provide.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

3.11.3 Document delivery and document access

If certain items are not available from its own stock, a library can obtain records requested by its users from another specified library. This process is called inter-lending or interlibrary lending (ILL). The requested material may be forwarded as a temporary loan or a photocopy, or a scanned photocopy may be supplied or transmitted instead. This is an important method of making information sources available to users as no library, irrespective of its size, can provide everything its users require. It is a means of resource sharing or library cooperation that will be dealt with in more detail in study unit 9.

The term “document delivery” is used to refer to a transaction involving the retention rather than the return of documents by the requesting library or user. The term “interlibrary loan” is used when items borrowed have to be returned to other libraries. The term “document access” indicates documents accessed from the worldwWide web, because they are not delivered in the same way as a photocopy of an article that is delivered by a document supplier.

3.12 USER SERVICES AND USER GUIDANCE FUNCTIONS

User guidance is directed towards implementing effective communication between the record and the user; it therefore amounts to the active provision of a service. The terms “service rendering” and “user services” denote functions that

can be classified as personal services directed at the needs and interests of specific individuals and groups. Service rendering consists of actions specifically intended to benefit or assist users. Active service rendering entails functions containing elements of guidance, and can thus be equated with user guidance. The functions falling under service rendering can therefore also be called user guidance functions. User guidance is therefore an overarching concept featuring in a number of service functions.

Guidance may be direct, or “face to face”, or it may take place indirectly by means of:

- providing information and reference works
- instructing and training users in techniques of information and library use
- providing advice, which implies guidance in respect of choices of material and is directed towards encouraging and stimulating users to use the library
- assisting users to gain greater insight into their personal problems through a specialised form of guidance known as bibliotherapy

3.12.1 Information provision

This includes information retrieval, information reference services, reference work and information transfer. Information provision is aimed at conveying information to the user by means of selection, evaluation and interpretation.

In addition to lending library material, libraries make provision for the use of information on the premises. Some items in a library’s collection are designed to be used when searching for information. Bibliographies, indexes and abstract journals are some of the items that guide users to the publications that contain the information they require. Encyclopaedias are usually too large to be taken home and dictionaries are used mainly to look up short bits of information. These publications are examples of library material used to provide information.

The ideal is that library users should get to know the library and its resources well enough to carry out searches for information on their own. However, the staff should be able and willing to help users find required information.

3.12.2 User education and information skills instruction

Instruction in library use is intended to enable users to make use of the various services, sources and facilities in the library. Bibliographic instruction is concerned with training the user in information retrieval techniques. The user will, for instance, be taught how to use the catalogue. Many library catalogues are computerised nowadays. As already mentioned under 3.10.2, a computerised library catalogue is called an online public access catalogue (OPAC). Users must be trained before they can use this catalogue.

3.12.3 User advice

User advice is the advice and guidance the librarian provides to users in order to satisfy their reading and information needs and interests. This implies that the librarian has to be well-acquainted with the library stock. User advice includes reading and user motivation.

3.12.4 Bibliotherapy

Reading guidance in the context of bibliotherapy is aimed at bringing about certain changes in the emotions and thoughts of the user. Reading matter or other media are therefore used to achieve a certain therapeutic goal. This form of guidance can be given to patients in medical institutions and can also be utilised in the public, school or hospital library.

3.13 MANAGEMENT

3.13.1 Definition

Management may be seen as a problemsolving process according to which the aims of the organisation or enterprise may be achieved through the competent utilisation of scarce resources in a steadily changing environment.

Five key aspects are integrated in this definition:

1. management as a problem-solving process
2. the achievement of organisational aims
3. balancing effectiveness (doing the right thing) and efficiency (doing things the right way)
4. the fact that resources are scarce everywhere
5. the relationship of the organisation with the continuously changing environment

The management of information agencies makes it possible for the information professional to offer users a professional service within the framework of a well-structured organisation.

Management functions bind the preparation and service rendering functions together and include the following:

- planning
- organisation
- staffing
- directing
- control
- financing

- marketing
- research

We will discuss some of these functions briefly.

3.13.2 Organisation

You have already learnt that the library manager usually has to answer to a parent body such as a municipality for the way in which the library performs. Final responsibility for the library service lies with the management of the parent body. Management usually delegates its responsibilities to a library committee. The chairperson of this committee operates as the intermediary between the parent body and the library service. The library manager reports regularly to the committee on matters including finance, staff and expansion. The committee also offers the library manager the opportunity to bring the needs and potential activities of the library service to the attention of the parent body.

Note that we deliberately use the term “management” rather than “administration” because management indicates involvement with the entire organisation, including that organisation’s environmental context. Management is a future-oriented, proactive leadership process directed towards users and the environment.

3.13.3 Financing

Finance plays a decisive role in management and the development of the library service. The extent and quality of the service provided by the library is closely connected to the availability of funds. Funds determine the provision of buildings, staff and the purchase of library material and must therefore be spent wisely.

3.13.4 Marketing

The function of marketing a library has two main aspects: assessing the needs of the community to be served, and publicising the services of the library to the community. The concepts “community” and “community needs assessment” have already been explained. Community needs assessment will be illustrated in terms of the public library in study unit 4.

Publicising the services of the library to stimulate use entails making users and non-users aware of the services being offered by the library. Notices in the library must be clear and may be made professionally. The library can hold exhibitions on a regular basis and put accession lists and the dust jackets of new books on bulletin boards to bring them to the attention of users.

To improve the relationship between the library and its users, staff may publish and distribute a library bulletin. Public libraries should use the press and local radio. For instance, the Tshwane Community Library and Information Services publicises its holiday programmes for children in the local newspapers.

The staff of a school library may organise a book fair, where local booksellers can exhibit. They can then invite parents to view the books and buy copies for themselves or for the media centre. These activities help to make people aware of the facilities and services libraries offer.

Library staff must always be conscious of the image that they and their library have in the community. The attitude of library workers, both librarians and assistants, is of cardinal importance in projecting a positive image. A strongly service-oriented approach may be the best publicity strategy for the library to adopt. The librarian or library assistant who serves a user can project a negative or a positive attitude by body language, facial expression and tone of voice.

3.14 SUMMARY

Libraries flourish when there is a specific combination of social, political and economic conditions.

Just like other institutions, the library has had to change, whether influenced by economic, political or technological factors. Developing technology is now causing more rapid change. In the past, libraries have withstood many onslaughts and survived as institutions. They are embracing change and changing technologies (see study unit 9).

As you have probably noticed, we have discussed libraries in general. In this study unit, we covered such topics as the environment in which the library functions and how the environment influences the functioning and existence of libraries. Also, we have indicated the relationship between libraries and their parent bodies. Other aspects relating to the library in general have included the role a library can play, the library as a service organisation and as an institution, and how information technology affects libraries.

In this study unit, we also studied the mission, aims and functions of libraries in general and used examples from different kinds of libraries. In the following study units, we will take a more in-depth look at specific kinds of libraries, concentrating on the way in which each kind of library differs from the general picture and from other kinds of libraries. This applies to certain functions carried out in a manner that differs noticeably in different types of libraries.

3.15 SELF-ASSESSMENT

(1) Test yourself to see whether you are able to

- discuss the environmental factors that can influence the existence and functioning of libraries
- define the concept “parent body”
- clarify the term “branch library”
- explain what influence users can have on a library and how libraries try to meet their needs by means of branch libraries
- discuss the role of the library in society
- discuss the library as an institution and service organisation
- explain the meaning of a “mission” and describe the mission of a library
- discuss the aims of libraries
- discuss the functions of libraries
- explain why a library ought to do a survey of its community
- clarify the concepts “collection development” and “collection development policy”
- discuss the two processes involved in making information accessible
- explain the purpose of a catalogue
- give a brief explanation of what classification means explain why a library needs a lending procedure
- describe the kind of information that a lending system should provide
- explain what is meant by the conservation of library material
- define the concept “management”
- describe the ways in which a library can publicise its services

(2) The following is an example of an essay-type question:

Explain the influence of information technology on the survival of the library as an institution.

SOURCES

Arts and Culture Task Group. Library and Information Services Subcommittee (1995); Atkinson (1996); Beenham & Harrison (1990); Behrens (2000); Behrens, Olen & Machet (1999); Birmingham & Lenox (1995); Cassell & Futas (1991); Chernik (1992); Chirgwin (1993); Evans (2000); Harrod’s librarians’ glossary (2000); Jefferson (1969); Jenkins & Morley (1999); Lundu (1995); McGarry (in *International encyclopedia of information and library science* 1997); Moran (1996); Totterdell & Harrison (1998)

STUDY UNIT 4

Public (Community) and School Libraries

ORIENTATION

The aim of this and the following study units is to introduce you to various types of libraries. The first one we deal with is the public (community) library, which is perhaps the best known. We show how it differs from other information agencies, consider its general aims and identify the groups of people who use public libraries. We also discuss potential users, user needs and some of the services provided by public libraries to meet their users' needs. Finally, public libraries are described in the South African context to alert you to some of the problems they face today.

We then move on to discuss school libraries with reference to their aims, functions and users, as well as their connection with education. We consider an ideal school library system. For many reasons, including social and economic circumstances, this system cannot be implemented everywhere. It is particularly difficult to apply to developing countries as it is.

South Africa's outcomes-based education system is based on specific principles that make the existence and use of school libraries indispensable. Yet, strange as it may seem, the provision of school libraries is frequently not a priority. In the final section on school libraries, we return to the situation in South Africa for a discussion of some alternative models of school library services.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this study unit, you should be able to:

- define the term “public library” (“community library”)
- discuss the aims of public libraries
- give an account of public library users and their needs discuss the services rendered by public libraries
- discuss some of the problems facing public libraries in South Africa
- describe school libraries and their users
- explain the aims and functions of school libraries
- indicate their importance within the framework of education
- discuss some models of school libraries and school library services, and form an opinion of their suitability for developed and developing communities

KEY CONCEPTS

**information skills instruction
models
libraries**

**learner assistants library
public libraries school
teacher-librarians**

4.1 PUBLIC LIBRARIES

4.1.1 Definition of terms

The public library is one of the main types of library. It is the library for the general public – for the community in which it is situated. For this reason, it is also called the “community library”. Since “public library” is the term that is in general use throughout the world, we shall also keep to it.

Consider the following definitions of the term “library”. Then compare them with the definitions of the term in study unit 2. You should understand the exceptional characteristics which distinguish public libraries from other types of library.

In the report by the Arts and Culture Task Group presented to the Minister of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology in 1995, a public and community library is described as follows:

It is a community-based agency, supported wholly or partly from public funds, that provides for the educational, informational, recreational and cultural needs of the community. Any member of the public is entitled to use it, and its basic services are normally rendered free of charge (Arts and Culture Task Group 1995:6).

The *International encyclopaedia of information and library science* defines the term “public libraries” as follows:

[Public libraries are] libraries that are provided through public funding for public use and the public good. Public libraries make use of materials in printed, audiovisual and electronic formats in order to collect, preserve, organize, retrieve, disseminate and communicate information, ideas, and the creative product of the human imagination. (Usherwood 1997:380)

Harrod’s librarians’ glossary (2000:598) offers the following definition:

A [public and community library is a] library provided wholly or partly from public funds, and the use of which is not restricted to any class of persons in the community but is freely available to all. A major agency of

enlightenment for adults, providing also for children the recorded experiences of others which will help them to grow into adulthood.

The main common elements of these definitions are that the public and community library should be financed by public funds and that it should be available to everybody free of charge.

This is a principle debated later. Form your own opinion on this issue.



EXERCISE 4.1

Write down your own brief definitions of the term “public and community library”.

4.1.2 Aims of the public and community library

The following is a broad outline of the general aims of the public library as formulated by IFLA and issued as the UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1995). In this manifesto, the aims of public libraries are identified as the following:

- to contribute to lifelong universal education
- to facilitate appreciation for the achievements of humanity and culture
- to be the principal means whereby the record of man’s thoughts and ideas, and the expression of his creative imagination, are made freely available to all
- to freshen the human spirit through the provision of books and other media for relaxation and pleasure
- to assist students
- to provide up-to-date technical, scientific and sociological information

These aims do not cover the full variety of purposes and activities with which the public library can associate itself, but they do lay down certain basic requirements that should be met. There are also other formulations of the aims of public libraries. Some authors regard the provision of information as the primary aim of the public and community library, whereas others put education first.

The aim of a public library is to provide information sources and services to the community and, in so doing, meet the educational, information, cultural and recreation needs of the community. These services and sources should be

equally available to all members of the community. Public libraries provide “services” and are not there only to make books and other sources available.

The public library should meet the needs of the community in which it is established. The need for access to books, information and all types of published material has increased over the years with the growth of education and learning. The public library has traditionally been at the forefront of those institutions that respond to the demand for increased access to information.

For more than 200 years the public library has developed new aims and reassessed its aims in order to meet a constantly changing pattern of demands. This indicates changes which have been taking place throughout the world since the 1960s, the increasing demand for information and education as well as technological changes in the production and distribution of information have resulted in the need to revisit the aims of public libraries. Public libraries have, to a large extent, succeeded in adapting to changing circumstances and user needs in such a way that they are still just as relevant as they were at the beginning of the 20th century.

If the library cannot satisfy the needs of the community concerned, it can expect little support from that community. The particular aims of any public library should be formulated to suit the needs (both expressed and unexpressed) of the community which it serves. As it is supported by public funds, unless it actively seeks to meet its users’ needs, it may have problems obtaining the necessary finance and support.

Public libraries have a role to play in development, particularly in the field of education. Therefore, both education and the encouragement of literacy may be included under development as a broad aim.

FIGURE 4.1

The interior of the main branch of the Tshwane (Pretoria) community library



4.1.3 Users of the public and community library

Since the services of a public library are theoretically available to everyone living in the area, users may consist of:

- children and adolescents
- adults and senior citizens
- those who are physically disabled
- the disadvantaged, such as adult new readers and prisoners

4.1.4 Needs of public and community library users

We briefly examine four classes of user needs, namely educational needs, personal and social information needs, cultural information needs and recreational needs.

4.1.4.1 Educational needs

The public library assists learners of all ages in meeting educational objectives established during their formal courses of study. It therefore plays a role as a formal education support centre and provides for the information needs of learners in informal and nonformal educational programmes.

(a) Formal educational needs

Formal education is the process whereby educational practice or exercise is organised according to a specific curriculum. The process is evaluated and the end result is a certificate or degree. The traditional Western model of a public library, which is generally imitated in South Africa, is not seen as a formal educational institution.

The majority of schools in South Africa do not have school libraries of a satisfactory standard. Many do not even have a school library. Former Model C schools usually had school libraries which provided for their formal educational needs. However, the mere presence of a library in a school does not mean that it will be used adequately.

As library services in South Africa opened their doors to users from all population groups, many public libraries adapted to an influx of users from formerly deprived communities, who came to the libraries to find a quiet place to study. Special study halls and other services have been provided to meet this new need.

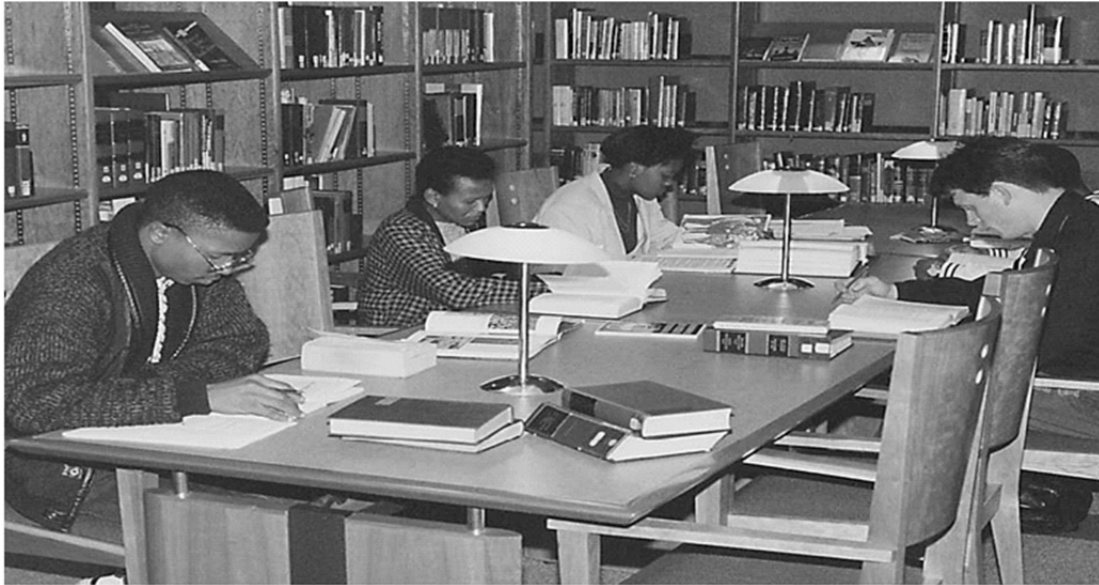
Public libraries have to meet the needs of pupils attending schools that do not have school libraries. These children frequently come from a cultural environment where books either do not feature prominently or do not feature at all. Parents may also be unable to assist their children with their school work beyond encouraging them to attend school. Thus, the public library can play a valuable role in meeting these children's needs for resources and providing a suitable place for them to study. The need for this type of service is increasing as the number of school-going children increases.

In meeting the formal learning needs of youth, the public library clearly plays an important role in education. In section 4.2, we will examine the ways in which school and public libraries can cooperate in providing for the school-related information needs of learners.

(b) Informal and nonformal educational needs

The public library should also meet the **informal** educational needs of its users. Informal education consists of those activities in which an individual participates without being involved in formal study for examination purposes.

FIGURE 4.2

Students studying in a public library**EXERCISE 4.2**

Make a summary of the three types of educational needs of users.

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____

In this capacity, the library should provide the means for informal education of the individual or group at every stage of development. This includes story hours for preschoolers, books on hobbies for children, book talks and lectures on topical subjects for adults.

Non-formal education involves activities that are organised, subsidised and promoted but do not form part of the institutionalised, formal educational process. In the USA, the public library was used for self-education by European immigrants in the 19th century and for this purpose by American blacks and Cuban and Vietnamese refugees in the 20th century. The public library also played a role in uplifting poor whites in South Africa in the 1930s. The public library can play a role in educating disadvantaged adults by offering facilities for literacy classes and by ensuring that suitable material is available for adults who are just learning to read.

4.1.4.2 Personal and social information needs

As society and modern life become more complex, needs arise in the personal situation as well as work or school situation which cannot be satisfied through interpersonal contacts. Information providers such as public libraries are required to fill this gap by providing information on a large number of subjects. To make effective decisions, one needs to be aware of the options and to have the necessary information. This need for information affects individuals as well as those in executive positions whose decisions may have far-reaching effects. Small business firms will not have the benefit of a library service and facilities. In South Africa, it is essential to encourage economic growth and to provide information needed by small businesspeople and entrepreneurs.

The public library has traditionally met the information needs of its users through its reference services. Librarians may carry out searches for users and assist users to find the information they require. These needs may vary from a highly complex research request to a very simple everyday need for information. Community information services attempt to meet these information needs experienced by a significant part of the public library's community.



EXERCISE 4.3

Think of the immediate members of your family and make a list of the personal and social information needs that public libraries could satisfy.

4.1.4.3 Cultural information needs

Culture is expressed in literature, art, music, and so forth.

The library is a major means of storing recorded cultural experience, values and norms and making them available to the community. The role of the public library is to recognise cultural and ethnic differences and encourage pride in one's own cultural heritage together with appreciation for the cultural heritage of others. By

providing information on all the cultures in South Africa, the public library helps to promote understanding.

4.1.4.4 Recreational needs

People who work need to relax physically and mentally and to direct their attention to activities which they find pleasurable and personally fulfilling, whether hobbies or reading recreational literature. Recreation is essential for mental health. The material which public libraries provide for recreation is made up mostly of books, predominantly light fiction, but the libraries should also provide works of literary merit.

In future, people may no longer want to read as much in their leisure time. There are also illiterate or semiliterate people who cannot read books. To meet their needs, public libraries provide audio recordings such as cassettes and CDs. Audiovisual and electronic records such as videos and CD-ROMs also form an important part of the public library's stock.



EXERCISE 4.4

Do you ever use the public and community library for recreational purposes?

If yes, make a list of the books and other material you have thus far borrowed or used there, or other activities at the public and community library which you have attended for recreational purposes.

4.1.5 Community needs assessment

If the aim of a library service is to satisfy users' needs, then knowledge about the potential library user is essential for successful library planning and operation. This can be done by conducting a community survey or study with the help of an agency which specialises in studies of communities. To find out as much as possible about the community, library staff should also consult census data, plans and surveys, community newspapers and magazines, as well as local agencies and institutions.

The survey should find out the composition of the community and what services are required to meet people's needs. If a public library thinks of starting a new branch, for example, the survey should establish the following: Does the community speak mainly Afrikaans, English, Sesotho or isiXhosa? Are there many immigrants, for instance people who read Portuguese? The planners must use the information gathered in the survey to plan the service or improve the existing service.

Once the library has carried out the survey, it uses the collected information to draw up its collection development policy. If a large proportion of the community consists of elderly people, for example, a considerable number of books in large print will be selected for purchase. The cataloguing and classification scheme will also take into account the needs of the users.

The types of services that the library offers will also depend on the community it serves. If a library provides for adult education, the service has to meet the needs and interests of its community. In a neighbourhood with many young children, users may be interested in child psychology, but this would not be the case in a neighbourhood of older people. If the library or other organisations in the community offer literacy classes, the library should select reading material meant for newly literate readers and arrange to introduce those people to the use of the library.

Market research should be an ongoing process. Library staff must record feedback from the community, such as complaints about aspects of the service and suggestions for different services. The library should adapt its services to meet changes in the community.



EXERCISE 4.5

Describe the community in which you live.

Give the names of groups that would probably use the library in your community.

4.1.6 User services and user guidance functions

Study this section together with study unit 3, as the basic functions of library and information services can be applied with different emphasis to different types of libraries. “Services” indicates the activities which library staff performs in direct response to user needs, or in anticipation of user needs.

However, no library has a large enough budget to meet all the service needs of its community. Therefore, each library must focus its resources on a limited number of services.

4.1.6.1 Service roles

In planning library services, public libraries can select the roles most appropriate for the library’s circumstances. These are profiles of library service emphasis. Each role is a shorthand way of describing the following:

- what a library is trying to do
- who the library is trying to serve
- what resources the library needs to achieve these ends

Libraries can select from this set of basic service roles when planning the following:

- (a) **A formal education support centre** – The library assist students of all ages in meeting educational objectives established during their formal courses of study.
- (b) **A community exercise centre** – The library is the focus of the community’s activities, meetings and services.
- (c) **A community information centre** – The library is a point where the latest information about organisations, issues and services in the community is collected.
- (d) **An independent reading centre** – The library supports individuals of all ages by providing learning programmes which are not attached to any educational centre.
- (e) **The provision of popular material** – Public libraries provide books and other high-demand, high-interest information to persons of various age groups.
- (f) **Services to preschool children** – Through its services to children and to children and adults together, the library encourages young children to cultivate an interest in reading and learning.
- (g) **A reference service** – The library provides accurate, usable and useful information to the community.
- (h) **A research centre** – The library supports learners at school and researchers with their studies and research into specific fields of knowledge.



EXERCISE 4.6

Visit your nearest public and community library and try to establish which of the abovementioned services are available.

The user guidance services that are rendered vary from library to library because the communities in which each library functions are different and because of variations in the financial means available.

4.1.6.2 User education

Orientation in the public library is usually informal and takes place at the time when a user needs it. An important form of instruction consists of signposting indicating the location of various resources in the library. There should also be a guide to the classification scheme and use of the catalogue.

Many libraries support the idea of giving bibliographic guidance to everyone, so that people will be able to use the library independently all their lives to enrich their work and recreational activities. The idea is to prepare people for what is called “lifelong learning” through information skills instruction.

4.1.6.3 *User advice*

User advice in the public library is intended to:

- encourage users to make use of the resources in the library
- direct users’ attention to high-quality works and to give advice about these help users to select appropriate and authoritative information sources and to read critically so as to attain new knowledge and insights

User advice can take the form of book talks, story hours, and lists of recommended works. Public libraries may also compile bibliographies if readers require them. The internet also offers librarians access to readers’ advisory information.

4.1.6.4 *Bibliotherapy*

Bibliotherapy is directed at the purposeful use of library material to solve personal problems. A child facing the trauma of an operation, for example, may be encouraged to read books on the subject.

4.1.6.5 *Information provision*

We study two types of information services provided by public libraries, namely reference and community information services.



EXERCISE 4.7

Make a list of all the different types of guidance users can receive in a public and community library.

(a) Reference service

The reference collection of the public library is a resource that can be used to satisfy all types of information needs felt by the public. Users’ needs may vary from straightforward requests for easily traced information (for instance, “Who was Albert Luthuli?”) to complex searches among many sources (for instance, “How did the African National Congress come into existence?”).

Information services may be divided into reactive and proactive services. Reactive services are those which are offered in response to users’ demands. A reference

interview is an example of a reactive service as it is conducted in reaction to a user's question. Proactive services are those which the library provides in anticipation of users' needs. The community information service is an example of a proactive service.

(b) Community information services

The community information service (CIS) is aimed at those people who are not traditionally public library users. It is an attempt by the library to supply information to meet the needs of the average citizen in his or her everyday life. With this type of service, the librarian may be expected to interpret information if he or she acts in an advisory capacity. The information provided concerns the local community. In other words, the information deals with aspects such as health, welfare, education, local cultural activities, clubs, associations and services provided by the local authority.

Community information services may operate as an extension of the reference function. The librarian draws information from a number of information sources. Some of the sources will be traditional reference works, but many of them form part of a file which is specially compiled to answer the practical, often welfare-oriented type of enquiry. The file usually contains names of people and organisations in the specific community to whom the librarian or people with queries may turn for help.

Some public libraries, such as the Mid-City (Tshwane) Community Library in Pretoria, organise this information in a computerised database, which library staff or users can consult. These services answer questions such as: "What medical services are available in this vicinity?" or "Where can I find information on homes for the aged?" Public libraries can become involved proactively in providing community information by, for instance, showing videotapes of primary health care topics at clinics.

The community information service is sometimes used as a special unit run by the local authority and, in other cases, by volunteers or an advisory group.

Public libraries are considered suitable places to offer community information services for the following reasons:

- (1) They have an extensive network of service points, which are usually open for longer hours than other public services.
- (2) Staff are skilled at searching for and obtaining information from sources.
- (3) Libraries have a neutral image, in other words people do not speculate about why a person visits a library.
- (4) Libraries are not threatening.

4.1.6.6 Extension services

Urban public libraries provide various extension services according to the financial resources available to them. The term "outreach" is often used for this kind of service. Examples of such services are the following:

- supplying collections of books and sound tapes to homes for the elderly and changing these collections at regular intervals
- taking books and tapes to individual users who are unable to visit the library because of illness or disability
- providing library materials to the local prison

The provision of extension services is an area in which the public librarian can show initiative. By cooperating with organisations giving literacy classes, for instance, the public and community library can ensure that newly literate people retain their literacy and become users of libraries. Khunou (1994) describes a variety of activities which she initiated in the Vosloorus Public Library to bring the library to the attention of the community and make it attractive to non-users and even to illiterate people.

Some of the community programmes which public libraries can facilitate are skills development and youth programmes on topics such as narcotic substances (drugs), HIV/AIDS and career guidance. This can be done by means of talks, industrial theatre, puppet shows and theatrical groups.

4.1.7 Public and community library services in South Africa

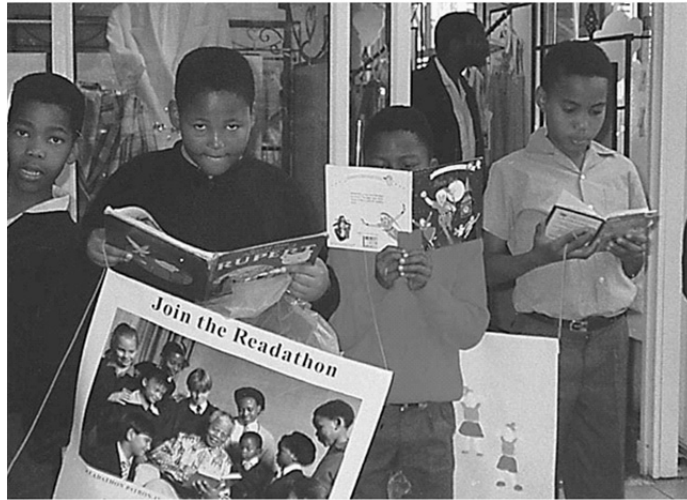
4.1.7.1 Information for development

The significant way in which the public library can feature in the development of South Africa is set out in the report by the Arts and Culture Task Group (1995:11–12).

A network of delivery points comprising public libraries, library depots and other suitable delivery mechanisms, supported by appropriate professional and administrative services at district and provincial levels, will extend to every community, delivering services appropriate to each community's needs as determined in consultation with it.

FIGURE 4.3

Children participating in a reading marathon at a public library



EXERCISE 4.8

Read through section 4.1.6.5 again. Think of the community you live in. Make a list of the characteristics of the people who form part of this community, and draw up a list of services needed in a library if these people were to use it.

Use the table provided below.

Services to different groups in the public and community library		
User groups	Characteristics	Library services
Adults	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Senior citizens	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>
Children and youth	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>	<hr/> <hr/> <hr/>

In each community, the public and community library will serve as one or more of the following:

- a community learning centre, focusing particularly on the promotion of literacy and information awareness and on support of adult basic education and distance learning, and providing facilities for learners at school who lack access to adequate school libraries
- a centre for the promotion of, and participation in, living culture
- a centre for the dissemination of knowledge in all fields, with particular emphasis on knowledge needed for participation in democratic decisionmaking
- a centre for recreational reading

The public and community library ought to provide support for services such as social programmes for the youth and programmes to eliminate unemployment. Furthermore, it should help to develop skills relating to aspects such as computer training.

4.1.7.2 Provincial library services

In terms of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa, 1996, each province has control over library services. However, the de facto position is that it is a local or community service. Local authorities usually have the primary responsibility for creating and supporting the public and community library by way of finance, buildings and staff as well as the provision of books. This local authority might be a metropolitan council, a community council or any variation of a rural local authority. And the local authority may apply to the provincial department of library services for support in rendering a library service. The provincial library service in each province determines the policy and standards of service delivery by public libraries – and also implements these. It also coordinates library services at provincial level.

In addition, provincial library services are established for the purpose of supporting local authorities to provide public and community library services. They assist local public libraries in the following ways:

- (1) They provide the local library with a stock of books and other media such as sound recordings and videos.
- (2) These materials are centrally prepared for circulation (this includes classification and cataloguing).
- (3) They regularly exchange part of the stock.
- (4) They provide the local public library with technical assistance and professional guidance.
- (5) They provide a reference service from an extensive reference collection.
- (6) They facilitate interlibrary loans between service points.

Efforts to expand public library services in historically disadvantaged communities have been intensified.



EXERCISE 4.9

List the activities that could form part of extension services.

4.2 SCHOOL LIBRARIES

4.2.1 Definition of terms

The *International encyclopedia of information and library science* (Heeks 1997:410) defines school libraries as “service agencies designed to support curriculum delivery and operating through provision of material, facilities and services. They may also be known by such terms as “school library resource centre” or “library media centre”.

One could say that school libraries are learning centres in schools where a comprehensive series of printed and audiovisual material – and the necessary equipment – is available to the schoolchildren and teachers or educators, usually at a single school.



EXERCISE 4.10

Go through the definitions above and then formulate your own definition of a “school library”.

According to the IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (1999), school libraries provide information and ideas without which it is impossible to function in a society that is increasingly based on information and knowledge. The school library equips children with lifelong learning skills, develops their imagination and enables them to grow into responsible citizens.

Previously, in order to realise their aims, school libraries made use chiefly of material printed on paper. Because, for the past few decades, audiovisual media have become a steadily more important component of the school library, the term “media centre” or “resource centre” has come into use. Nonetheless, “school library” remains the generally accepted term for this institution.

The definitions narrowly demarcate the user community of a school library. The users are usually restricted to the learners and teachers or educators of one school. When, however, you come to the section dealing with the situation in South Africa, you will see that there are also other possibilities for school library services.

4.2.2 Aims of school libraries

The aims of a school library are closely linked with the aims of the school and ought to reflect and promote the educational aims of the school itself. For this reason, the library is involved in the formal school curriculum as well as in aspects such as the personal and social development of schoolchildren. Whereas previously the aims of education tended to cultivate learners who were largely passive in their reception of tuition, the aims of education have now changed to the teaching of problemsolving skills and skills with which to gather information in a meaningful way. An effort is being made to place more responsibility with learners for the way in which they study and for the progress they make. The school library has become the centre of the school’s educational programme.

The following three aspects can be considered the chief aims of the school library:

- (1) Promoting reading, viewing and listening. It is a vital part of the media teacher’s job to encourage reading in a non-competitive environment. The media teacher should also help schoolchildren to widen their range of experience through reading, viewing and so on.
- (2) Providing information skills instruction and reference services. An ever-increasing amount of information is available, and unless pupils or learners are equipped with the skills to locate and obtain the specific information they need, they will be at a distinct disadvantage when it comes to competing with others in their future lives and careers. The reference

service can provide information directly and also teach children how to obtain information.

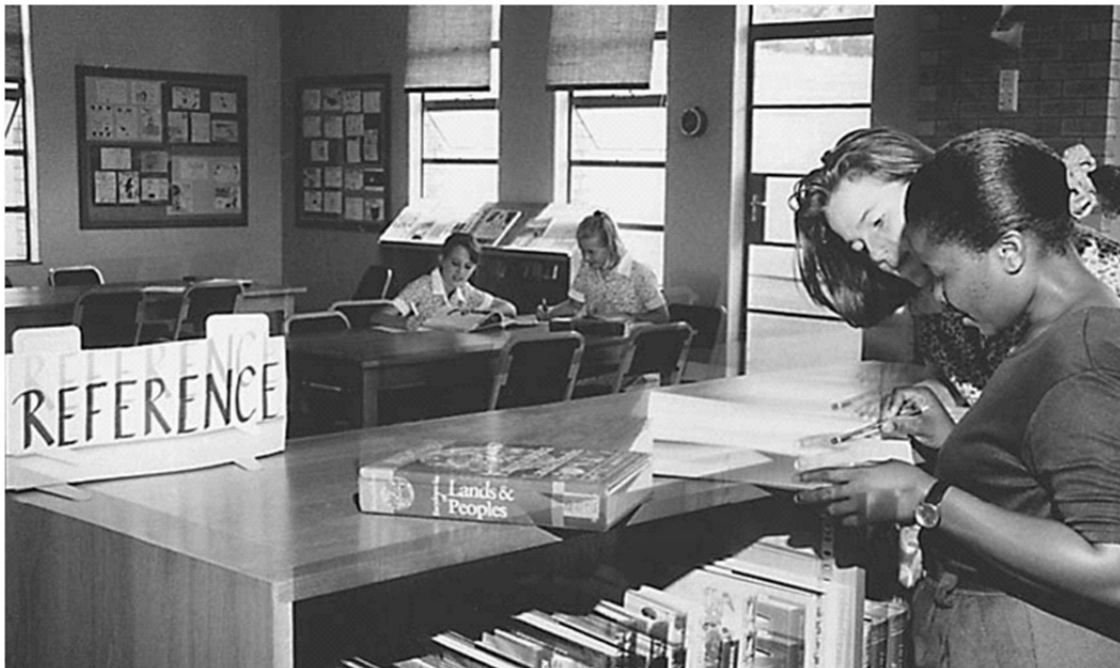
- (3) Developing a collection of suitable resources and assisting teachers or educators to select media suitable for particular lessons. The teacher-librarian also instructs children in the information skills required for preparing assignments.

The following aims of a school library are included in the School Library Manifesto (IFLA/UNESCO 2000) formulated by the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA):

- supporting and enhancing educational goals as outlined in the school's mission and curriculum
- developing in children the habit and enjoyment of reading and learning, and the use of libraries throughout their lives
- offering opportunities for using information for knowledge, understanding, imagination and enjoyment
- supporting students in practising skills for evaluating and using information, regardless of form, format or medium
- providing access to local, regional, national and global resources and opportunities that expose learners to diverse ideas, experiences and opinions
- organising activities that encourage cultural and social awareness and sensitivity working with students, teachers, administrators and parents to achieve the mission of the school
- proclaiming the concept that intellectual freedom and access to information are essential to effective and responsible citizenship and participation in a democracy promoting reading and the resources and services of the school library to the whole school community and beyond

FIGURE 4.4

Schoolchildren consulting information sources at the reference section



EXERCISE 4.11

Study the above section carefully. Decide which are the four most important aims of a school library. Formulate these in your own words.

- (1) _____
- (2) _____
- (3) _____
- (4) _____

4.2.3 Users of school libraries

The users of the school library may be divided into two groups: learners and teachers or educators.

4.2.3.1 Learners

The users of school libraries include children in the primary and secondary school phases, who fall into the following categories of readers:

- (a) beginning readers
- (b) children with reading problems who, as a result of a lack of pre-literacy skills and various other contributing factors, read slowly, as well as dyslexic, reluctant or unmotivated readers
- (c) self-motivated readers

The aims of school libraries demand that they meet the needs of these categories of readers. School libraries should cater for gifted and average children and also for slow learners. They should meet learners' needs for material required for educational purposes within the context of the school curriculum. They should also satisfy learners' needs for recreational reading materials that encourage socialisation (teaching them about the culture of their society) and stimulate the development of literary appreciation, aesthetic values and ethical standards. School libraries should therefore satisfy children's information needs in connection with both their curricula and their interests outside the curriculum.

4.2.3.2 Teachers or educators

Teachers require information on education in general as well as on the subjects for which they are responsible. This includes the following kinds of information:

- subject information
- information about how to teach the subject or learning area
- information to support their teaching programmes, including books and other media to which the teacher can refer children to supplement the content that they are taught in the classroom
- information in other media to enrich their teaching programme, for example a video or tape recording of Shakespeare's play *Hamlet*, which will enrich the teaching of the play



EXERCISE 4.12

Write down three information needs of the teacher.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

As in the case of other types of libraries, we look at the way in which the functions of school libraries differ from those carried out by libraries in general. If there is no significant difference, the function will not be discussed in the following sections.

4.2.4 Collection development and management

The media selected for the school library should be suited to the needs of the particular school community and should meet the educational requirements of the school. The selection of media for the school library should be based on knowledge of the curricular and extracurricular needs of both learners and teachers. By this we mean that the media selected for a primary school will differ from those for a secondary school, and media selected for an agricultural high school will differ from selections for a technical high school.

An important task is to select the most appropriate medium or media. The following aspects should be taken into account when a medium is selected:

- (a) Cost: There is a relationship between the type of medium and the cost. For example, videotapes or CD-ROMs cost more than audio tapes or slides. This factor must be taken into account when selecting a medium.
- (b) Equipment availability: If a school does not own the equipment necessary for a particular medium, then materials in this medium must be avoided. For example, if a school does not possess a television monitor or projector, it should not buy videotapes or films.
- (c) The way in which the medium will be used: Cost per use will affect the choice of medium. For example, videotape and film are more costly to use than audio cassettes or slides.

It is important to develop a well-balanced stock that not only meets curriculum requirements but also exposes learners to alternative points of view. The size of the collection depends on the attitude of the educational authorities and the school board towards the school library. An authority that perceives the school library as making a valuable contribution to the educational objectives of the school will provide the finance for a substantial collection.

4.2.5 Information organisation and retrieval

Most schools use an abridged or simplified version of the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme. A good catalogue, which lists all the items in the school library, is essential because the different physical formats of the media found in the school library mean that items cannot all be shelved together in a single sequence. Items such as pictures, slides, and audio and video cassettes have to be stored separately from books.

Some education departments in South Africa centralise these functions and they process, classify and catalogue the material for school libraries. Schools under other education departments have to carry out these functions themselves due to the costs involved.

4.2.6 User education and information skills instruction

The education system in South Africa is based on several important principles that clarify its direction. One of these is the notion of an outcomes-based curriculum, and another is that learners must be able to collect, analyse, organise and critically evaluate information. This way of teaching and learning depends largely on a situation where a learner has independent and ready access to and use of information sources.

Pupils need to become critical thinkers and problem solvers rather than rote learners. It is therefore important that they should learn information-handling skills that will help them to adapt to change in a complex world. They need to obtain guidance in developing an awareness of the importance of information and acquire the skills to retrieve and select their own information.

The term “information skills” includes all the skills that jointly contribute to the effective handling of information. School libraries also aim to teach media literacy and reading skills on a progressive and continuous basis as the child matures.

4.2.6.1 Developing information skills

The following are some of the principles that should be taken into account when information skills are taught:

- (1) The skills needed should be taught in a functional way, for example the ability to use an alphabetical index at the back of a book or a contents list at the beginning. The children should be taught within the context of either a subject being studied or extracurricular activities, and not as a theoretical exercise. We believe that the mere process of teaching children to locate and find books and other media in the school library has little intellectual benefit for them. The processes involved in what learners do with the information – evaluation, synthesis, reflection, thinking, or appreciation – are the important factors, not so much the searching, locating and assembling of media.
- (2) Children should be guided from the beginning to use the correct methods when searching for information. Individual guidance in this respect is very successful. Children need to be guided to use locating and retrieval skills outside the school curriculum. They should be stimulated to discover and investigate other fields. In this way they are made aware of the importance of information and its use in decisionmaking.
- (3) They need to understand the purpose of the skill being taught and should be motivated to develop it further. They should also realise the advantages of learning to use the resource collection of the school library themselves. Schoolchildren should be made aware of the interrelatedness of different subjects, as they generally tend to see them as isolated.

In summary, the aim of user education and information skills instruction in schools is for schoolchildren to develop information concepts and skills necessary for them to learn independently and to prepare them for lifelong learning.

**EXERCISE 4.13**

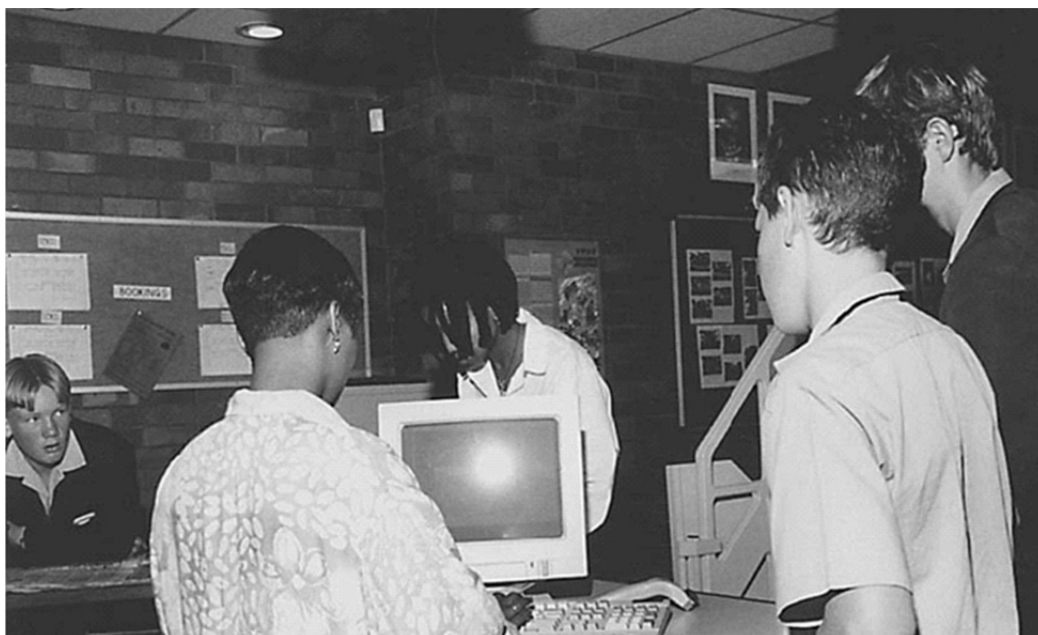
List the various information skills that have to be taught to learners.

4.2.6.2 Integrating information and media use into lessons

The skills taught in information skills instruction become meaningful to schoolchildren when they apply these skills in curricular (and extracurricular) situations in which they have to find and use information independently. They need to perceive that there is a reason to use information. A sequence of information-use activities should be planned to match children's developmental stages and their need for information arising from experiences in the classroom and in their personal lives.

FIGURE 4.5

Librarian showing children how to use the computerised catalogue



The purpose of teaching information skills is to advance the interaction between the school library, the classroom and the learner. It has been demonstrated that when librarians and teachers work together, learners achieve higher levels of literacy, reading, learning, problemsolving, and information and communications technology skills.

Books and other media can be selected and used in the classroom situation. The formal use of textbooks should be alternated with activities in which children search for information and information sources by themselves. Media packages, such as books, atlases, slides, toys and video programmes, are stimulating to learners and may be used to complement the formal teaching programme.

Many learners relate more easily to audiovisual media than to print media. Audiovisual media offer teaching-learning experiences that print media cannot offer. A video recording, for instance, can provide rapid viewing of processes that occur over a long period of time (by means of time-lapse photography), for instance the changes in a plant as it grows.

Class and subject teachers should be familiar with the media available in the school library so that they can make full use of such media, both in their lessons and in setting assignments or projects. Teachers should be asked for their recommendations for collection development, and the teacher-librarian should work closely with teaching staff to ensure optimal use of the school library.

New teaching staff should be introduced to the school library and its services, and be encouraged to work closely with the teacher-librarian. Projects set by the teacher-librarian should relate to the learning areas or subjects. Assignments or self-study tasks set by subject teachers should be related to resources in the school library.

From the above, it is clear that the role of subject teachers in developing information skills and integrating these skills into classroom teaching is crucial.



EXERCISE 4.14

Give an example of how a subject teacher can make use of the school library when teaching. Apply your answer to a specific school subject or learning area.

4.2.7 Management of the school library

4.2.7.1 School library committee

The school library committee is responsible for the professional management of a school's library under the guidance of the school principal. Its members should represent all the subjects taught at the school. Its size depends on the size

of the school. This helps to make the school library an integral school resource that is used effectively by both teachers and learners.

4.2.7.2 Staff

To be effectively managed, the school library ought to be staffed by a teacher-librarian whose time is devoted entirely to the work of the school library. Instead of “school librarian” or “teacher-librarian” the terms “media teacher” or “media specialist” are also sometimes used. Some schools appoint qualified librarians as school librarians but, in many cases, the teacher-librarian is a teacher who has specialised in school library science. The ideal is for a school librarian to be qualified as both teacher and librarian. Learners are frequently used as assistants to help with various tasks in the school library and are called “learner assistants” or “pupil assistants”.

The role of teacher-librarians varies according to the financial objectives, curriculum and teaching methodology of the schools, within the financial situation and national legal framework. The general areas of knowledge that are vital if teacher-librarians are to develop and operate effective school library services are: resources, library and information management, and teaching skills.

In an increasingly networked environment, teacher-librarians must be competent at planning programmes for teaching different information-handling skills to both teachers and learners and therefore should keep their professional training up to date.

4.2.7.3 School library services in South Africa

The centralised school library, as described in the preceding pages, outlines the ideal situation, but it is not generally found in developing countries.

4.2.7.4 Provision of resources in South African schools

Many schools do not have a school library and the majority of those that do are not of satisfactory quality and are not used adequately for the following reasons:

- Teacher-librarians are increasingly expected to spend their time teaching examination subjects rather than attending to the library and the related guidance of users.
- While teacher-librarians work hard to promote the services of the school library, subject teachers do not always integrate the library facilities into their teaching. The teaching styles and attitudes of the subject teachers are often considered to be the most important factor in encouraging learners to use the school library.

This means that teachers should be role models for learners with regard to reading and information use (Olen 1996:92).

Department of Education policy documents envisage school libraries to be the “learning resource centres” of schools. Schools are expected “to ensure optimum acquisition of, access to, cooperation and effective use of resources to ensure effective implementation of outcomes-based education” (Faassen & Metcalfe 1997:9).

However, due to the shortage of school libraries and the costs involved in setting up and maintaining them, the Department of Education has a number of alternative models for school library services.

4.2.7.5 Models for school library services

In a discussion document dealing with the National Policy Framework for School Library Standards (1997), various school library models were suggested. This provides the opportunity for schools and public libraries to devise, in cooperation with the local community, a model suited to the particular circumstances of the community. Note that the following library models already exist in one form or another in South Africa:

(1) One school, one library

This model of a school with its own centralised library collection and a teacher-librarian is the one that is advocated in this study unit.

(2) One classroom, one library

The focus here is on the use of sources in the classroom, mainly for curriculum-related activities. The model consists of a box or a set of books and various other media at the reading and cognitive level of the learners and the curriculum programme. This is often referred to as a “book-box library” or a class library. Its greatest advantage is that the material is usually kept in a central place that is accessible to the learners and can easily be used throughout the day. It also saves the school having to fund a library or teacher-librarian. The success of this model depends on a central support system from which classroom collections may be supplemented and exchanged.

FIGURE 4.6

Some schools have their own centralised school library with a teacher-librarian in charge



(3) One community, one library

This model is based on the principle that teachers and learners and the wider public can make use of the same library institution. This is sometimes referred to as a “joint-use library”.

The model is also complex and difficult to implement. Thoroughly negotiated agreements between education authorities, and local and provincial authorities responsible for library services to the general public, are essential. It is vital to consider issues such as admission times, remuneration of staff, possession of the collection, location of the library, use of space and ownership.

Some of the larger public library services are engaged in developing this type of centre. For example, the Mid-City (Tshwane) Community Library, in cooperation with the education authorities, opened a branch library in the Mamelodi residential area that serves as a school library in the mornings while, in the afternoons, the surrounding communities use it as a public library.

(4) One region, one library

In this model, a regional library service provides various library services to schools in a particular region. These services may be limited to advisory support services or systemic services. Advisory support systems include selecting and ordering, centralised retrieval, and central development of educational material for users. Systemic services link up directly with the curriculum programmes of schools and

include services such as the provision and replacement of class collections.

Of course, the existence of these regional library services does not mean that schools cannot have their own school library, but it is a cost-effective way of avoiding unnecessary duplication.

SchoolNet is an example of an electronic network of school libraries in South Africa.



EXERCISE 4.15

Complete the following table in which you name the most important characteristics, advantages and disadvantages of each of the library models listed below.

Library model	Characteristics	Advantages	Disadvantages
Centralised school library	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
Joint-use library	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
Classroom box library	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____
	_____	_____	_____

It is proposed that provinces should commit themselves to a single model for providing learners with access to learning resources once school management teams and governing bodies, in consultation with district and regional officials, have selected the model that most suits their current needs and capacity.

4.2.8 Cooperation between schools and public libraries

Clearly the one community, one library model involves cooperative activities between already existing library services. Cooperation and communication between schools and public libraries occur at informal and formal levels.

4.2.8.1 Informal cooperation

Informal cooperation involving interlending, block loans and reciprocal borrowing has associated practical difficulties for its implementation, particularly in schools in developing communities:

- Interlending requires telecommunications and computer facilities and access to bibliographic databases.
- Block loans of books in specific subject areas by the public library for classroom projects are possible resource-sharing activities, but the public library may not have the stock needed to supplement the collections of all the schools in an area.
- As far as reciprocal borrowing is concerned, school libraries do not have the relevant sources to offer to the adult patrons of a public library. If the school management board has in the past had sole responsibility for raising funds and expenditure on library materials, its board members may feel that these materials should be used only by learners for whom the money was collected in the first place.

4.2.8.2 Formal cooperation

Formal cooperation involving all the resource-sharing activities at the informal cooperative level as well as cooperative collection development requires a structured and coordinated approach at provincial level and long-term planning.

4.2.8.3 Informal communication

Nevertheless, at local level there are ways in which individual schools and public libraries can cooperate in ensuring learners' access to information resources for independent study projects. Some public libraries and neighbouring schools already communicate at an informal level in which sporadic communication occurs about forthcoming assignments.

However, a system of formal communication consisting of regular contact with regard to assignment topics could be more effective.

4.2.8.4 Formal communication

This could begin with preliminary contact between the principal and the public librarian at the school to discuss the possibility of class visits, the promotion of public library programmes and services at the school, and advance notification of planned assignments. The latter will involve an assignment or homework alert programme through which:

- class or subject teachers notify the public library when learners have been given an assignment that may require the use of public library collections
- teachers ensure that sufficient sources will be available on the topics set for a particular class by the judicious selection of topics (by assigning tasks that are

broad enough so that a large class can work on different aspects and fewer learners will be searching for material on any one subject)

- public librarians maintain a topic file and usage log to determine popular research topics, curriculum needs and materials in demand
- public librarians notify teacher-librarians and subject teachers about the non-availability of material on a particular topic

4.3 SUMMARY

The public and community library strives to meet the needs of users of all age groups from all walks of life. Its aims and services are geared to providing for these needs, which should be continually evaluated in terms of changing needs and demands. In South Africa, with its large developing population, public libraries can play an important role in assisting people with self-development, as they have done in the past.

School libraries play an important role in education. The teaching of information skills ought to be an integral part of subject teaching and should encourage learners to use the school library for their extracurricular activities. School libraries should contribute to the development of the information skills necessary for independent and lifelong learning. Various school library models offer possibilities for meeting learners' needs for resources at different levels of service.

4.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT

(1) Test yourself to see whether you are able to:

- (a) define the term "public and community library"
- (b) discuss the aims of public libraries
- (c) discuss the needs of users of public libraries
- (d) describe the various types of educational user needs for which public libraries are expected to provide
- (e) discuss user guidance and information services as services offered by the public and community library
- (f) explain what you understand by the term "user guidance"
- (g) give an account of the services of public libraries
- (h) explain why it is necessary to orientate users to the public and community library
- (i) explain in what way community information services in a public library are different from the usual reference service
- (j) clarify the concept "outreach services"
- (k) explain the role of a community information service in a community

(2) The following is an example of an essay-type question:

Discuss the ways in which public libraries can assist in developing disadvantaged communities in South Africa.

(3) Test yourself to see whether you are able to:

- (a) discuss the value a school library can have for schoolgoing learners
- (b) give a brief explanation of the aims of school libraries
- (c) describe the users of a school library
- (d) explain how the aims of a school library relate to the needs of the users
- (e) give a brief description of how collections can be built up in a school library
- (f) explain what you understand by “information skills”
- (g) write notes on how the school library can and should influence the cultivation of information skills
- (h) discuss the importance of the concept “lifelong learning” and explain where the school library fits into this context
- (i) list a number of problems facing school libraries in South Africa today
- (j) discuss the various models of school libraries
- (k) explain the suitability of each of the various models for a developed and developing community

(4) The following are examples of essay-type questions:

- (a) Explain why the school library forms an integral part of the school. (b) Debate the necessity or otherwise of well-equipped school libraries.

SOURCES

Aitchison (1991); Arts and Culture Task Group. Library and Information Services Subcommittee (1995); Boyd (1993); Faassen & Metcalfe (1997); Fourie (1996); Harrod’s librarians’ glossary of terms used in librarianship (2000); Heeks (1997); IFLA/UNESCO School Library Manifesto (1999); Karelse (1991); Khunou (1994); Kuhlthau (1995); Moran (1996); National Policy Framework for School Library Standards (1997); Olen (1996); Olen & Kruger (1995); Planning and role setting for public libraries (1987); Shillinglaw (1986); Soper, Osborne & Zweizig (1990); Stilwell (1997); Stoker (1996); UNESCO Public Library Manifesto (1995); Usherwood (1997); Van der Merwe (1996)

STUDY UNIT 5

Academic Libraries

ORIENTATION

This study unit introduces you to academic libraries as a group of library types with many similarities but also a few differences. There are no marked differences between the libraries of the various academic institutions. The differences that do exist stem from the scope of the collections, and the services and aims may also vary from library to library.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this study unit, you should be able to:

- indicate which libraries are viewed as academic libraries
- define the concept “academic library”
- discuss the aims and users of academic libraries
- describe the services and functions of academic libraries
- discuss important aspects such as subject librarians and cooperative ventures that have been undertaken in South Africa recently
- give your opinion on the place and role of the academic library in the South African context

KEY CONCEPTS

academic library

undergraduates and postgraduates

subject reference librarians

university library

5.1 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

We use the term “academic library” to refer to a library that is associated with an academic institution above secondary level, and that provides for the teaching and research requirements of staff and students. These academic libraries form an integral part of the institutions they serve, in other words of their parent bodies. Under “academic libraries” we therefore include university and college libraries and those attached to any other tertiary (that is, post-school) educational institutions.

The university library may be defined as “[a] library or group of libraries established, maintained, and administered by a university to meet the needs of its students and members of the academic staff” (*Harrod’s librarians’ glossary* 2000:754).

Many technikons and universities have merged and their libraries are being integrated in order to serve an expanded student body. The university and university of technology libraries are attached to the university with a view to supporting its teaching and research aims in every respect. This includes obtaining, retrieving and making available the necessary information sources, and training students to become lifelong library users. The library must also support the university's services to the community. The similarity between the various academic libraries becomes clear when one considers that academic libraries may differ only in size and subject emphases. We must point out, however, that college libraries are often far smaller than the other types of academic libraries and that most of these have only a teaching aim.

Harrod's librarians' glossary (2000:163) defines a college library as "a library established, maintained, and administered by a college to meet the needs of its students and faculty".

You can see that these definitions are very similar. In each case, the role of the library is to further the aims of the parent body of the university, university of technology or college which controls the library and supports it financially.

In some developing countries a university library may also function as a national library because it is the largest and most important library in the country.



EXERCISE 5.1

Study the definitions of the university and college library. Compare these with the definition of an academic library and make sure that you understand that it is a comprehensive term for the other two.

5.2 AIMS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The main aim of any academic library is to support the functions of its parent body, namely teaching, research and community service, through the provision of information. The library is seen as the hub of a university, and an adequate library is essential to the performance of any academic institution's educational and research functions.

The chief aim of an academic institution is to meet the information needs of the members of the institution. However, important we may think other aims are – such as making available the services and stock of an academic library to the general public – these are secondary aims.

The aims may be summarised as follows (Hoare 1997:3):

- providing for the educational needs of students, both those arising directly from the curriculum and those of a more general nature

- supporting the teaching staff in their need for up-to-date material required for their teaching role
- providing for research (where the institution undertakes this), both higher degree work and research undertakings or exercises by academic staff



EXERCISE 5.2

Summarise in your own words (and in no more than three sentences) the aims of the academic library.

5.2.1 Provision of information for teaching

As the academic library should reflect the aims of the academic institution, teaching support will be one of its main aims. Its aim is to supplement and support the teaching function of the academic institution by providing information and sources of information that students require for their studies, or to provide access to such information.

The increased emphasis in education on self-study means that the library and its facilities play an indispensable role in education.

For the student, the library's aim initially is education. However, as the student progresses to postgraduate level and independent study, the importance of the educational aim diminishes and the aim of information provision becomes increasingly important.

5.2.2 Provision of information for research

Research is one of the major activities carried out at a university by academic and research staff and by students at master's and doctoral level. The academic library aims to support researchers by providing the information and sources of information they require, and by facilitating access to external information resources in electronic networks.

5.2.3 Provision of information for community service

Academic institutions have always participated in rendering a service to the wider community, be this to a greater or lesser extent. Recently, this participation in community service has received more acute recognition from academic authorities and by the various institutions themselves. As the overall aim of the academic library in each academic institution is to support the aims of its parent body, it can be assumed that the library will be drawn into the community service projects of the parent body.



EXERCISE 5.3

Describe how the university library provides for your needs.

5.3 USERS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

The users of academic libraries consist of the following groups:

- (1) undergraduate students
- (2) postgraduate students
- (3) lecturers (academic (teaching) staff)
- (4) researchers
- (5) administrative staff
- (6) the community

5.3.1 Undergraduate students

The largest group of users of the academic library are undergraduate students. Their needs are usually predictable as they require material that has been recommended by their lecturers. This material should be easily accessible and available for loan or for use in the library. This need is usually met by a short loan collection. Access to electronic resources is also made available to undergraduates.

Students who are unfamiliar with a library need to be educated to use a library and its facilities properly and effectively.

Undergraduates need library space where they can sit and work, and, if necessary, consult material that is not available for loan.

The needs of the student will partly depend on the course being studied. For instance, a student studying towards a BA degree is sometimes required to read more than a student studying towards a BSc degree and thus will require more from the library.

5.3.2 Postgraduate students

We use the phrase “postgraduate students” to refer to students who have completed a first tertiary qualification, such as a bachelor’s degree at a university, and its equivalent at a university of technology.

Postgraduate students are students who study at advanced levels. They are therefore concentrated in universities and universities of technology rather than other educational institutions. As students progress, their needs become more specialised. Postgraduate students require a wide and diverse range of research material. Their needs are not easy to predict as these depend on the fields that the students have chosen to research.

Postgraduates must be shown how to use the relevant retrieval aids if they are not yet familiar with them, because they have to do their own literature searches. Before beginning research, they need to find out whether any research has been done on their topic of interest, so as not to duplicate work already done.

As postgraduates need to spend long hours working in the library, they require private study areas. These are usually provided in the form of study carrels.

5.3.3 Lecturers

Lecturers require material to support their teaching function. This may be literature about the subject they teach or about the methods for teaching that subject. They also require information to support their own research. Another type of material they may want from the library is audio and audiovisual material, such as videos, to use during their lectures. They also need to be kept up to date with new developments in their fields through the relevant literature.



EXERCISE 5.4

Draw up your own list of distinctions between undergraduate and postgraduate students.

5.3.4 Researchers

Researchers are persons who are attached to departments or research institutes of a university or university of technology and who do research in specialised fields. They need to ascertain what research has been done in these fields before beginning new research projects, and they need to be kept up to date with the latest developments in their subjects.

5.3.5 Administrative staff

Administrative staff is employees of the academic institution who are not involved in either teaching or research. They may require information to help them in their work. Some universities and universities of technology, however, have departments that do undertake thorough research. An example of this is Unisa's Institute for Curriculum and Learning Development.

5.3.6 The community

The library supports the formal community service projects of the academic institution. An example is the opportunity that the University of Johannesburg offers, as a community service, to upgrade Soweto teachers' teaching qualifications. The library should meet the information needs of the teachers who benefit from this project.

An academic library may contribute to community service by making its facilities and services available to individuals, groups and bodies that are not attached to the academic institution. However, this is never done at the expense of its primary users.

The academic library usually charges a fee for the use of its facilities by private individuals or companies. Users have to pay to borrow material, make photocopies and access other services such as interlibrary loans.

Because they train people to apply their knowledge directly in commerce and industry, universities of technology expect their students to undertake periods of practical work as part of their courses. This brings them into direct contact with enterprises that may need to use the services of their libraries, thus presenting the libraries with opportunities to serve the community. This kind of service may be a source of income for the library.

The collaboration between academic libraries in the form of consortiums may also be seen as a service to the community. The services and stock of the participating libraries are often far more extensive than those of other participants.



EXERCISE 5.5

Make a list of the various types of users of academic librarians and identify their needs.

5.4 COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

Academic libraries have specific collections to support the training and research aims of the parent body. The stock of a university library therefore reflects the courses offered and the type and amount of research undertaken by the institution.

The primary goal of every academic library is to offer its students and academic staff a collection of sufficient depth and scope to meet the requirements of the academic programmes of its parent body.

When one compares the stock of an academic library with that of a public library, which includes far more fiction, one is struck by the fact that the major part of the university library's collection is non-fiction. This reflects the aim of the library, which is to support the teaching and research functions of the parent body by means of its holdings and services. Thus, academic libraries usually have a larger reference section and a far greater variety of media types. These include a comprehensive journal section, audiovisual collection and access to

electronic sources. A collection development policy is formulated to meet the academic needs of users.

Considerable care is taken to ensure that strict criteria are followed and that all the subjects taught in the academic institution are covered in order to prevent gaps in the collection.

Material may be selected by:

- academic staff
- librarians, who will take cognisance of the recommendations and requests of academic and research staff
- academic staff in collaboration with librarians

The advantage of cooperation between academic and library staff is that the academic staff members are aware of their students' needs as well as their own research needs. The librarian, on the other hand, ensures that the collection is balanced. This is necessary as academic and research staff may tend to concentrate on material that is of specific relevance to them, and not consider the collection as a whole.

Another important aspect is that many subjects overlap – for example, Information Science overlaps with Communication Science, Sociology, Management, and Computer Science. Unnecessary duplication of material should be avoided, and the librarian is in a position to coordinate one department's selection with that of other subject fields.

The library has to ensure that sufficient copies of works recommended by lecturers for undergraduates are purchased. The collaboration between academic libraries in the form of consortiums (e.g. GAELIC and CALICO) has a direct influence on their collection-building policy.

When various academic libraries are involved in this type of cooperation, they can come to an agreement that particular libraries will concentrate on specific subject fields in order to avoid unnecessary duplication of expensive books.

The development of global electronic information collections is, increasingly, also influencing the collections of academic libraries. Fewer expensive reference works that soon become obsolete will be selected and purchased. Instead, this material will be made available to library users by means of access to electronic databases.



EXERCISE 5.6

Read through this study unit again. Then complete the following table in which you compare collection development in school and academic libraries.

Collection development in school and academic libraries

School libraries

Academic libraries

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

5.5 INFORMATION ORGANISATION AND RETRIEVAL

Cataloguing and classification may be centralised or they may be done by the subject reference librarian. Academic libraries are among the foremost contributors to and heaviest users of the computerised catalogue databases such as those available through Sabinet (South African Bibliographic and Information Network).

Although it is necessary to ensure that records are analysed in such a way that in-depth retrieval is possible, the availability of commercially produced abstracts and indexes makes it unnecessary for this work to be done by the library. The library staff should ensure that the necessary retrieval tools are available, for example Library and Information Science Abstracts (LLSA) for abstracts of articles published in periodicals in the field of library and information science. Nowadays, indexes and abstracts are accessed mainly through computerised databases.

5.6 LENDING

The number and types of items and materials that will be lent to a user will depend largely on the status of the borrower and the demand for the material.

Undergraduates are usually allowed fewer books than postgraduates and academic staff. The loan period for material also varies according to the status of the borrower. Material recommended for undergraduate use is usually in great demand, so the loan period is limited.

A special short loan section is often created for material that is in very great demand. Students are permitted to use this material in the library for a limited period, for instance one or two hours, and they may borrow items overnight or over a weekend, after which those items must be returned. This is applicable to residential university libraries – where there are students on campus. However, distance education students' needs are different.

Photocopying facilities can help relieve the high demand for certain works or publications by enabling students to make photocopies of sections that they want to study at home. However, there are legal restrictions on photocopying, and according to the copyright laws only a small section of a record may be photocopied.

The lending service can obtain requested items that are not available in the collection through the interlibrary loan system. This service is usually available only to postgraduate students or academic staff and researchers.



EXERCISE 5.7

Make a summary of all the services that are rendered as part of lending services.

5.7 USER SERVICES AND USER GUIDANCE FUNCTIONS

5.7.1 Information provision

The university library's information service is usually geared to the needs of postgraduate students, academic staff and researchers. To meet the need for information on research being done or already completed, the library carries out retrospective searches. These may be done manually by going through the relevant printed indexes and abstract journals, or they may take the form of online or CD-ROM searches in databases that contain the indexes or abstracts. After searching, a list is drawn up of selected sources on the specific topic, usually limited to a date reference or format. The library may compile bibliographies on specific topics if required, either manually or with the aid of database searches.

The information needs of undergraduates are usually met by a reference librarian, who helps them with any queries they may have. Bibliographies are not usually compiled for undergraduate students.

5.7.2 User education and information skills instruction

The goal of academic library user education is to support the educational goals of the institution. User education is an extremely important function in an academic library. Different types of instruction will be offered depending on the level of the user. This training is traditionally given personally, but interactive teaching programs on computer are increasingly coming into use. These may include virtual tours of the library.

5.7.2.1 Undergraduate students

An undergraduate education system should motivate students to learn independently. Students need to acquire basic skills and concepts and a broad range of knowledge. They should learn to think critically and be prepared to continue educating themselves throughout their lives. Librarians should deal with students' anxiety, which could be caused by the intimidating size of the library and not knowing where things are, what to do, or how to begin the research process. Remote access to electronic resources also presents its own problems.

Studies indicate that success at university is related to students' use of the library. It is therefore very important that first-year students be offered orientation courses and training in how to use the library effectively. These may take the form of lectures, audiovisual programmes or printed guides.

In South Africa, many students come from disadvantaged backgrounds. They come from schools that do not have libraries, and they have never been taught library skills. Therefore, if they are going to be successful at university, they may require more than a basic orientation course consisting of a few lectures. They may need to

be taught skills such as summarising, analysis and synthesis of information and other information literacy skills. The librarian can provide the human link between new learners and some of the complicated media forms and associated technology necessary for them to cope with the first-year university experience.

As students progress, they require further instruction in library use. They should be introduced to the bibliographic tools for the retrieval of information in their subject field, so that they can begin doing subject searches for themselves.

The library system should be user-friendly and enable students to identify their information needs, determine how to meet those needs and locate, evaluate and select the information. The system should evolve according to the developing technology, subject to budget constraints. Library user education programmes in academic libraries should ensure that:

- students receive the information at the time of need, in a concise form, in order of importance, and with a minimum amount of effort required
- lecturers are included and involved in the programme, since the lecturer is aware of the students' needs in relation to the course being studied
- dial-up access to information that provides brief assistance is readily available
- instruction focuses on strategies, not bibliographic tools
- instruction is brief, self-directed and aimed at various skills levels
- students are encouraged to complete searches and apply critical thinking skills
- the process is not perceived as difficult, because the system is easy to use and leads to success
- instruction makes maximum use of technology
- the use of print and electronic information is effectively combined
- the library director is committed to the programme
- the programme is cost-effective and student-interactive
- instruction is not repetitious for the student and can be transferred to other assignments

5.7.2.2 Postgraduate students

Students at postgraduate level are expected to be able to work independently and to carry out their own literature searches. Students who completed their undergraduate studies at another academic institution should be introduced to the library of the present institution and informed of the services available to them.

5.7.2.3 Lecturers and researchers

New members of the academic staff should be offered a library orientation course and informed about the services available to them.

5.8 USER ADVICE

Undergraduates are usually given a list of recommended literature by the lecturer and require little reader guidance. However, a reader's adviser should still be available to undergraduate students if they require help. Postgraduates may require a bibliography on their topic when they begin their research, and the library should assist in compiling this.

A current awareness service should also be provided for lecturers and researchers. This may take a variety of forms, for example circulating recent periodicals in the relevant subject fields, or providing photocopies of the contents lists of recent periodicals. Accession lists of new additions to the stock should be provided and also need to be available within the library for students. Displays of the covers of new books are another way of publicising new additions.



EXERCISE 5.8

Make a summary of user guidance to various types of users. Indicate how this service differs from group to group. What similarities are there?

5.9 MANAGEMENT OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIES

5.9.1 Marketing

As in other libraries, an academic library should first carry out a survey in order to establish users' needs. This entails ascertaining facts such as expected registration, courses taught and method of tuition; and the library should incorporate the feedback into its planning. Some academic institutions have found it helpful to have a student committee that liaises with the library and brings students' problems to the library's attention.

It is also important that the library have regular contact with lecturers so that it is aware of curriculum changes, new research projects being undertaken and any problems that staff may be experiencing with the library.

The wider community served by the academic institution should be surveyed to find out how the academic library could serve it. When this has been done, the community should be made aware of the services the academic library can provide.

5.9.2 Subject reference librarians

Subject reference librarians, or subject specialists, as they are sometimes called, form part of the professional staff in some university libraries. A subject reference librarian is chosen specifically to work in a particular subject field. There is no consensus on the tasks to be performed by the subject reference librarian, but the work will include all or some of the following:

- selection of material for the particular subject field
- information provision to the academic departments in the subject field user instruction
- cataloguing and classification of works in the relevant subject field

The policies of individual universities differ as to whether, or to what extent, the subject reference librarian should have subject knowledge. In some fields, for example chemistry or music, it is more important that the subject reference librarian have subject knowledge rather than information skills, as it is felt that these skills can be learnt on the job. However, for other subjects (e.g. English) it is more effective to have a trained librarian who may have studied the subject or is able to pick up sufficient subject knowledge on the job.

5.10 ACADEMIC LIBRARIES IN SOUTH AFRICA

There are many academic libraries in South Africa and there are many differences between them. On the one hand, there are university libraries with impressive information collections that make use of sophisticated information technology to provide access to international resources for their users. On the other hand, there are college libraries at some training and nursing colleges that keep only the most basic sources for the use of their students.

As a group, university libraries possess the majority of South Africa's scientific and academic information sources and provide for more than half the country's interlibrary requests.

For a number of years, the functioning of academic libraries has been strongly constrained by limited financial resources. For instance, university libraries have had to cancel their subscriptions to thousands of journal titles, and book purchases have declined drastically.

This has led to greater collaboration between libraries – which is a positive development – but it has caused great damage to the long-term educational and research abilities of the parent body – damage that will be difficult to repair.

This also applies to the extent to which tertiary institutions are capable of meeting the country's information needs.

Library cooperation will be discussed in study unit 9. Some cooperative schemes have been undertaken by academic libraries in South Africa. Libraries are taking the lead in collaborating with and participating in consortiums such as GAELIC and CALICO. This means that more and more of the differences that might have existed in the past are being eliminated owing to systemic, working and procedural standards within the consortiums.

Academic libraries are an important national resource, and it is important that they ensure that they provide the best possible service to their users.

5.11 SUMMARY

The academic library is a library instituted and maintained by its parent body to support its aims of teaching and research. The library's users consist of undergraduates, postgraduates, researchers and academic staff. To meet its users' needs, it should have a well-balanced collection that is stored and made accessible in such a manner that in-depth retrieval of information is possible. It should offer services such as user education, reference services and current awareness services. It should constantly assess its stock and services to ensure that they are meeting the needs of its users.

5.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT

- (1) Test yourself to see whether you are able to:
 - (a) indicate which libraries may be regarded as academic libraries
 - (b) define the concept "academic library"
 - (c) discuss the aims of an academic library
 - (d) give an account of the groups who use academic libraries
 - (e) describe the needs of undergraduate users of academic libraries
 - (f) describe the functions of the academic library
 - (g) explain the tasks of the subject librarian in an academic library

- (2) The following is an example of an essay-type question:

Discuss the place and role of the university library in South Africa and its collaboration in cooperative schemes.

SOURCES

Arts and Culture Task Group. Library and Information Services Subcommittee (1995); Behrens (1993); Coetzee (1996); De Jager (1992); Harrod's librarians' glossary of terms used in librarianship (2000); Hoare (1997); Hunt (1993); Meyer & De Bruin (1993); Rosenberg (1998); Soper, Osborne & Zweizig (1990); Tiefel (1995:68–69).

STUDY UNIT 6

Special Libraries and Information Centres

ORIENTATION

In this study unit, you will be introduced to the special library and information centre as a unique type of library. Because of the differences in the naming of the information units serving the work interests of a wide variety of organisations, this study unit is devoted to a discussion of specialised information units serving commerce, industry, government and non-governmental organisations. We refer to these units as “special libraries and information centres” or simply “special libraries”.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this study unit, you should be able to:

- explain what a special library and information centre is
- give an account of the differences between a special library and other types of libraries
- describe the different functions of a special library and information centre
- compare the functions of special library and information centres with the functions of other types of libraries
- show how these functions can meet the needs of the parent body and its employees

6.1 CLARIFICATION OF CONCEPTS

Since the term “special library” is accepted worldwide, it will be the term mainly used in this study unit. In practice, as in theory, however, you will come across many other terms to denote a special library. In some cases, the only term used is “information centre” or “information service”. The term “information centre” is often used in the belief that it indicates a wider scope, greater depth of services and more advanced technology. In practice, however, there are many libraries that are more sophisticated than any information centre and, for this reason, there is not much sense in replacing the term “library”.

In addition, the focus or users of the institution are often featured in the name, for example “technical library” or “business information service”.

Whatever term is used, both “special libraries” and “information centres” offer one and the same type of service and are staffed by subject specialists who interact proactively with the information needs of the client.

It is difficult to give a precise definition of special library and information centres because they display such diversity and individuality that descriptions of characteristics and activities have to be broad rather than specific. There is no unanimity regarding the definition of a special library. We quote a few definitions of special libraries but you should look for other definitions and try to formulate your own definition.

In the report by the Arts and Culture Task Group (1995:7), special libraries are defined as follows:

Special libraries collect materials and offer information services in more specialised fields of knowledge, serving mainly users associated with particular institutions or companies. They also tend to analyse the information materials in their collections in depth. There is some overlap between the terms “special library”, “information centre”, “documentation centre” and “resource centre”.

Harrod’s librarians’ glossary (2000:687) contains the following definition:

- 1 (a) A library or information centre, maintained by an individual, corporation, association, government agency or any other group; or
(b) a specialized or departmental collection within a library.
- 2 A collection of books and other printed, graphic or record material dealing with a limited field of knowledge, and provided by a learned society, research organization, industrial or commercial undertaking, government department or educational institution. It may also be a special branch of a public library serving certain interests or occupational groups, such as a technical library; or a subject library meeting the needs of all enquirers on a given subject, such as a music library. Broadly, a library which is neither academic, commercial, national, nor public. It is intended to serve the needs of a portion of the community requiring detailed information respecting a limited subject field.

Note that numerous libraries, such as medical, business and law libraries, meet the criteria of a special library but may also form part of an academic library. However, they function as special libraries rather than as a branch of the academic library. The term “special library” covers libraries with very different collections, very different services and very different user groups.

Commercial information services show specific similarities to special libraries, so are mentioned here. These are institutions or organisations offering information services to users who are not usually catered for by libraries. The services are often rendered for a fee, either annual or request-specific. In these institutions, information

is viewed as a valuable and saleable commodity. Information professionals attached to these institutions sell information, usually to the commercial and industrial sectors.



EXERCISE 6.1

Study the definitions above and use them to formulate your own definition in the space below.

6.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES

The two most important characteristics of a special library are the limited user group (the special library usually serves only the members of the specific parent body) and the limited subject field (usually confined to the subjects relating to the functions of the parent body).

Study the definitions above and use them to formulate your own definition in the space below. It is also clear that special libraries exist in a wide variety of enterprises. They are usually limited in scope and oriented to a single subject or group of related subjects that comprise a field of practice or exercise. The scope is determined by the interests of the parent organisation.

A large industrial organisation, for instance, may have a “special library” at its head office and a “technical information centre” at one of its factories or laboratories. The difference between the two is one of emphasis only, as both units handle information. The head office library may focus more on financial, management and legal information, while the technical information centre handles more technical and scientific information. Access to electronic information will make the physical place or space of the library steadily less important.

The fact that a special library is created for the sole purpose of collecting and using information to assist its parent organisation has a direct bearing on its characteristics and functions, which can be summarised as follows:

- (1) It has a specialised collection.
- (2) It serves a specialised group of users.
- (3) It is staffed by individuals with specialised training in a particular subject field or methodology.
- (4) It offers specialised, often personal, services.



EXERCISE 6.2

Make a list of all the characteristics of special libraries in the space below.

6.3 AIMS OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES

Special libraries exist to serve the needs of an organisation exclusively, rather than the wider needs of society that most other libraries serve. The only aim of the special library is to provide information in support of the mission of its parent body, which has little interest in library service as an end in itself – rather, it regards the library as a means of obtaining the information it needs. The special library is required to provide information more efficiently and economically than can be done by alternative methods. If it does not accomplish this goal, it is likely to be closed down by the parent organisation.

The ultimate decision as to the practicality, efficiency and value of the special library and the resources allocated to it is made by the parent organisation, and this decision is based on how well the library provides an information service. A special library is expected to assist the parent body's staff to carry out their functions more effectively, thus saving time and money for the parent organisation. Increasingly, special libraries are also expected to generate their own funds in order to justify their existence.

Special libraries are finding that they have to justify their roles. Public, school and academic libraries have a traditional role, one often supported by the expectations of their funding bodies, but special libraries exist only because they

fulfil special needs in their organisations. Under difficult economic circumstances, the organisation may re-evaluate those needs. The main purpose of a special library is to enable the staff of the parent organisation to carry out their duties more effectively, thus saving time and, particularly in the case of libraries in commercial organisations, money for the parent body.

These aims mean that the emphases of special library work differ somewhat from those of public and academic libraries. “Putting knowledge to work”, the motto of the Special Libraries Association in the USA, expresses the broad aim of special libraries very clearly.



EXERCISE 6.3

Compare the characteristics and aims of special libraries with those of the other libraries you have studied so far. Are there marked differences? Indicate these in the table below.

	Special	Academic	School	Public
Characteristics	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____
Aim	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____	_____ _____ _____ _____

Now write out the most significant differences in full sentences.

6.4 USERS OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES

Special library users are limited to the personnel, members or clients of the organisation to which the library belongs. Their information needs are determined by the type of organisation and the individual user's role in that organisation. They are motivated by two basic needs: a desire to keep up to date in their particular field and to obtain specific answers to urgent questions. Thus, information needs are usually current but may also be retrospective depending on the nature of the enquiry. Users may require retrospective information when beginning a new project in order to avoid duplication.

Special libraries essentially carry out the same functions as other types of libraries, but the way they do this is influenced by the parent organisation and the individual library's place in it. In subsequent sections, the differences between activities in special libraries and in other types of libraries will become apparent.

6.5 COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT AND MANAGEMENT

“Putting knowledge to work” is not a passive process; it does not consist of developing huge collections without measuring whether or not they are used or caring whether the information being searched for can be found. In special libraries availability, and not ownership, is what counts. “Special librarianship is a process of giving users what they need and what they need is not necessarily what they want or what they asked for” (White 1995:197).

The purpose of a special library's collection is to provide individual users with the information that they require in a usable form when they need it. The librarian has to ensure that material for which there is a known demand or which is likely to be desired at short notice is either in the library or readily obtainable from somewhere else. The emphasis is on current information, and the amount of retrospective material retained by the special library will depend on whether users need it and whether it can be borrowed from another library when a user requests it.

To build up a satisfactory collection, it is important for special librarians to be aware of the types of information needs they may be expected to meet. In a small organisation, it is possible to make personal contact with all the users and be attuned to their needs by talking to them or seeing their work. In a larger organisation, it may be necessary to adopt other approaches such as:

- visiting departments and attending meetings with principal groups of users
- attending meetings where future plans of the enterprise are discussed as well as meetings that review current activities

- listening to talks by senior staff on work being
- done studying annual, progress and research reports
- taking part in training courses designed to give a better understanding of the organisation's aims and activities
- analysing records of enquiries and requests for documents and information



EXERCISE 6.4

Write down four ways in which a special librarian can keep abreast of the information needs of the library's parent organisation.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

The collections in special libraries may contain published and unpublished documents that are produced internally and externally.

These include various types of information and information sources such as the following:

Scientific and technical journals, books and reports in print may form part of the collection, but information sources are found in a variety of other formats in a special library. Audiovisual material and microforms (microfilm and microfiche) are often used to save space. For example, technical reports are often issued in electronic form. For many special libraries, it is these reports, and not books, that form the lifeblood of the collection. For example, the technical library of a mining company will make special efforts to obtain research reports on mining engineering methods. Newspaper and journal clippings may also form part of special collections. However, the full texts of articles in electronic journals and newspapers and reports are often accessible online.

Externally produced databases can be part of the collection. A database is an information source in computer-readable form, which may contain facts or

figures, bibliographic references or abstracts, or even the full text of documents. Special libraries can purchase commercially produced computerised databases on CD-ROM (compact disc read-only memory) or arrange to search these databases online, that is via telecommunications lines for a fee (per use or annual subscription). In other words, they purchase the right to have electronic access to the content of a remote database. The special library usually serves as the gatekeeper to databases of importance to its users. However, certain licence agreements allow other staff members access to some databases via internal networks.

Types of information include data or information found in reports, patents, standards and specifications, tenders, instruction manuals, data sheets, product catalogues, laboratory notebooks, engineering drawings, statistical publications, laws, regulations, conference proceedings and market surveys.

Information is not only obtained from sources of recorded information. It may be more practical for a user to be referred directly to an expert in the field or to be informed of a forthcoming conference, meeting or symposium that has a direct bearing on his or her problem. Part of the task of acquisition is to know about the activities of experts working in related fields, not forgetting those working in the organisation to which the specific library belongs. Records of these special sources of information, including contact details for the specific experts, should be maintained.

The types of information sources collected depend on the kind of organisation that the library belongs to. Although it may be small, the special library collects material covering its primary areas of interest in great depth, and may include materials not usually found in other libraries. Corporate or agency libraries tend to be small, limited collections staffed by only one librarian. As access to information becomes more important than ownership of it, special library collections are shrinking to an even smaller size than ever before.

The subject scope of the collection is also not static but changes according to changes in the organisation, for example as happens with mergers between companies, or the introduction of new products or services. These factors affect the subject scope of the special library. As a result of financial pressure, more and more emphasis is being placed on human networks and collaboration agreements in order to ensure a balanced collection of information.

6.6 INFORMATION ORGANISATION AND RETRIEVAL

Special libraries employ a wide spectrum of organisational methods. The emphasis is on flexibility and adaptability to changing needs. Some special libraries reject standard classification schemes such as the Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) scheme and even the Universal Decimal Classification (which provides for more minute subdivisions than the DDC) because these

tend to be inflexible and not sufficiently detailed in the particular field of interest to meet the needs of the special library or its users. Instead, it may use a custom-designed classification scheme for its particular subject area, and some special libraries have even developed their own classification schemes. Most, however, use an existing classification scheme, which they adapt and expand to suit their needs.

In special libraries, the request is often not for a source of information but for the information itself. Therefore, the document and information analysis must be sufficiently detailed to enable the library to meet this need. Not all items are treated in the same way. Rather, the maximum organisational effort is devoted to in-depth subject analysis of the most important information. Each item is given precisely the amount of processing it needs to be retrieved most efficiently, according to the importance of the information it contains, its probable use, the length of time it will be retained, and the availability of published guides (that is, commercially produced abstracts or indexes).

Abstracting and indexing are of paramount importance in the special library. Where possible, commercially produced abstracts and indexes are used, but these may be supplemented for greater coverage and to cover internal information. Many special libraries construct databases to meet their needs more specifically than external sources can. The purpose of these databases may be to provide in-depth analysis of important information, to focus on new subjects of vital interest to the organisation, or to track material in publications important to the organisation but not covered by commercial indexes. Relevant internal material is indexed in depth, and while reports are most often treated this way, the library may also index memoranda, minutes, tenders, correspondence and other internal documents.

6.7 USER SERVICES AND USER GUIDANCE FUNCTIONS

The feature that distinguishes special libraries from other library types is the level of service the staff renders to their users and to users of the parent body.

6.7.1 Information provision

Special libraries exist to provide an information service and all their functions and resources are geared to this task or exercise. The information or reference service makes use of information sources that are collected or accessed electronically (see section 6.5).

The special librarian usually concentrates on providing the information itself, rather than merely presenting documents in which the information may be contained. Initial selection eliminates unwanted aspects such as already known facts, obvious propaganda, and solutions that are clearly beyond the range of possible application. This is what is meant by “adding value” to the information (see section 6.8.2).

The reference interview is a prerequisite for any information retrieval. In the interview, the librarian discovers the exact nature of the enquiry, the time range to be covered in the search, the extent of the enquirer's existing knowledge on the subject, the sources that have already been tried without success, the purpose for which the information is needed and the conditions under which it will be used. The librarian also finds out how urgently the user requires the information and informs the user if there is likely to be a delay in obtaining the desired information.

Selection of stock is extremely important. Within the scope of the available resources, the aim of selection is to achieve the maximum probability of finding profitable leads. The better the choice has been and the greater the experience of staff in exploiting the stock, the more likely it becomes that the "right information" will be found to meet users' needs.

6.7.2 Current awareness services

Special libraries place a great deal of emphasis on providing proactive information. One of the most important functions of the special library is to establish a system for reviewing publications immediately upon receipt, to select information pertinent to the work of the organisation, and to note individual items to be brought to the attention of persons to whose work they are related. To do this, the librarian has to understand the needs of the persons or project teams and be informed about their planning. Sometimes they make use of an expert to sift through the material.

This service is known as a current awareness service. The following are some of the methods that are used:

Telephoning individuals. This method is effective only in very small firms.

Noting references on slips and sending them to individuals. Again, this is too time-consuming to be undertaken in larger organisations.

Routing periodicals. This is a good way of getting the contents of periodicals to people who read and select what they need.

Maintaining a file of references. As documents are reviewed, selected references may be typed on cards or entered in a computerised file. Adequate notations or abstracts are often included. The entries in the file can be arranged according to a suitable classification scheme. If the file is well publicised and kept up to date, users will consult it.

Preparing a bulletin for distribution at regular intervals. This is one of the most effective ways of publicising information. It entails a system for reviewing all publications received by the library, selecting pertinent items, collecting them and issuing, at regular intervals, a library bulletin.

Making multiple copies. This entails photocopying tables of contents of periodicals and circulating these to users.

Offering a Selective Dissemination of Information (SDI) service. This service entails drawing up an interest profile for a user or group of users and then searching the literature and other information resources at regular intervals and noting items that fall within the user's field of interest. A list of these items is sent to the user (or group) at regular intervals. SDI services are usually computerised. There are also commercial SDI services, such as South African Selective Dissemination of Information (SASDI), to which users may subscribe.

The availability of journals, indexing and abstracting services in electronic form has resulted in very effective current awareness services becoming available. There are several types of electronic current awareness services, such as Emerald Intelligence + Full-Text.

Push technology. Users subscribe to a list server, an electronic user group that has its own "bulletin board". Everything published on this bulletin board relates to the interest field of the users. If something is published, it is sent to the subscribers' e-mail addresses.

The availability of personal computers linked to local area networks (LANs) and networks such as the internet have made it possible to offer current awareness services with the help of electronic communications. An e-mail message may be sent to the user. This ensures that the user receives such messages promptly, as soon as the e-mail is read.

6.7.3 User education and instruction in information skills

The extensive use of computers means that users today require a whole new set of skills. Special librarians will have to teach users the following skills:

(1) Basic computer skills

This involves search strategies. Special librarians have to assist their users to formulate appropriate questions in order for the librarian to ascertain the most likely sources to use. The librarian advises users what information may be available and informs them about how long their enquiry will take. Certain users require assistance in using specific search tools themselves, and the librarian provides instruction in the specific requirements of various databases and search engines.

(2) Information management skills

Users need to know how to manage the information they find. Personal information management, for example, involves organising information on computer storage media so that it is easily retrievable. Librarians are the logical instructors in the effective development of integrated database systems. For instance, a user of an in-house corporate system could read an

article on a competing company in a newspaper database, go from there to a linking database of company information, and then to local e-mail, which lists recent internal memos on the company.

Reaching users for instructional purposes is an essential skill. Unless their library is in an academic setting, special librarians may have difficulty forming groups for instruction. In the past they resorted to flyers and a great deal of one-on-one instruction, with the librarian responding to the information needs of one user at a time. As many organisations move into a networked environment, librarians can provide remote users with online access to the library by means of communication networks (intranets), and instruction is increasingly provided online or by e-mail.

New members of staff should be introduced to the library and informed about the services it offers. Researchers nowadays are computer-literate and often prefer to do their own searches. They should then be instructed in how to use the bibliographic tools available in the library.

6.8 MANAGEMENT OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION CENTRES

6.8.1 Marketing the special library

Special libraries need to develop channels for obtaining information about the functions, organisation, management and long-term plans of the organisations they work for on a thorough, continuous basis. The library needs to be aware of changes in direction by the parent body, any pending reorganisations, and any information task or exercise that is needed or that presents problems.

Formal arrangements should be made to keep the library informed of the organisation's long-term plans. This information may be acquired in a similar way to the way in which the library obtains information about the activities of the company for the purposes of collection development. The special library needs to be very sensitive to this feedback. If the library does not fulfil its aim of effectively supplying information, it may be closed down.

Special librarians need to ensure that those who make budget decisions are fully informed as to the nature and effectiveness of the library. The staff of a special library should alert the management of the parent body to the positive role the library plays in their organisation. A special library may publicise its services in newsletters of the parent body by including regular announcements in the newsletter.

6.8.2 Role of the special librarian

Technological development has meant that some special libraries are already being called “virtual libraries”. This is because many of these libraries are increasingly making use of electronic databases. The role of the librarian has developed in order to match the needs of the technological workplace. Librarians usually have sufficient experience of the new technology to be able to collect, analyse and disseminate it proactively for strategic decisionmaking. As so much information is available in so many forms, businesses and organisations need the services of an information specialist who can distinguish between important and less important information.

Easy access to information does not add value to the information – the information professional has to do it. As information features more and more prominently as a commodity, special libraries rely increasingly on their information professionals or librarians to find the information required by their organisations and clients.

Special librarians are dynamic and change-oriented information professionals. Given the rapid social, technological and workplace transformations taking place, special librarians are finding themselves evolving to function in a variety of environments.

Their mission is to produce a constant flow of value-added, customised information services.

These information experts are becoming recognised as a valuable part of knowledge-based organisations. They are able to find the best information resources and then to organise, package and deliver information in a way that maximises its usefulness. In addition, special libraries (and their librarians) contribute to the development of information policies, marketing and the use of information products.

One of the advantages that special librarians have over their colleagues in public, school and academic libraries is that they have the freedom to do what they feel needs to be done. They may be constrained by budgets, but these are minor constraints if they can demonstrate that what they do is important to the organisation and provides better information for decisionmaking.

6.9 SUMMARY

The most distinctive feature of special libraries and information centres is not the subjects that they deal with but the services that they provide. Their aim is to make information available in order to further the interests of the parent body and its employees.

6.10 SELF-ASSESSMENT

Test yourself to see whether you can:

- (a) explain what a special library is
- (b) define the concept “special library”
- (c) discuss the functions of a special library
- (d) draw a comparison between the functions of a public library and a special library
- (e) discuss information organisation and retrieval in special libraries
- (f) show how the functions of a special library can provide for the needs of the parent body and its employees
- (g) describe the services rendered by a special library
- (h) explain how a current awareness service could be rendered by a special library

SOURCES

Adams (1995); Arts and Culture Task Group. Library and Information Services Subcommittee (1995); Behrens (1993); Bender (1998); Coetzee (1996); Davis (1999); De Jager (1992); Du Toit (1992); *Harrod's librarians' glossary of terms* (2000); Hoare (1997); Hunt (1993); Kinder & Katz (1988); Matarazzo (1999); Meyer & De Bruin (1993); Multi-million volume library to be established (1996); Rosenberg (1998); Soper, Osborne & Zweizig (1990); Tiefel (1995:68–69); Totterdell & Harrison (1998); Van Deventer (1999); Van Deventer & Van Brakel (1993); White (1995)

STUDY UNIT 7

ORIENTATION

In this study unit we discuss national libraries as distinct from other types of libraries and indicate their importance in the library structure of a country. We consider the national library as a general institution and then look specifically at the National Library of South Africa.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this study unit, you should be able to:

- describe the characteristics of national libraries
- list the aims of a national library
- relate the aims to the users and their needs
- discuss the chief functions of the national library
- relate your discussion to the situation in South Africa or in your own country
- discuss the activities of the National Library of South Africa

7. NATIONAL LIBRARY

7.1.1 Characteristics of national libraries

National libraries differ from one country to another, as their particular body of users and user needs vary. It is therefore difficult to find a definition that applies to all national libraries.

Harrod's librarians' glossary (2000:506) defines a national library as follows:

A library maintained out of government funds and serving the nation as a whole. Usually, books in such libraries are for reference only. They usually receive material through legal deposit legislation. [Their] function is to collect and preserve for posterity the published record of the country's cultural heritage, usually in printed form but increasingly in multimedia formats as well.

National libraries are libraries that, irrespective of their title, are responsible for acquiring and conserving copies of all significant publications published in the country and function as a "deposit" library, either by law or under other arrangements. They also normally perform some of the following functions: produce a current and retrospective national bibliography; maintain a collection of foreign

sources including books about the country; act as a national bibliographic information centre; and compile union catalogues.

This definition applies mostly to national libraries in developed countries such as Britain and France. In developing countries, other libraries such as a university library may also serve as a national library and perform the functions of the national library. Thus, the term “national library” refers to a wide range of institutions, all with responsibilities and functions of national and international importance.

What is very important is that a national library must belong to the entire nation and not exclusively to any part of it. In other words, it must be maintained primarily by funds allotted from, and disbursed by, the national exchequer. The services of the national library must be available to all nationals on the basis of equality.

From these definitions, we can infer the following attributes of a national library:

- (1) It is national property.
- (2) It renders a service to the whole nation.
- (3) It is financed by the state.
- (4) It builds up a collection of the country’s publications.
- (5) It is the central library of the country and carries out library functions at a national and international level.

The authority by which the national library exists and performs its functions is usually through an act of parliament or a piece of legislation by a legislative body.



EXERCISE 7.2

Keeping the above characteristics in mind, formulate your own definition of a national library.

7.1.2 Aims of national libraries

The most important aim of the national library is collecting and preserving all published information sources in a country, in whatever form.

An equally important, if not more important, aim is to provide an infrastructure or foundation for library services in the country, in order to ensure that the information needs of the country are met. The national library ought to take the lead by coordinating and supplementing information services rendered by other libraries.

Information is essential to a country. Without it the country cannot develop or maintain its position as a developed country. The national library ought to ensure the optimal and reliable availability of information for decisionmaking and task performance for national use on the basis of efficiency and economic relevance.

An important aspect of the information aim of the national library is to meet those information needs not met by the other libraries in the country. If there is a well-established library system that meets the need for public, university, special, research and school library services, the national library does not need to address these needs. However, in developing countries, the national library may have to meet some or all of these needs.

Another of the national aims is to stimulate optimal use of the nation's cultural heritage insofar as it is recorded. This is done primarily at a national level and secondarily at an international level.

7.1.3 Users of national libraries

One could say that the chief users of the national library are other libraries, which approach the national library when they are unable to meet the needs of their users. The national library assists by providing them with support services such as developing collections, bibliographic checks, resource classification, preservation, supplying information, and international mediation.

In most countries, the national library is immediately accessible only to people living in or near the capital city and to those who can afford to travel to it. Therefore, the national library serves the majority of the population indirectly, through libraries and other institutions serving them. Private individuals may also use the national library to satisfy their information needs. Potential users vary from primary and secondary school children and the general public to professional people, advanced postgraduate students and researchers.

7.1.4 General functions of national libraries

In the report by the Arts and Culture Task Group (1995:7) we find the following definition:

A national library has particular responsibilities for collecting, organising and preserving and making available the nation's heritage of books and other information-bearing publications, for high-level reference services, and for providing a national infrastructure which enables the country's libraries and information agencies to carry out bibliographic work, resource-sharing, and information supply efficiently.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) (in Totterdell & Harrison 1998) classified all the functions of national libraries into three categories:

(1) Main or essential functions

- to collect and conserve the national literature, aiming at complete coverage to produce a current national bibliography
- to operate a lending service
- to act as a national bibliographic information service
- to publish and/or support the production of specialist bibliographies

(2) Desirable functions

- acting as a centre for research and development in library and information work
- providing education and training in library and information work
- acting as a planning centre for the nation's libraries

(2) Possible functions

- acting as a centre for the exchange of material between libraries
- providing specialised library services to the country's governing body
- acting as a book museum



EXERCISE 7.2

Study the above classification of the functions. When you have read through sections 7.1.5 to 7.1.8, state whether you agree with the classification. If not, draw up your own classification according to what you consider to be the most important and less important aspects of the South African situation.

7.1.5 Collection development and management

Collection development and management is linked to the functions of collecting and conserving the nation's publications and foreign literature (national and international publications), as well as the function of serving as a repository and exchange for publications.

7.1.5.1 Collecting the nation's publications

The first function of a national library is to collect the nation's publications. In many countries this is achieved through legal deposit legislation. Legal deposit usually requires that publishers deposit one free copy (or more) of every book published with certain libraries, in terms of law. The purpose of this is to ensure a comprehensive collection and to preserve the nation's heritage.

This collection should not be confined to printed documents but should also include published documents in other formats, for example sound and video recordings. In addition to ordinary books and journals, a national library should aim to have a comprehensive collection of official documents, report literature where possible (some reports issued by industrial organisations have a restricted distribution), printed music and ephemera. An important feature of this function is the conservation of the collection for future use.

This function is important for the Universal Availability of Publications (UAP), a project undertaken by IFLA. The aim of the project is to ensure that all publications are available universally. Universal availability is assured if each country's national library undertakes to collect and preserve every item published in that country. This means that users anywhere in the world can be assured that a record not available from any library in their country may be borrowed from the national library of its country of origin.



EXERCISE 7.3

Do you understand what is meant by "legal deposit"? Make your own summary of what legal deposit entails and how this relates to the activities of national libraries.

7.1.5.2 Collecting foreign publications

The major research libraries (special and academic libraries) of a country acquire extensive collections of information sources in order to serve the basic needs of their users. However, the primary users of these collections are only the small proportion of the population who has access to these libraries.

To ensure access to these collections, the country's national library should develop a collection or collections that will be available through loan or photocopy to those users throughout the country who do not have access to special and academic libraries.

This function can be termed the central loan/photocopy collection of foreign publications and is formed on the basis of known and likely demands. An excellent example of this type of collection is the British Library Document Supply Centre (BLDSC), formerly known as the British Library Lending Division (BLLD).

If a national library cannot build such a collection itself, it should at least supply the necessary infrastructure to permit access to these records in other libraries, for instance through interlending. This is discussed further in this study unit.

7.1.5.3 Serving as a repository and exchange for publications

As all local libraries run short of space sooner or later, a great deal of material may be weeded out of one library which may be needed by another library, whether in the country itself or in foreign countries. The exchange and distribution of duplicates and other surplus material are among the most important activities of the national library and are linked to preservation and interlibrary loan.

However, care needs to be taken that at least one copy of every publication within a country is retained and preserved in order to ensure future availability. Unless there is some plan for retaining these records, they may become unavailable within a few years of publication. This has happened in some developing countries and valuable material is now no longer available.

Retention has little purpose if it is not closely linked to the interlending system. Thus, withdrawn material that is being retained should be kept at a library (or libraries) that undertake the bulk of interlending, rather than be distributed among other libraries. It follows that policies relating to the responsibility for retention and distribution should be the same as, or linked to, the policies for national record supply systems, in other words interlending.

7.1.6 Information organisation and retrieval

7.1.6.1 Publishing the national bibliography

As the national library has the most complete collection of its own country's publications, it should make this information accessible by compiling and publishing an extensive current and retrospective national bibliography, thus exercising bibliographic control.

Before continuing with this section, revise study unit 3 of this study guide to refresh your memory about the concepts of bibliographic control, bibliographic

records and national bibliographies. Remember that national bibliographies can be current or retrospective (listing sources that were published in earlier years).

A national bibliography can be defined as a complete list of all the publications the national library acquires as a result of legal deposit as well as new journal titles. A description, called a bibliographic record, is compiled for each publication. It includes information such as author, title, publisher, place of publication, date and pagination.

The national bibliography does not list separate articles in journals but only complete physical units, in other words the journal title is entered but not the individual articles.



EXERCISE 7.4

Visit your nearest library and see whether you find a national bibliography. Remember that you can consult a national bibliography in print or electronic form.

Examine a few of the entries. Now list at least three main elements in the entries and give examples found in each bibliographic record.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

The compilation of a national bibliography is a major function of national libraries in countries that produce a large number of publications, but is a relatively minor one in others.

This function is important for Universal Bibliographic Control (UBC), an IFLA project started in 1973. UBC requires every country to accept responsibility for compiling a national bibliography that records all publications within that country in an internationally acceptable form and makes the bibliography available for retrieval of bibliographic information. UBC is possible if every country accepts this responsibility.

Nowadays, many national libraries have computerised their national bibliographies by adding the bibliographic records to a computerised database. The advantage of this is that the computerised records (the separate entries for each publication) may not only be used for printing, updating, cumulating and indexing national

bibliographies, but can also be supplied directly to other libraries, either for consultation or for direct use in cataloguing their own material (see library cooperation below).

Computerisation makes it easier to produce up-to-date records and provide access to them. The value of the national bibliography is lost unless it is up to date. Libraries need access to records of new publications for selection and cataloguing purposes, and users want to be informed of the latest publications in their field of interest.

The form of the entries in the national bibliography should conform to internationally accepted standards as they permit the international exchange of bibliographic information. These standards are dealt with briefly later in this study unit.

7.1.6.2 Serving as the national bibliographic information centre

In addition to the publications of their own country, users need to be informed of publications in other countries. Bibliographic access in this context may be defined as making available bibliographic information on what has been published. Bibliographic information on much of the world's scientific publications, particularly articles in journals, is contained in huge databases.



EXERCISE 7.5

Complete the following sentences:

A database containsto information sources.

.....records are used as entries in bibliographic databases.

While it is the national library's responsibility to make its own databases available, and to try to ensure that other databases are accessible within the country, it is not necessarily its function to provide access to other databases. Specialist research libraries, other than the national library, may carry out the function of a national bibliographic enquiry centre. Commercial bodies are also becoming increasingly involved in providing access to bibliographic databases. Whatever the solution adopted by a country, it is essential to ensure that provision is made for access to bibliographic databases and that they are available to all.

7.1.7 Document delivery and access

Another major responsibility of a national library is to make the material in the library available to users. Records in libraries must be accessible. There are two main forms of access to records in a national library:

- (1) Records may be made available to users in the library itself. This limits the use of the documents to those people who live near the library.
- (2) The records may be made available through interlending.

The most common method used to provide access to records not in stock is an interlibrary loan system, also referred to as an interlending system. Interlending or interlibrary lending (ILL) is the process whereby one library obtains records requested by its users, which are not available from its own stock, from another specified library. The requested material may be forwarded as a temporary loan, or a photocopy or faxed copy may be supplied or transmitted instead. This is an important method as no library, irrespective of its size, can provide everything its users require.

Interlending is increasingly becoming known as record or document supply, because many items, such as periodical articles, are supplied to the requesters in the form of photocopies rather than being lent to them. Some authors see this as the most important function of the national library.

For interlending to work effectively, libraries using this service must be able to locate records speedily. The tool used for this is the union catalogue. A joint catalogue is a list containing the joint holdings of two or more collections. It lists documents that form part of the stock of the libraries participating in the compilation of that particular union catalogue and indicates their locations in the holding libraries. It thus indicates the holdings of the participating institutions. A national union catalogue represents the library stock of a country.

The national library provides the infrastructure for interlibrary lending by compiling the union or joint catalogue for the country. The national library may also act as the clearinghouse for internal ILL (that is, requests are sent to the national library, which then checks which library has the requested material and forwards the request to the relevant library). The national library also acts as the clearinghouse for international interlibrary loans and may also provide further infrastructure by formulating policy and rules governing interlibrary loans.



EXERCISE 7.6

Complete the following sentence: A national union catalogue lists documents that form part of the library stock of a _____ and indicates their _____.

It has become accepted that it is each country's basic responsibility to make its publications available by loan or photocopy to remote users, including those in other countries. Without full acceptance of this responsibility by the national libraries of all countries, publications cannot be universally available. This function is therefore most important for UAP. In practice, this means that two copies of each publication should be deposited with the national library; one copy for preservation and one for loan.

7.1.8 Information provision

A further responsibility of a national library is offering information analysis and supply. Every country should make provision for supplying information directly to users. This is necessary as users require information but do not have the time or motivation to seek out the correct record that will provide them with the desired information. Nor do they have the expertise of trained information personnel that may be needed to find the information. There should be a means for providing any publicly available information, which may range from a straightforward request, for example for a chemical formula, to a highly complex package of information that needs to be gathered from numerous sources.

Information services may be offered at:

- local public library level
- specialised library or information centres
- specialised subject centres (within a national system of such centres)

National planning and involvement are essential to coordinate these services. In some countries, the national library assumes this coordinating role, as it should be linked to the related functions of national document supply and bibliographic control.

7.1.9 National Library of South Africa

The National Library of South Africa (NLSA) functions from two sites. It has a Pretoria division at the premises of the former State Library in Pretoria and a Cape Town division at the premises of the former South African Library in Cape Town.

In terms of the National Library of South Africa Act 92 of 1998, these two libraries amalgamated to form the National Library of South Africa. They ceased to exist as separate entities on 1 November 1999. In terms of the Act, the National Library is situated in Pretoria and Cape Town and can also have agencies and departments in other places. The location of the office of the National Librarian is decided by the Minister of Arts and Culture on the recommendation of the Council of the National Library. The Act also specifies the Council's aims and functions.

In figures 7.1 and 7.2 you will see photos of the main buildings housing the two divisions of the National Library.

7.1.9.1 Aims of the National Library of South Africa

The aims of the National Library of South Africa are “to contribute to socio-economic, cultural, educational, scientific and innovative development, by collecting, recording, preserving and making available the national documentary heritage and promoting a consciousness and appreciation of it, by cultivating informational literacy and by facilitating access to the world’s information sources” (South Africa 1998a:5).

FIGURE 7.1

The National Library of South Africa, Pretoria division



7.1.9.2 Functions of the National Library of South Africa

The functions of the National Library of South Africa largely coincide with those listed above. In terms of the National Library of South Africa Act 92 of 1998, the functions are as follows:

- (a) (i) to build up a complete collection of published documents derived from and relating to Southern Africa
- (ii) to maintain and expand any other collections of published and unpublished documents, with the emphasis on documents stemming from material relating to Southern Africa
- (iii) to promote the optimal management of collections of published documents kept in South African libraries, as a national resource
- (iv) to supplement the national functions envisaged (in the previous paragraph) with selected documents
- (b) (i) to record the documents envisaged in paragraph (a)

- (ii) to render a national bibliographic service and to act as the national bibliographic agency
- (c) to promote optimal access to published documents, nationally and internationally
- (d) to provide reference and information services nationally and internationally
- (e) to arrange, develop, retrieve, preserve and make its collection material available for use
- (f) to facilitate access to the material in Southern African libraries by means of retrieval systems
- (g) to render bibliographic services throughout the country
- (h) to act as the national preserving library and to provide conservation services on a national basis
- (i) to promote consciousness and appreciation of the national published documentary legacy
- (j) to promote information awareness and informational literacy

To achieve these intentions and in terms of the Act, the National Library should

- (a) provide appropriate informational products and services
- (b) provide leadership, guidance and advice to South African libraries and information services
- (c) undertake planning and coordination in cooperation with other libraries and information services
- (d) offer training and educational courses which relate to the activities, in consultation with suitable institutions and professional bodies
- (e) undertake research and development
- (f) liaise with libraries and other institutions inside and outside South Africa

The functions of the two divisions are essentially the same as the functions of the former State Library and South African Library. The Cape Town division is the national reference library of South Africa. In contrast, the Pretoria division's stock is a service stock that is issued for use outside the library.

Lor (2000:38–39) identifies the specific functions of the National Library that would primarily ensure access to information and information collections as follows:

- building up a complete collection of documents emanating from South Africa
- bibliographic control of documents emanating from South Africa
- providing access to own holdings
- providing access to the holdings of other libraries
- provision of reference, research and information services
- preservation of own collections

- various auxiliary services, such as guidance and advice to South African libraries and information services
- legal deposit
- official publications depositories



EXERCISE 7.7

Now study the abovementioned section again and group the functions of the NLSA into five broad categories in the space below.

(1) _____

(2) _____

(3) _____

(4) _____

(5) _____

7.1.9.3 *Collecting and conserving national and foreign publications*

A primary function of the National Library of South Africa is to develop a collection of documents emanating from South Africa as well as foreign publications.

(a) Legal deposit

The national collection is built up by means of legal deposit. In terms of the Legal Deposit Act 54 of 1997, all publishers are obliged to send a prescribed number of copies (no more than five) of everything they publish in South Africa to each of the following libraries: the National Library, Cape Town division; the National Library, Pretoria division; the Natal Society Library in Pietermaritzburg; City Library Services, Bloemfontein (Mangaung); and the Library of Parliament in Cape Town.

The process of revising the Legal Deposit Act was completed in 1997. An important aim of this revision was to make provision for the legal deposit of publications in media other than printed paper. The Act includes the National Film, Video and Sound Archives in Pretoria as a full deposit library for specific categories of media for current and future use.

(b) Official publications depositories

The legal deposit legislation also institutes official publications depositories. Official publications are documents published by an organ of local, provincial and national government or a parastatal organisation or any other institution listed as a public entity. The Act introduces the term “place of deposit”, which includes legal deposit libraries and other types of depositories for official publications. As official publications depositories, all the abovementioned libraries also have to serve as centres for public awareness of, and access to, official publications.

(c) Collecting foreign publications

The National Library also collects publications about South Africa and publications by South African authors that are published outside the country. The National Library, Pretoria division, is responsible for maintaining a general study and research collection to supplement national stocks.

The National Library has very limited funds for the purchase of books and journals. It has always collected mainly in the areas of the humanities, law and social sciences, not in the natural sciences. The development of collections in these fields has been left to research libraries. Nevertheless, everything that has been published on science and technology in South Africa is collected through legal deposit.

(d) Conservation and preservation

Both divisions of the National Library preserve special collections.

Besides its valuable collection of Africana, the National Library, Cape Town division, preserves the Grey and the Dessinian collections. The Dessinian collection is the most important 18th century Cape book collection in the country. In study unit 2, you learnt about the significant role Von Dessin and the former South African Library played in library development in South Africa.

The National Library, Pretoria division, collects foreign official publications, for example the Smithsonian collection, which contains official publications of the United States of America.

The National Library, Cape Town division, conserves publications in their original form and has a laboratory specially fitted for the purpose of restoration. The National Library, Pretoria division, microfilms South African newspapers that are not microfilmed by commercial firms.

7.1.9.4 Information organisation and retrieval

The National Library, Pretoria division, is responsible for compiling the South African National Bibliography (SANB). The national bibliography is compiled from the legal deposit collection. Books, monographic series, periodicals, published conference papers, government publications, maps and research reports of major institutions are included. Entries furnish complete bibliographic information (i.e. author, title, publisher, place of publication, date and pagination). It lists publications according to subject, author and title. The UNIMARC format and system have been used, which are compatible with international standards for machine-readable catalogues as accepted by major national libraries abroad. This means that the entries can be used for computerised databases such as Sabinet.

The National Library, Pretoria division, focuses on the promotion of UNIMARC, SAMARC, and MARC21 as communication formats. The aim of this is to improve bibliographic access to computerised information within South African libraries and information services by the application of internationally accepted standards for the format of entries for the national bibliography.

The National Library has compiled the following retrospective national bibliographies:

- (1) The National Library, Cape Town division, as the former South African Library, compiled a South African Bibliography to the year 1925. It covers publications from the time printing was invented in about 1450 up until 1925. This bibliography is brought up to date by regular supplements.
- (2) The National Library, Pretoria division, as the former State Library, compiled the Retrospective South African National Bibliography, covering the period between 1926 and 1958. This function has been moved to the National Library, Cape Town division.

The National Library, Pretoria division, also administers the system of International Standard Book Numbers (ISBNs) for South Africa. The system identifies each book by means of a unique number, and the Pretoria division also sees to it that each publisher of a South African journal gets an International Standard Serial Number.

The National Library, Pretoria division, is responsible for the Index to South African Periodicals (ISAP). It is an author, title and subject index to articles appearing in more than 500 current South African journals.

ISAP may be accessed as a computerised Sabinet database for users of the network.

7.1.9.5 Document delivery and access

The National Library, Pretoria division, is responsible for creating the infrastructure for interlibrary loans. It formulates the policy and rules that regulate interlibrary

loans. It also updates a computerised databank of the members of the interlending scheme, together with their addresses. This databank is regularly updated, which is important because details change and new libraries register during the course of the year. The scheme is known as the Southern African Interlending Scheme (SAIS). Library and information services in six countries participate in this scheme.

The National Library, Pretoria division, also compiles the Directory of Southern African Libraries from time to time. The library, in cooperation with the Centre for Geoinformation Science, as part of the South African Public Library Project funded by the Carnegie Corporation and the NLSA, compiled a database of public and community libraries called PACLISA (Public and Community Libraries Inventory of South Africa). Besides containing statistical data about the size of library collections, circulation figures, operating costs and funding, it also contains demographic data about the area in which libraries are located and maps showing the physical distribution of public libraries throughout South Africa.

Previously the National Library, Pretoria division, compiled the Joint Catalogue of Monographs in Southern African Libraries and the Periodicals in Southern African Libraries (PISAL). This has now been incorporated into SACat (the joint catalogue on Sabinet).

FIGURE 7.3

Example of entry with abstraction in the Index to South African Periodicals (ISAP) printed from a database on CD-ROM

NISC DISCover Report

SOUTH AFRICAN STUDIES - December 2001

Title: Field relationships and age of supracrustal Beit Bridge Complex and associated granitoid gneisses in the Central Zone of the Limpopo Belt, South Africa.

Author: Kroner, A.; Brandl, G.

Source: South African journal of geology; Vol. 101, Iss 3, p.201-213, Sep, 1998

Key Terms:
Sand River; Central Zone; Limpopo Belt; Supracrustal rocks; Sand River Gneiss; Beit Bridge Complex; Protoliths; Zircon ages; Metamorphism; Metapelites; Granitoid gneiss; Dorothy Gneiss; Verbaard Gneiss; Geochronology; Messina; Causeway locality; Verbaard locality; Concordia diagrams

Abstract:
Reports that field relationships in the Sand River in the Central Zone of the Limpopo Belt show that the supracrustal rocks of the Beit Bridge Complex are intruded by granitoid phases of the Sand River Gneiss protoliths. These leucogneisses represent some of the oldest magmatic phases in the Central one of the Limpopo Belt dates so far. Illustrates with maps, graphs, tables, photographs, a photomicrograph and Concordia diagrams

Major Topic: Geology

Language: English

ISAP Document Delivery: National Library of SA, Pta Div, PO Box 397, Pretoria, 0001 SOUTH AFRICA; Tel: +27 12 321-8931 Fax: +27 12 325-5702; E-mail: docdel@nlsa.ac.za; URL: <http://www.nlsa.ac.za/index.html>

Record ID: 2860-11000439801

Database: ISAP - INDEX TO SOUTH AFRICAN PERIODICALS

7.1.10 Role of the national library in a developing country

We now consider whether the traditional functions of a national library will meet the needs of developing countries. The characteristics of a developing community include some or all of the following to various degrees: low average standard of education, widespread illiteracy, absence of a reading culture, prevalence of an oral tradition, socioeconomic problems, widespread poverty, with a large section of the population living at or below subsistence level, fierce competition for funds from the public purse, difficulties in obtaining foreign exchange, lack of professional staff and a poor communications infrastructure.

Libraries in developing countries should evaluate these factors and question how the national library can meet their needs. Some of the differences between national libraries in developed and developing countries are summarised in table 7.1.

As you saw in section 7.1.9, the National Library of South Africa Act makes provision for some of the aspects applicable to developing communities. Once the needs and characteristics of a developing country have been taken into account, the appropriateness of the traditional model for a national library must be considered.

**EXERCISE 7.8**

After you have studied the section above, reread the sections on the aims and functions of a national library (sections 7.1.2 and 7.1.4). Write notes on how the aims of a national library relate to the needs of a developing country, and indicate how the functions, particularly the activities set out in the National Library of South Africa Act, can advance these as well.

7.1.11 International cooperation

In the previous sections, we explained how libraries in a specific country or area may cooperate in order to improve their services. In this section we look at cooperation in different fields across national borders.

Apart from the various functions already discussed, national libraries play an important role in international cooperation. The terms “international librarianship” and “comparative librarianship” are sometimes used arbitrarily as synonyms.

International librarianship may be defined as follows: International librarianship consists of activities carried out among or between governmental or nongovernmental institutions, organisations, groups or individuals of two or more nations to promote, establish, develop, maintain and evaluate library, documentation and allied services, and librarianship and the library profession generally, in any part of the world.

TABLE 7.1

Differences between national libraries in developed and developing countries

	Developed countries	Developing countries
Main users	Other libraries; advanced scholars and decisionmakers	Individual end-users, and communities; full spectrum from illiterates upwards
Sphere of operation	National and international	Local, regional and national
Typical activities	<p>Legal deposit; comprehensive collection of national book production</p> <p>National cooperative collection; development programmes</p> <p>Preservation of collections</p> <p>Repository and exchange scheme for relegated material</p> <p>Developing infrastructure for document delivery</p> <p>Highbrow cultural exchanges; exhibitions</p> <p>Experts' workshops; colloquia</p> <p>Developing standards for computerised bibliographic records</p> <p>Research on and development of new technology</p>	<p>Promoting indigenous writing and publishing; recording oral traditions; producing literature for neo-literates</p> <p>Building basic book stock relevant to national needs</p> <p>Establishing school, public, college libraries</p> <p>Acquiring and processing materials for branch/affiliated libraries</p> <p>Servicing depots; providing book boxes</p> <p>Delivery of documents and information to end-users</p> <p>Literacy work; promoting reading and library development</p> <p>Education and training of library workers</p> <p>Standardisation of basic procedures</p> <p>Implementation of appropriate technology</p>

Major problems and challenges	Staff costs	Staff recruitments
	Funds; charges; cost recovery	Funds; foreign exchange
	Space	Space
	“Slow fires”	Climatic and other threats to book stock
	Collection growth	Inadequate book fund
	Keeping up with new technology	Maintaining equipment; erratic power supply
	Complexity of system	Bureaucracy
	Productivity; rationalisation	Productivity

Source: Lor 1991:79–81

It may also be more simply defined as follows: International librarianship is the study or practice of librarianship in a manner that transcends national boundaries.

Bibliographic control and copyright are only some of the issues on which there are international agreements that librarians have to take into account. International organisations, such as the FID, IFLA, the International Standards Organisation (ISO) and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO), enter into agreements that may influence the daily activities of librarians, for example when it comes to standards for the exchange of bibliographic information.

7.1.12 Summary of national libraries

The national library is a unique type of library in that it fulfils its functions at national level. It is the library that coordinates the library and information services in a country and represents the country internationally on various bodies that promote international cooperation in regard to librarianship and information science and the library profession. The functions of the national library should help it to fulfil its aim of meeting the information needs of the whole country.

7.1.13 SELF-ASSESSMENT

- (1) Test yourself to see whether you are able to:
 - (a) define what a national library is
 - (b) describe the chief characteristics of a national

- (c) library list the most important aims of a national library
 - (d) explain how the aims of a national library may be related to its users and their needs
 - (e) discuss five functions of a national library
 - (f) explain what is meant by the “legal deposit of publications”
 - (g) describe the role of the national library in terms of bibliographic control
 - (h) discuss the system of interlibrary loans
 - (i) give your opinion on the role the national library can play in a developing country
- (2) The following are examples of essay-type questions:
- (a) Discuss the functions of a national library. In your answer, refer to the activities of the National Library of South Africa or the national library in your own country.
 - (b) Evaluate the use of cooperative networks for resource-sharing.

SOURCES

Arts and Culture Task Group. Library and Information Services Subcommittee (1995); Broodryk (1999); De Beer (1998); *Harrod's librarians' glossary* (2000); Lesk (2005); Line (1983); Line & Line (1992); Lor (1991); Lor (1998); Lor (1999); Lor (2000); Plaister (1997); Sewell (1981); South Africa (1998a); South Africa (1998b); Totterdell & Harrison (1998); Westra & Zaaiman (1991)

STUDY UNIT 8

Museums, Archives and Records Offices

ORIENTATION

In this study unit we provide an overview of museums, archives and records offices, and explain how they came into existence. For centuries there was no real difference between archives and museums, and it was only after the invention of the printing press that there was a demarcation between archives and museums. As many more copies of documents could be produced and preserved in institutions, libraries came to be associated with these copies, and archives concentrated on unique, original records.

For a long time, the primary task and business of museums was seen as the preservation of objects, with the description of these objects as a secondary function. However, the context in which the objects were found or used and the information associated with them, together with their preservation, is important to museums. The interaction between people and their environments is vital to museums, as is the management of the objects that form the cultural heritage of their environment.

There is also a close relationship between records offices and archives. Records are created by individuals or organisations in support of the activities of their creators. They are administered and managed by the organisations responsible for their creation, maintained, used and discarded. However, those that are retained eventually make their way into archives, where they are managed by archivists.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this study unit, you should be able to:

- define museums, archives and records offices
- discuss the development of all three institutions
- distinguish between the different types of museums
- give an account of the roles that all three institutions play in society
- express your opinion on the value and use of the three institutions
- describe the relationship between archives and records management
- describe the tasks and functions that are performed in records offices

KEY CONCEPTS

archives

preservation
museum

museum types records
office exhibitions
restoration functions
principle of provenance

8.1 INTRODUCTION

Most people have an idea of a museum as a place where objects (mostly old objects) are preserved. However, in recent years the idea of managing the objects as well as the entire cultural heritage of the environmental resources has developed, and museums are organised so as to make their collections available for cultural and scientific purposes.

Archives are among the oldest information institutions in existence, dating as far back as 25 centuries to the preservation of written records in early Mesopotamia. At that time there was no real difference between archives and museums, but after the invention of printing, archives became associated with the preservation of unique, original records.

The word “archive” is derived from the Greek “*archaios*”, which means old, as well as another Greek word “*arche*”, which means power or authority. The Latin word “*archivum*” refers to a government building used to preserve documents recording government activities or tasks or exercises.

Records are created by individuals or organisations as products of immediate interest to them that support the activities of their creator. If they are administered correctly, they are managed and may be maintained, used and discarded in an efficient way.

There is a degree of overlap between the interests of records managers and archivists. Some archival documents may have been managed in records offices before being transferred to archives.

In this study unit we will look at definitions of all three of the institutions outlined above.

8.2 MUSEUMS

8.2.1 Definition and nature of museums

A museum is an institution developed by society in order to preserve objects of a cultural or natural scientific nature for as long as possible. Objects are not only collected and preserved but are also used in research. Museums are organised so as to make their collections available for cultural and scientific purposes.

They originated from the passion that people have to collect things. This urge to collect is very deep-seated in human nature. All civilisations, from the most primitive to the most developed, share a desire to bring together objects that are beautiful, valuable, rare or intriguing. The urge to collect objects is accompanied by the desire to show them to others or to exhibit them. There are always people who are keen to view such collections. These desires and interests create the basis for establishing museums.

Once the initial urge to collect was satisfied, museums turned to making objects available so that they could be used for research and study purposes. As society became more organised, museums became more accessible and they focused on the growing need for information.

How do we define a museum, and what is expected of contemporary museums?

A museum is a non-profit, permanent institution in the service of society and its development. It is open to the public. Museums acquire, conserve, research, communicate and exhibit material evidence of human beings and their environment for the purposes of study, education and enjoyment.

A museum is a collection of physical objects, whether of natural origin or human creation, assembled for research, educational, artistic or leisure interest, and also encompasses the building in which they are kept. The early museums were unsystematic cabinets of curiosities assembled by hobbyist and compulsive collectors. However, the modern museum is a systematic, properly inventoried information resource mainly, but not exclusively, of three-dimensional objects, appropriately stored and, in the case of suitable parts of the collection, displayed and interpreted by museum professionals whose responsibilities go far beyond the simply curatorial (Lees 1997:304).



EXERCISE 8.1

A contemporary museum may therefore be seen as an institution that collects, studies and preserves objects of human and natural interest, and makes these available to the public for the purposes of providing information, education and recreation. The concept of a museum may include institutions such as art galleries, secular and religious collections, certain historical monuments, permanent outdoor exhibitions, botanical and zoological gardens, aquariums, planetariums, nature reserves, and so forth. A museum is a reflection of people and their activities, and of their natural, cultural and social environment. Objects in exhibitions are presented in terms of scientific, aesthetic and psychological criteria. Each object is exhibited in context with other objects, and the exhibition is elucidated by means of explanatory notes or documentary facts. The group of objects is then placed within the

overall context of natural or cultural heritage. The aim is to establish direct contact between the individual and the object.

Formulate your own definition of a museum.

8.2.2 Types of museums

Museums are usually classified according to the types of objects collected, in other words the subject field on which they focus. They may be broadly classified as history, art or natural sciences museums, although some include a combination of these fields. All museums collect, preserve, study and exhibit objects. They also differ widely in their activities and are discussed below in the South African context.

8.2.2.1 *General museums*

The objects in general museums form both cultural and natural heritage collections; thus these museums could be said to contain large unspecialised collections and are usually located in large national centres of a country. Most municipal museums in South Africa fall into this category. Some examples are the National Museum (Bloemfontein), Natal Museum (Pietermaritzburg), Albany Museum (Grahamstown), and the McGregor Museum (Kimberley), which also has a herbarium.

8.2.2.2 *Cultural heritage museums*

Most museums are essentially cultural heritage museums, and the objects they collect reflect the material culture of human beings. The aim of cultural history is to recreate and bring perspective to the past by means of three-dimensional objects.

(a) General cultural heritage museums

These collections include all kinds of materials of an historical, documentary and cultural-historical nature, including objects such as weapons, vehicles, medals, coins, stamps, furniture, domestic tools, clothing, documents, paintings, books, photographs and sound recordings. Examples are the National Cultural History Museum (NCHM) (Pretoria), the Africana Museum (part of Museum Africa, Johannesburg), and the South African Cultural History Museum (Cape Town).

(b) Specialised museums of cultural history

These are also known as thematic museums because each collection is focused on a particular period or theme, for example the 1820 Settlers or the gold rush. All objects in the collection are directly or indirectly related to the theme. Other examples are the Huguenot Memorial Museum (Franschhoek), the Forest Industry Museum (Sabie), and Coinworld at the South African Mint (Centurion).

(c) House museums

An historical house museum is located within the original home of the person or the event that it commemorates. The collection consists of the original contents of the house, including any items that convey personal information about the owner(s) or event. House museums usually consist of period rooms depicting a historical style and period.

Period rooms are most suited to exhibiting objects in a functional, overall context. Sometimes house museums are established where historical areas or streets in a town or city are preserved as a whole. Some buildings are fitted out as museums and the rest are restored and inhabited. Examples of this may be seen in Stellenbosch and Tulbagh. Examples of house museums include Melrose House (Pretoria), Smuts House (Irene), Groot Constantia and Koopmans-De Wet House (Cape Town).

(d) Military museums

General military museums focus on military history, and their collections include war equipment, aircraft, medals, uniforms, flags, maps, photographs, war journalism, paintings, art by prisoners of war, and weaponry. Examples are the South African Museum of Military History (Johannesburg) and the War Museum of the Boer Republics (Bloemfontein).

Specialised military museums have collections and exhibits related to specific military installations, for example the Castle of Good Hope (Cape Town).

(e) Open-air museums

Buildings are reconstructed and/or preserved on a suitable site when they cannot be preserved at their original location. If the original building is not available, a replica may be erected provided that it remains true to the original in a cultural and historical sense. The buildings may include shops, churches, homesteads and, in Britain, even Shakespeare's Globe Theatre (London).

Historical objects are placed within a functional context in a comprehensive cultural environment against an appropriate background. In this way a complete picture is created. South African examples are the Kimberley Mine Museum and Tsongakraal Open Air Museum (Letsitele).

(f) Site museums

These are often confused with open-air museums, but site museums interpret remains of a cultural historical nature or natural history phenomena on a site where the remains have been preserved or have been restored or reconstructed by means of exhibitions, literature or other educational methods. Examples include battlefields, buildings and palaeontological, archaeological and geological remains.

(g) Art museums

General art museums house large collections of paintings, graphics and sculptures. The early collections in South African art museums consisted mainly of European works of art. South African art first made its appearance in collections three or four decades ago. As a result, most art museums own collections of 20th-century South African art. The South African National Gallery (Cape Town), the Johannesburg Art Gallery, the Pretoria Art Museum and the Tatham Art Gallery (Pietermaritzburg) are examples. Some collections also include textiles and ceramics.

(h) Natural heritage museums

The aim of natural heritage museums is to document all available information relating to nature. Three types of collection are relevant, namely study skins, wet collections (preserved in liquid), and documentary data including photographs and sound recordings. The collections therefore include objects such as vertebrates (mammals, birds, reptiles, amphibians, fish), invertebrates (insects, arachnids, the shells of snails, etc), specimens and archaeozoological objects (animal skeletons uncovered in archaeological diggings). The South African Museum (Cape Town) and the Transvaal Museum (Pretoria) are examples.

There are other more specialised natural heritage museums such as the National Herbarium (Pretoria), the Natal Herbarium, and Compton Herbarium (Kirstenbosch, Cape Town). These fall under the National Botanical Institute and collect plant types, which are dried and mounted on sheets of paper accompanied by the relevant information.

Geological museums consist mainly of rock samples, minerals, precious and semiprecious stones and fossils, for example the Museum of Geological Survey (Pretoria) and the Geology Museum (Johannesburg).

(i) Technological and industrial museums

The task of these museums is to depict and demonstrate scientific principles and the development of contemporary industries. In the USA, museums of this type have developed into scientific centres, and they depict the historical development of technology, for example the National Air and Space Museum and the Smithsonian Institution. In South Africa, there are the James Hall Transport Museum (Johannesburg), the Museum of Science and Technology (Pretoria) and the Bensusan Museum of Photography (Johannesburg).

(j) Interpretation or information centres

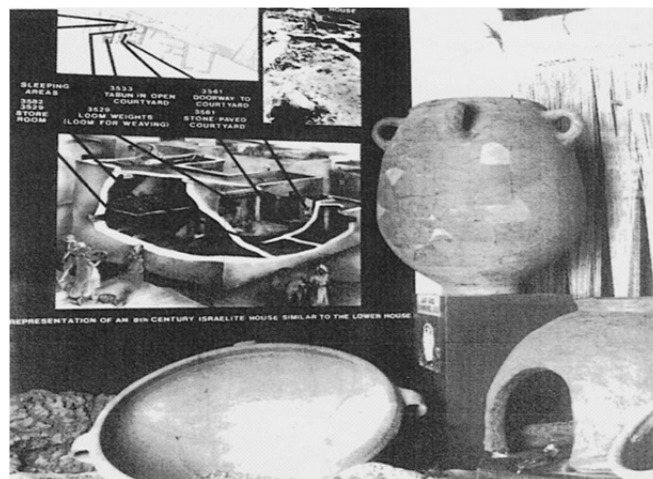
These centres are similar to site museums and aim to interpret a particular area and relate it to a larger whole. Examples are visitors' centres in national parks and exhibitions at hiking trails.

(k) Research or educational museums

Research or educational museums are usually thematic museums which focus on a specific subject. They are mostly attached to university departments, for example the Bernard Price Institute for Palaeontological Research at the University of the Witwatersrand and the Geology Education Museum at the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Most South African universities have museums of ethnology, zoology and archaeology. Unisa has an art museum, a nursing science museum, a theological museum, an educational museum and a museum of ethnology.

FIGURE 8.1

An exhibition in the Biblical archaeology section of Unisa's museum of theology

*(l) Children's museums*

Children's museums are aimed at children and are planned to take into account children's physical limitations and their intellectual level. Because their function is mostly educational, the collections tend to comprise specific objects and specialised material. They emphasise the fantasy world of children in the hope that the children will develop a love for museums. Children are encouraged to explore, touch and manipulate exhibits, models and displays. The only children's museum in South Africa is in Port Elizabeth. It is a zoological museum, and children are encouraged to touch the objects and examine small objects under a magnifying glass. The Museum of Science and Technology in Pretoria also has a section for both adults and children, aimed at interaction, and it is the oldest hands-on museum in South Africa.

(m) Private collections

These are usually specialised but cannot be regarded as museums in the true sense of the word as the public does not have access to them. In some instances, private collections may be loaned or placed in the care of an institution to be visited by arrangement. Examples include the Rubidge Collection of Karoo Fossils in the Graaff-Reinet district, and the Van Tilburg Collection and Dr H Muller Room at the University of Pretoria.

(n) Theme parks

Theme parks contain elements of both site museums and open-air museums, but the emphasis is on visitor participation. Cultural history theme parks deal with the past, and visitors are involved in many activities, such as trades (e.g. tanning, candlemaking, baking). This type of theme park is often called a heritage centre. Disneyland is the best-known example of a successful theme park.



EXERCISE 8.2

Categorise museums in your vicinity into the above museum types.

8.3 MUSEUM ACTIVITIES

Museums should render a service to the community and relate closely to the community's needs. Planning should be dependent upon close interaction and research, and should reflect the community's cultural, educational and recreational needs.

The three main functions of museums are collection, conservation and information organisation and retrieval.

8.3.1 Collecting

Collecting is the primary task of the museum. People visit the museum to see something; therefore, to the public, the museum's other functions are secondary.

There are a number of reasons for collecting, such as to preserve rare objects, to depict culture or nature, or to benefit posterity. The collection becomes meaningful once it has been systematically arranged, compared and interpreted.

Each museum should have a collections policy set out in detail that relates to its funding, accommodation and personnel. The scope of a collection is determined in terms of period, region and theme, and it also focuses on any related or relevant information. Unusual or rare objects are not the only ones collected, as everyday objects are also important because they provide the context for the unusual or rare objects and thus help to create a complete picture.

A finding list for a cultural historical collection may include the following: objects relating to establishment, transportation, food, medicine, clothing and ornaments, rituals, education, music and dance, toys, weapons, trades, trading and barter.

There are two methods of collection, namely passive and active collection. Passive collection includes donations, loans and exchanges, whereas active collection includes purchases, manufacturing, fieldwork and expeditions. The museum may manufacture objects so that visitors can handle replicas so as not to damage the originals.

8.3.2 Preserving

The preserving function includes both preservation and restoration. It is often referred to as the maintenance function.

Preservation takes place when an object is protected or safeguarded against natural processes of decay or destruction (which may be inherent in the physical or chemical properties of the object itself) or against external factors such as mould and insects. These factors vary considerably according to the nature and composition of the objects and climatic factors. Stone objects, such as tools and axes, are virtually indestructible but may flake or chip if they contain salts; metals are subject to chemical reactions; wooden and leather objects may be attacked by borers, ants and certain fungi; ivory may crack; and ceramics and porcelain must be carefully handled to prevent breakage.

Other causes of deterioration include daylight and interior lighting that may cause colours to fade, and heat may cause objects to dry out. There are specific methods for preserving virtually every type of object, and anyone who applies a particular method must have an in-depth knowledge of the chosen technique. Preservation therefore means the application of measures to counter deterioration or destruction.

Restoration should be reversible so that the object could be restored to its original condition. However, the public should be informed about the areas where restoration has taken place. Restoration is carried out on paintings, furniture and textiles.

8.3.3 Information organisation and retrieval

Information organisation and retrieval incorporates documentation (registration, cataloguing and classification), research, interpretation and exhibitions (display).

(1) Documentation

During documentation, all available information about an object is recorded, in other words a record is created for the object. This is essential for controlling the collection. An accession number is allocated to the object – a process called registration. The object is then catalogued and classified. These records are compiled in either a card catalogue or a computerised catalogue.

(2) Research

This is the most important task or exercise for increasing the vitality of a museum. There are five types of research which can take place:

- applied research, which is concerned with the collection, conservation and exhibition of objects
- general or basic research, which relates to specific collections
- object-oriented research, which is demanding because researchers must research all aspects of a particular object
- wider research, which deals mainly with the background of collections or objects
- research focusing on visitors to the museum

(3) Interpretation

With the growth of collections in public museums, more information about objects was researched and publicised together with the object itself in exhibitions.

(4) Exhibitions

Exhibitions are the link between the research and educational functions of the museum, and between the museum and the public. Interpretation of an object places it in context within its environment or in relation to other objects, and this makes it possible for visitors to understand its nature, role and functions. For example, clothing from a particular period may be displayed in a period room which also contains furniture of that period. Visitors may thus obtain a more comprehensive picture of the period concerned. Interpretation may be supplemented by relevant descriptions, or by activities such as demonstrations, lectures and guided tours. The final purpose of the museum is only achieved once the exhibitions have been viewed.



EXERCISE 8.3

Describe any aspect of a museum exhibition that interested you. What objects were researched?

8.4 ARCHIVES

Archives are among the oldest information institutions in existence. As explained in study unit 2, for centuries there was no real difference between libraries, archives and museums. Only after the invention of the printing press in the 15th century was there a demarcation between them, and libraries came to be associated with printed copies, while archives concentrated on unique, original records.

8.4.1 Definition

An archive comprises all the archival pieces received or generated by a particular institution, person or group of persons, which are the outcome of the activities of the institution or individuals.

Harrod's librarians' glossary (2000:31) defines archives as follows:

- (1) Public records or selected materials kept in a recognised archival repository
- (2) Records in any medium which were compiled for the purpose of, or used during, a public or private business transaction of which they themselves formed a part: and which were selected for preservation by the persons concerned with the transaction, or their successors or delegates, for their own use and as material for research or reference
- (3) An accumulation of original records assembled in the course of activities of a person or persons, or of a public or private organisation; or such records from a number of different sources; and kept together to ensure their preservation and to promote their use
- (4) The actual repository itself
- (5) Those materials in any information service that have been selected for long-term or permanent retention because of the retrospective or archival values they are perceived to possess

Here is another definition of archives from the *International encyclopedia of library and information science* (Forde 1997:15):

“The non-current records of an institution, organisation, business or person, created for working purposes and retained by the original creator, or a successor,

for reference and/or historical interest. In many instances the records will have been sifted after a set period in order to retain only originals of primary significance. Archives may be in widely differing formats, including parchment rolls, bound volumes, paper files, maps, textiles, works of art, photographs, film, electronic archives, audio-visual material, sound archives, microform and three-dimensional objects. The term also applies to buildings, alternatively record offices, where the above are stored, preserved and, in some cases, made available to the public.”

Therefore, we could say that the term “archives” relates to the documents or records (in any format or medium) which are generated or received by a particular institution, individual or organisation as part of the execution of their daily activities, and which are no longer actively used but, nevertheless, need to be permanently preserved because of their inherent value.



EXERCISE 8.4

Formulate your own definition of the concept “archives”.

The term “archives” does not refer only to the group of documents which are being preserved but also to the name of the institution which is preserving them as well as to the building in which this is being done.

An “archivist” may be defined as an “information professional having the care of archives and records” (Archivist 1997:16). *Harrod’s librarians’ glossary* (2000:32) establishes that the archivist is responsible for managing archives.

8.4.2 The nature of archives

This section highlights four aspects that distinguish the nature of archives:

- (1) The relationship of an archive with its creative entity (organisation, government institution or individual) is important, as it was created as a direct result of that entity’s functional activities and is intended to reflect its policy, activities and actions. This feature of archives leads to the archival

principle of provenance (a place where something originates), which is a very important consideration when archival records are being arranged.

Archivists attempt as far as possible to keep documents in the same sequence as that in which they were generated. The filing systems in use at the time when the records were used are retained as far as possible in the eventual arrangement of the archives. Records are filed so that records on a similar subject or issue are kept together. Thus, the creative context in which documents are placed is important. Each archive may be traced back directly to a specific agency and reflects the activities and characteristics of that agency.

Archives are automatically generated as the result of the administration of an institution or person, and in this respect they differ from other collections such as those in libraries or museums. However, archivists may also build up collections with items to add to or enhance the archives. Most archives also collect manuscripts, photographs, maps and even books.

- (2) A second feature of archives is their organisational character. As a particular task or exercise is carried out within an institution, the records relating to it increase. Each record in a file is linked to the outcome of a preceding record or records, which are therefore described or expanded upon by the subsequent record. Thus, sequence and arrangement are very important, as order changes may result in an incomplete or inaccurate version of reality.
- (3) The official nature of archives is important. Archives are the by-product of the activities of an organisation or institution, and its interaction with individuals or other institutions, and are generated by the official transactions of the institution.
- (4) Archives are unique. In contrast to books, which are mass-produced for cultural and educational purposes, archives are usually individually created or received as a consequence of a specific transaction or exercise.

When one thinks about archives, one usually thinks of individual records, files with records or bound records. The actual nature of the archival material is not a matter of importance. Material in archives may assume many different sizes and formats and, although traditionally based on paper, this has changed rapidly as more information is stored and preserved by means of computers. Because traditional material takes up a lot of space, nowadays large amounts of information are frequently stored on CD-ROM. Record forms such as maps, photographs and films are often also included in archives and are now stored digitally.

The term “archives” is not used to refer to just any collection of unorganised historical documents, as is often the case with manuscript collections. It is important to bear in mind that archives (as we have defined the term) consist of material which is functionally and/or organisationally related and which has been organically generated by a particular activity.

8.4.3 Aims

An archivist has two important overall aims. Firstly, he or she should exercise physical and intellectual control over the records that have been transferred to the archives. Secondly, the archives and the information contained in them should be made available to users in a proper and effective manner. The second aim is not possible unless the first has been properly executed. This means that an archive is concerned with preserving, controlling and providing information from official records.

Archives serve as the memory of a particular institution. Individuals cannot function well without a memory, and neither can institutions and organisations. Where such a memory (archive) is absent, there is no historical record on which to base the organisation's planning. There is also no historical precedent from which people can learn and so prevent the same kinds of mistakes from being made in the future. The absence of archives may also cause deficits in knowledge or expertise. Particular people are able to remember things, but such recollections may naturally be inaccurate, and without an accurate factual basis there may be no reliable way of proving ownership or of justifying or explaining actions.

Apart from the importance of archives as documentary evidence and for determining responsibility (in other words for financial and administrative purposes), archives are also important for cultural and historical reasons. Archives are an important source, among other sources, for historical research.

In other words, archives are important for **providing and controlling information in society**.

8.5 TYPES OF ARCHIVES

8.5.1 Introduction

As we mentioned earlier, the word "archives" refers not only to the documents generated by an institution but also to the body that preserves and administers the records. For a very long time, the term "archives" was used almost exclusively for government archives. In other words, it referred to all documents generated in the execution of the main task of the government, which is to manage the state. But governments are not the only institutions that have archives. Other institutions, organisations and associations (as well as individuals) also send and receive records when they carry out their tasks. Examples of such institutions include universities, businesses, religious, educational and other social institutions, as well as museums and hospitals.

Archives (archival bodies) vary from large, relatively well-funded institutions that provide the full spectrum of archival services, to smaller bodies often managed by a single archivist or volunteer. There are many differences between archives, not only in terms of the size, nature and scope of their archival holdings, but also in terms of their internal structure and their position within the organisational structure of the parent body. Archives are often a division of the library services, or they may, together with the library and other services, form part of the information service of an institution.

It is interesting to note the distinction between “in-house archives” and “collective archives”:

In-house or natural archives are those that arise from and exist for the benefit of a particular parent body to which the archives are attached. Examples of these are government archives, bank archives or university archives in instances where the archives preserve only the records of the particular university. The most common types of in-house archives are state and private archives.

The second type of archives is called **collective archives**. Here we refer to institutions that exist for the purpose of collecting a variety of archives such as the archives of organisations within a particular region or area, or archives that relate to a particular subject, task, exercise, and so on. Whereas we refer to “in-house archives” as natural archives, “collective archives” are regarded as artificial archives.

A third type of archives is a combination of these two types. University archives, for example, often house both the archives of the university and archives that originate in other organisations or institutions.

8.5.2 State archives

Large-scale restructuring of the state archives in South Africa was carried out in 1996. The State Archive Services of South Africa previously functioned as a directorate of the Department of Arts, Culture, Science and Technology. Then in 1996 its name was changed to the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa (NARS), which since 2002 has fallen under the Department of Arts and Culture. The title of the person who heads this service is the National Archivist, who is charged with the preservation, care and control of archives in government offices, offices of local authorities and the various archival repositories and interim repositories. In some cases, records of private persons and institutions are also accepted and preserved.

The Constitution provides for the devolution of the state’s responsibility for archives from central government to the country’s nine provinces.

8.6 FUNCTIONS OF ARCHIVISTS

Archivists perform the following functions: acquisition (accession), arrangement and description, conservation, information access and marketing.

8.6.1 Acquisition (accession)

Natural or in-house archives do not collect material. They serve as the memory of the parent body, and whenever material is deemed appropriate for transfer to the archives, the archives must ordinarily accept such material.

Sometimes archivists are charged with the task of records control even before the records of an institution are transferred to the archives. In such cases, archivists serve as records managers because they have to determine which records should be transferred to the archives and when this should be done.

Although archivists are not always involved in records control in the offices from which the records originate, they usually have some influence over decisions about which documents are to be preserved either permanently or only for a particular period of time, and which do not need to be transferred to the archives and so may be destroyed. This shows us the kind of control that archivists have over the accession of archival items and reflects what is known as the archival **principle of appraisal**.

Weeding becomes necessary when archival material proliferates. Not all archival material is valuable. By following archival principles and the policy and procedures of a particular body, the archivist distinguishes between archives that do not warrant permanent conservation and archives that are of sufficient value to be permanently preserved. Accession is reserved for documents that are of archival value. Deciding which documents may be destroyed, while at the same time avoiding any legal repercussions or significant historical or administrative loss, is probably the most difficult and most important archival task.

In collective archives, the archivist has a far greater say in the accession of particular archives and usually focuses on a particular area as a speciality, either a region or an area, subject or field of interest. This focus should be clearly spelled out in the accessions policy. When archives are collected, it is the responsibility of the archivist to enforce the conditions that apply to donations, bequests or the purchases of archives.

The accessioning and appraisal of archival material are crucial to the orderly growth of an archival collection. Both processes should be carefully documented in order to serve as guidelines for a current task or exercise and to provide direction for the future development of the archives.

The aim of in-house archives is to document the history, functions and development of the parent institution, and the accessions policy should correspond with this aim. Collective archives should similarly take into account the aims of the parent organisation when formulating a collection policy.

8.6.2 Arrangement and description

The function of “arrangement and description” refers broadly to what is called (in library terms) the “cataloguing and classification” of records. When archives which are transferred or acquired have not been arranged, the archivist needs to do this first. The archivist should, as far as possible, arrange the documents in the same sequence in which they were received. For this reason, the filing systems applied while the records were in active use at the parent institution are rarely changed during subsequent arrangement of the archives. This is the application of the principle of provenance, which should be applied as far as possible. The effective functioning of any administration depends on the speed and accuracy with which records can be traced and the comprehensiveness of the records on a particular topic. Therefore, it is important for the records of a body to be filed in such a way that records on similar topics or issues are kept together. Because of this requirement, a functional subject system is most frequently used in which alphabetic, numeric and chronological filing methods are used in addition to filing by topic. The principle of provenance is important in arranging archival material, but the archivist should also ensure that the archives are arranged in a way that will facilitate the location of specific documents or information in documents.

The **principle of provenance** is as important to the archivist as classification systems are to librarians. It reflects the way in which a record was generated, and in particular also to the relationship among all the records as an organic whole. It also shows which institution, person, department or corporate body produced the record.

The arrangement of archives may be seen as the first phase of retrieval. During the arrangement of documents, they are systematically classified. Then conservation measures are put in place if necessary, and the documents are stored in suitable containers. At this stage, the archivist also needs to determine whether all documents may be made available or whether restrictions need to be applied to some of them. In South Africa, official archives such as the state archives are closed for a period of 20 years in terms of the National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act 43 of 1996. Access to closed archives may be granted upon request, and each application is considered on its merits. Private donors often also determine a period of time for which their archives must remain closed. Ephemeral records, in other words records with a brief lifetime, such as pamphlets, and other records, such as routine correspondence, that do not warrant permanent conservation should be removed and the comprehensiveness of archives should be checked.

Once archival items have been arranged, the archives will be partially accessible. Then they need to be “described”. During “description”, which is the second phase of archival retrieval, inventories and other finding aids are drawn up. In this phase, archives are further indexed and classified, and key words and archival codes are assigned. This is similar to cataloguing in a library.

During the description phase, all records, but mainly groups of records, are listed. This list is called an **inventory**. A preliminary inventory may be constructed during the arrangement process, but this should be followed by a final inventory. Inventories are sometimes constructed for internal use only while, in other cases, they may be published.

An inventory contains an introduction which describes the origin, development, functions, and so forth of the specific organisation from which the archives originated. It often also contains additional information about the records and their arrangement. If some records are missing or are known to be somewhere else, this is mentioned in comprehensive footnotes.

It is important for archivists to know how to arrange and describe archives at all levels from the repository, record group, subgroup, series and file unit to the individual record (document). Because most archives were initially records or documents in the administration of the institution, the archivist should be familiar with the organisation, mission, functions, policy, procedures and activities of the institution. As we have mentioned, in some institutions (and this is the ideal situation) archivists are involved in records control prior to the records being transferred to the archives. As soon as the related archival records have been arranged and accepted for permanent conservation, such a group of related records is known as an archival group.

Archivists often compile a complete list of all archival groups in their possession. This consists of the various inventories and is called a guide. Guides may be combined to show the holdings of a group of archives. In South Africa, the National Archives and Records Service has such a joint guide, which has been computerised and may be searched from all archival repositories. It may even be consulted at private institutions in cases where the institution has subscribed to ARGNET, the network operated by the National Archives.

8.6.3 Conservation

Like librarians, archivists are charged with the responsibility of properly preserving the material under their control. Archives are exposed to a number of hazards such as fire, water, humidity, dust, insects, mould and other microorganisms, mechanical wear and tear, and theft. Another important hazard is the acid content of paper, which causes archival items virtually to self-destruct. Although paper remains the most important information carrier in archives, other carriers such as magnetic tapes, computer disks, microfilms, video tapes and compact discs (CDs) are increasingly found in archives. Each of these record forms presents other preservation challenges.

As with libraries, archives require a controlled environment in order to preserve material, but considerable damage may also be caused by incorrect use or storage methods. Merely handling archival pieces may pose a hazard. Archival documents may be preserved by photography, which is a solution frequently used for documents that are often consulted. They may be stored digitally or on CD-ROM, and the original material is protected against unnecessary and excessive handling.

Internal damage may be visible. Examples of visible damage are greasy spots, pen and pencil marks, worn bindings, frayed edges and underlining. Notes written on archival pieces often date from the time when the controllers of archives regarded the use of the information as being more important than the conservation of the archival piece itself. Photocopying is also responsible for mechanical damage. The use of archival pieces should therefore be strictly controlled, and users should be instructed in the correct use of archival records.

Paper records such as letters should be stored in acid-free containers and files. If this is not done, the acid in the container may contaminate the record and further shorten its life. The restoration of archives includes the neutralisation of acid and repairs to paper. Restoration is a labour-intensive and expensive process. Only a handful of institutions in South Africa have trained paper restorers in their service.

One way in which to limit the damage caused by use is by scanning archives onto computer disk. This method permits valuable archives to be preserved in their original condition, while users view a copy of the original text on screen. This is an effective storage method for large numbers of archives while enabling users to obtain copies of documents at minimal cost.

8.6.4 Information access

Once archives have been properly arranged, they may be made available to users. Archives that have not been arranged are usually not accessible. Compiling finding aids is one of the tasks performed during the description of archives, and this facilitates the task of the researcher considerably. These finding aids indicate which archival pieces are available in an archive. Users are not allowed to enter vaults to look for records themselves. They often trace records by using the finding aids and then request the archival records that they wish to use. These are fetched by the staff, and the user may use the material under supervision in the reading room. In view of the unique nature of archival records, they are not made available on loan. Photocopying is seldom allowed.

A very important aid for users of archives in South Africa is the computerised National Register of Manuscripts (NAREM), which may be found in various archives and other institutions that keep archival and manuscript collections. Users of participating institutions use computer searches to check which

manuscripts or archives, archival groups, or archival pieces relating to a particular topic are available in other institutions. There is a similar register for photograph collections that are deposited in institutions. This is the National Register of Photographs (NAREF).

Although archives are usually associated with historical research, one should bear in mind that an in-house archive is established in the first place to serve as a resource and memory for its creator (the parent institution).

The importance of such archives to the community in general (their importance as a source for historians, for example) is secondary.

As regards access to information, you should remember that, in some cases, it is necessary to restrict access to sensitive information.

8.6.5 Marketing

The archivist also has a traditional “honorary” obligation to compile and publish source books of the most important material under his or her control. Source books may be guides and inventories, for example the Resolutions of the Political Council at the Cape during the Dutch Administration. Other examples include the computerised NAREM and NAREF, which are administered by the National Archives and Records Service. By means of these source books, as well as other publications, such as journal articles, the archivist should market the archives as a centre for research by, for example, historians.

Archivists are not concerned only with the past. They are equally involved in the present and interested in the future. When we consider that archivists have to decide whether to preserve or destroy records, it becomes clear that they are concerned even with the distant future!

8.7 RECORDS OFFICES

8.7.1 Records and records management

Records may simultaneously be the conveyers, products and documentation of specific transactions. Records are the memory of organisations, the raw material for decisionmaking and the basis for legal evidence. Another definition refers to records as recorded information (regardless of the medium or characteristics), which is created or received by an organisation using the information in its operations (Yusof & Chell 1998:170).

Here is the definition given by the International Council of Archives (ICA):

A record is a specific piece of recorded information generated, collected or received in the institution, conduct or completion of an exercise and that comprises sufficient content, context and structure to provide proof or evidence of that exercise (*ICA guide on electronic records 1999*).

Records management begins as soon as a record is created or received in an institution and is completed only when the record is destroyed or transferred to an archival storage place.

But what exactly is records management? It is an administrative system by means of which an organisation strives to control the creation, distribution, filing, retrieval, storage and destruction of all records generated or received by the organisation. It is concerned with the systematic control of records and records include a wide variety of formats: paper, microfiche, sound cassettes, maps, digital records, records in machine-readable format, and so forth.

Records management is concerned with the efficient and effective handling of the carrier of the information, with determining life cycles and the final disposition of information or data, and with management issues of information access, security, integrity, timeliness, and so on. All of these functions are driven by what constitutes the core of records management: information value analysis. What value does a subset of information present to the organisation? How much has been invested in the creation, use, maintenance and storage of the information? Who uses it and why? How broad is the client base, and how would it be affected if the information were not available? The answer to questions such as these should lead the records manager to a determination of the value of the records and information, and from this value assessment a management programme flows.

The aims of records management are to:

- (1) provide accurate and detailed information when this is required for the effective management and running of an organisation
- (2) process recorded information as effectively as possible
- (3) furnish information and records at the lowest possible cost when this is required
- (4) provide the user with maximum service (Rhodes 1991:12)

It is important to note that records systems should be managed in an organised way. In other words, the management functions should not take place in isolation or on an ad hoc basis, subject to the whims and fancies of individuals. Instead they should be determined by the organisation's policy as part of an organisational programme. The process is depicted in Figure 8.2. Policy should address all the other elements contained in this figure and make sense within the overall mandate and mission objectives of the organisation.

8.7.2 Records management programme

Harris (2000:31–33) lays out the elements of a records management programme:

(1) Identification

Policy should articulate clear-cut and implementable criteria for distinguishing between organisational and personal records. The former must be classified and stored in a way which makes them accessible to others in the organisation. Classification systems should support functional requirements, efficient retrieval, the linking of related records and appropriate retention (ie records should be kept for as long, and only for as long, as they are needed).

Policy should articulate clear-cut and implementable criteria for identifying activities/events/transactions for which organisational records should be created. Policy should articulate guidelines on how to create a record. To be a record, a document requires more than just information content: contextual information must be linked to the content. Thus, for example, one should ask questions like: Who created the document? On what date? To whom was it sent? With what attachments was it sent? Is it a draft or a final version?

(2) Custody

The organisation should formulate clear guidelines on where records are to be kept, in which office, on which hard drive, on which directory or subdirectory, etc; appropriate physical care of records; under whose immediate control records are to be placed; and in which media records are to be kept.

(3) Security

Policy should address general physical security; control over the removal of records from their places of custody or from the control of the person responsible for them; protection against unauthorised access; maintenance of records' integrity implying, for instance, protection against alteration or deletion; and the protection of vital records.

(4) Legality

Policy should address the organisation's need to secure the admissibility of records as evidence in court, promote the weight of evidence accorded such records by courts, and ensure that all legal obligations relating to records management are met.

(5) Memory

When a record ceases to support operations, it should be destroyed, erased or moved into archival space, where it becomes part of the organisation's (and ultimately society's) long-term memory. The record's retention period should be based on a combination of legal requirements, known operational needs and calculated risks associated with its destruction.

(6) Responsibility

Overall responsibility for an organisation's records management programme should be assigned to an individual. Subordinate areas of responsibility should be clearly defined and assigned to individuals.

(7) Evaluation

The organisation should establish criteria for measuring programme success.

8.8 THE NATURE OF RECORDS OFFICES AND CENTRES

Records offices and centres are institutions or sections or departments where records of the particular agencies are preserved. The work done here concerns records which are still in use at institutions as opposed to records which have lost their immediate user value and are usually preserved in archives. A records office usually functions like a section within an institution and is concerned with the records of the parent institution. In addition, there are commercial records centres which preserve the records of other institutions.

8.9 THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RECORDS MANAGEMENT AND ARCHIVES

As a discipline, records management is closely related to archives. This becomes clear when considering the two phases in the life cycle of a record. In the records control phase, the following tasks are performed:

- (1) Information is generated or received in the form of records.
- (2) The records, or the information contained in the records, are classified in some logical system.
- (3) The records are maintained and made available for use.
- (4) The records are alienated when they are transferred to archives. It is at this stage that ephemeral records are destroyed. (Ephemeral records are those records which were not meant to be permanent when issued, for example a bus ticket or a ticket to a jazz festival.)

In the archival phase, the following tasks are performed:

- (1) The records are selected or acquired by the archives.
- (2) The records are described in inventories, finding aids, and so on.
- (3) The records or, in some cases, the information in the records, are preserved.
- (4) Queries are answered and researchers and other users are referred to whatever information they may need.

The aim of both records managers and archivists is to effectively preserve and retrieve information, for example for administrative and research purposes. Both are information managers.

The process of records management actually helps us to determine which records an organisation will produce and how they will be identified, preserved, accommodated and used. If archivists wish to ensure a proper archival record of an organisation and, together with this, a complete reflection of the context from which the record

comes, they should become involved in records management. Records management has always existed but, during the latter part of the 20th century, the avalanche of records to be handled increased in importance. The increase in new information-bearing media and the inventions of new technologies are changing the established definitions of the term “record” and are challenging the functions of preserving archives and record systems in a manner which exceeds institutional boundaries.

The need for archival involvement in records is probably most evident in records which are electronically formatted. In contrast to a paper environment, archivists need to make timeous arrangements for appraisal and deletion, if they wish to prevent a loss of electronic records. Paper records which no longer have any functional value may be moved to strongboxes, unused rooms and so on. On the other hand, electronic records which have lost their functional value are erased or stored in formats which become unreadable as new technology takes over. As a result, archivists have no choice but to become involved in the design of electronic records systems. In this way, they can secure new procedures to ensure the preservation of archival records.

The connection between the two agencies is both theoretical and practical. As far as official documents or records are concerned, many countries deliberately attempted to strengthen the bond during the 20th century. This has seen attempts by governments to exercise greater control over valuable archives as well as effective control over records at a time characterised by the “paper explosion”. Archivists took the lead, and the occupation of a records manager actually arose from this development. Indeed, archivists often find themselves approached for guidance about records management. In South Africa, this is definitely the case.

The difference between an archivist and a records manager may be explained by noting the important difference between the terms “records” and “archives”, and between “records management” and “archives management”. In archival terms, records refer to all the records generated, received and maintained by a particular government or authority, official or private institution, organisation or individual, in the performance of daily activities and legal obligations. Most of the records are used to justify official actions, to record actions, and to explain and document legal obligations and policy decisions. These records are controlled by means of a process of records management.

It is inevitable that a large number of records will accumulate in an institution or organisation. Although most records will gradually lose their immediate utilitarian value, many of them need to be preserved for later reference purposes. Records that need to be preserved because they have enduring utilitarian value are then transferred to archives. Archives may therefore be regarded as the core collection of official or organised records that are no longer needed in the daily activities of the institution but which should be preserved because they constitute a record of the past transactions or activities of the institution and/or because they contain information about people, places and things. For example, a copy of a politician’s speech may be of interest to students of history or political science, years after the speech was made. This may then need to be sent to the archives for future reference.

The point in time at which records become archives varies from one institution to the next. In general, records may be regarded as archival as soon as it has been determined that they have enduring value, or as soon as they are no longer in current use and can be set aside for conservation. Although archives are therefore records, not all records will eventually become archives.

In South Africa, as elsewhere, a formal distinction is drawn between records in the administrative or dynamic phase (records) [the records management phase] and records in the static phase, when they no longer have any current administrative value (archives) [the archival phase]. Archival pieces are only those administrative records that should be preserved in spite of the fact that they no longer have any direct administrative value.

Records managers design programmes to exercise effective economic and systematic control over the generation, distribution, organisation, maintenance, retrieval, use, protection and destruction of all active records of an organisation. In spite of this, an archivist may often make input into or exercise some control over this phase. This is the case, for example, in the records offices of South African government departments. Records management is carried out by the officials of the National Archives. In these circumstances, records are often already classified by the time they are transferred to the archives.

Whereas records managers have control over the active records of an organisation, archivists are charged with controlling the inactive records that have been selected for permanent preservation.

Other differences between the work of records managers and that of archivists relate to the nature of the information they work with and the users they encounter.

Records managers deal with the records of their own institutions, especially those that have administrative value, whereas archivists deal with the archives of various offices and with material ranging from the recently generated to documents that are hundreds of years old. The users of records offices are fellow employees of the parent body, and their use of information is almost exclusively determined by the need for effective administration. In contrast, the users of archives are public servants, the research community and the public at large.

The task of the records manager is to compile inventories of all records relating to particular functions of an institution and to exercise control over the flow of records in the institution. The records manager also has to determine the retention period that is applicable to records. To do this, it is necessary to assign a particular value to records and to prepare a schedule based on such values.

Control of the life cycle of records is central to a records control programme. In terms of the “life cycle” concept, records management has been described as referring not merely to filing and finding, but to control of information in a much broader sense: monitoring it from the time of its creation through the stages of filing, retrieval, inactive storage and eventual destruction, and providing standards and procedures for carrying out these tasks.

Records management, therefore, is concerned with control over the flow of information in an institution. Records managers keep track of documents or records as they travel through an institution and ascertain where copies of the records are kept. They simplify forms and procedures so as to make them more effective, and they improve filing systems and techniques so as to reduce the time that it takes to retrieve records.

As computerisation is widespread, records managers play an increasingly important role in establishing guidelines for the control of different formats, standards and profiles of information records, and in applying the guidelines. Computerisation facilitates records management because it increases the speed of information retrieval and increases the effectiveness of records conservation.

According to Yusof and Chell (1998:173), there are a number of reasons that organisations have to manage records:

(1) Commercial reasons

Records management is necessary for the efficient running of a business. Organisations need information about their operations so that they can continue to operate in the event of a disaster, plan for future development and publicise activities.

(2) Legal reasons

Because organisations need to comply with national and international legislation, records should be kept for as long as business, statutory and regulatory requirements dictate. This process protects the rights and interests of employers and employees, customers, suppliers and the general public.

(3) Archival reasons

Records of historical interest have to be kept for purposes of research and for posterity (the collective memory).

8.10 RECORDS MANAGEMENT IN SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is one of only a few countries in which the National Archives and Records Service (NARS) has complete control over records management in national and local government. The introduction and approval of filing systems are also controlled by NARS, and all archivists of NARS are expected to have at least a basic knowledge of the principles and practice of records management.

South Africa has a long tradition of involvement in records management by public archivists. The National Archives and Records Service of South Africa Act builds on this tradition by giving the National Archivist responsibility for ensuring the proper management and care of public records still in the custody of central governmental bodies. The National Archivist has the following duties and responsibilities:

- a broad advisory function

- the training of public servants in records management the power to inspect the records of government records
- the power to authorise the destruction, erasure or other disposal of such records
- the power to determine the records classification systems used by public servants, the conditions subject to which public servants microfilm or electronically reproduce records, and the conditions subject to which public servants manage their electronic records systems



EXERCISE 8.5

Summarise the difference between records offices and archives.

8.11 SUMMARY

In this study unit, we discussed museums, archives and records offices as information institutions in terms of their functions, resources and information provision. The similarities and differences between their aims and functions were also described.

8.12 SELF-ASSESSMENT

- (1) Write notes on “records” as used in the archives and records management fields.
- (2) Define “records management” and list its aims.
- (3) Explain what is meant by a records management programme.
- (4) Describe the relationship between archives and records management with reference to the “life cycle” of a record.
- (5) Write notes on the differences between archival management and records management.
- (6) Explain which tasks and functions are performed in records offices.
- (7) Give your opinion on the importance and value of records management.
- (8) Write notes on the occupation of a records manager.

- (9) Define the concept “archives”.
- (10) Write notes on the principle of provenance as applied to archives.
- (11) Discuss the value and use of archives.

SOURCES

Archivist (1997); Atherton (1985/86); Behrens (2000); Bradsher (1988); Campbell (1989); Cook (1993); De Roever (1991); Ellis (2002); Forde (1997); Harris (1989); Harris (1997a); ICA guide on electronic records (1999); Kirkwood (1990); Lees (1997); Mellody (1992); Mnjama (1993); Nelson (1995); Pederson (1987); Rhodes (1991); Schwartz & Hernon (1993); Van der Walt (1992); Wamukoya (1995); Wright (1993); Yusof & Chell (1998)

STUDY UNIT 9

Publishing and the Book Trade

ORIENTATION

In this study unit, we consider publishing as an industry and series of activities, which begins when an author or publisher has an idea, and ends when a book, professional journal, CD-ROM, electronic record or other record is published. We concentrate on book, journal and newspaper publishing and also consider films, compact discs, videos, electronic records and internet publishing.

Published information plays an extremely important role in this electronic age, and the role played by the book trade in the dissemination of printed sources of information is discussed. It is interesting to note that despite electronic publishing, the volume of printed material continues to increase.

Published information still plays a vital role. Many books, magazines and technical journals are published in electronic form as well as in print form, and the internet is increasingly used to sell books, video recordings and music. It is apparent that the book trade is extremely important in the dissemination of information.



LEARNING OUTCOMES

After studying this study unit, you should be able to:

- explain the concept “publishing”
- discuss the different types of publishers and the departments within a publishing concern
- discuss publishing and the book trade in South Africa
- describe the tasks of the book dealer
- compare the roles of the publisher and the book dealer in the dissemination of information

KEY CONCEPTS

book dealers

deposit

publishing

International Standard Book Number (ISBN)

copyright legal

illiteracy

the book trade

9.1 DEFINITION OF PUBLISHING

Publishing is the means by which information is made available to others by producing copies in the form of a book, periodical, or any other visual or audio record that is made available to the public.

Harrod's librarians' glossary (2000:602) defines publishing as “the trade of publishing books; this includes negotiations with authors or their agents, design of books in conjunction with printers, book production and sales through book wholesalers and retailers”. You should also note that motion pictures, audiotapes, compact discs, digital video discs and videotapes are all publications.

Publishing is an important element in the information cycle. The spoken or written word has limitations because it can communicate with only a small number of people. Information communicated through the spoken word cannot be preserved for future generations unless it is recorded in one way or another. Publication makes it possible to distribute information as well as preserve it for future generations.

Electronic publication has had far-reaching effects on the publication of information. The effect of computer and telecommunications technology is dealt with in study unit 9.

A publishing business publishes to satisfy contributing authors and potential purchasers, as well as to earn a profit for the publishing house.

9.2 PUBLISHERS

9.2.1 General publishers

General publishers publish a wide range of subjects and do not restrict themselves to material or books aimed at a particular market segment or age group. They may publish general fiction, popular nonfiction, works on various topics such as hobbies, and so on.

Mass market paperback publishers may also be included in this category as well as publishers of children's books (Anansi, Garamond and Gecko Books are South African examples of such publishers).

9.2.2 Educational publishers

Educational publishers publish textbooks for school and university and/or university of technology students as well as material for continuing and adult education.

School textbook publishing is very profitable because of the large volume of orders should the books be prescribed by the education authorities. A South African example of an educational publisher is Juta.

Textbooks for tertiary institutions are designed and adapted for the education process.

9.2.3 Scientific publishers

Publications by scientific publishers include study books and reference works. Because scientific works are often used as prescribed works at tertiary level, they are often similar to textbooks. The difference lies in the fact that they are not usually specially designed and adapted for the educational process.

9.2.4 Specialist publishers

Specialist publishers concentrate on a particular field of interest or subject field, for example gardening, cooking, religion, politics or sport. Kwela Books specialises in publishing local writers' works of fiction and nonfiction, with an emphasis on poetry. They previously published books for newly literate or semiliterate adults.

Technical and research works are usually published by a sponsor organisation. Sales are limited to people involved in research, consultancy or technical work in the specialised subject field concerned.

9.2.5 International or joint publications

All the abovementioned types of publications sometimes venture into the field of co-production. This is usually undertaken in the case of books with expensive full-colour illustrations and a small amount of written text. Publishers in various countries therefore tend to publish co-productions, which entails using the same colour prints but with the text translated into different languages and printed separately.

This type of publication is very important in South Africa in view of the large number of languages spoken. To make printing of these publications possible, printing is often carried out jointly with overseas publishers. Foreign picture books for children are often published in this way in South Africa. The colour plates of the illustrations are bought and the text is translated into the various South African languages.

Anansi Publishers publishes some of the world's best-known picture books in Afrikaans, English and Xhosa.

9.2.6 Electronic publishing

Electronic books (e-books) are becoming more widespread as more and more titles are being published electronically.

9.2.7 Journal publishing

Journals are academic publications that are released at regular intervals. Each edition contains original articles on the specific subject field catered for by the title published. Examples are the *South African Journal of Libraries and Information Science* and *Water Science and Technology*. The journals are seldom available in retail bookstores but are available to members of professional and technical societies, often as part of their membership subscriptions. In addition, they are available to individuals and libraries on a subscription basis directly from the publisher.

Book publishers, academic associations, universities or professional institutions may publish journals. A large part of the work, such as editing, is done free of charge and contributors are not usually paid for their articles, because publication itself is regarded as sufficient compensation as the authors get recognition for their work and their articles are disseminated to a wider audience of their peers. Articles may also be automatically indexed by online services and are thus more widely available to researchers in the subject field.

Commercial journal publishers may also collaborate with scientific, professional or technical associations or institutes to publish, edit or distribute journals. Some journals may be profitable, but others are not owing to their specialised nature and small readership. They may continue to be published as a service to members of an institute, association or profession.

9.2.8 Popular magazine publishing

Popular magazines appear at regular intervals, usually weekly or monthly. Their content is determined by their target market readership, and their articles present attractively designed layouts and information that is easily understood by their readers. Magazines may also contain serialised fiction or short stories.

Advertisements form the main source of income for magazines, and the larger the circulation, the higher the advertising rate that can be charged. Therefore, magazine publishers continually subscribe to market research readership surveys in order to adjust their advertising rates according to the latest readership figures.

The same companies that publish newspapers, such as Johnnic, Caxton and Naspers, often publish magazines in South Africa. Johnnic publishes the *Sunday Times*, *Business Day*, *Sowetan*, *Daily Dispatch*, *Herald* and *Weekend Post* as

well as the magazines *Elle*, *Longevity*, *Computing SA* and *Financial Mail*. Naspers, which publishes *Beeld*, *Die Burger*, *Daily Sun*, *Son* and *Soccer Laduuuuma* publishes the magazines *Die Huisgenoot*, *You*, *Sarie*, *Fairlady*, *Seventeen* and *Tuis*.

In addition, Naspers is active in other African countries including Kenya, Nigeria, Angola and East Africa and has branched out into pay television and internet services. Naspers is also responsible for the news channel News 24, an internet- based 24-hour news service.

9.2.9 Newspaper publishing

Newspapers are usually published daily or weekly, but some may be published at longer intervals, for example fortnightly or monthly. The latter are usually intended for specialised markets, such as farming and agriculture.

Like magazines, they earn the greater part of their income from advertising, and their advertising rates are in proportion to the size of their circulation. In South Africa, circulation figures are reported annually and strictly audited. A few large newspaper publishing companies such as Independent Newspapers, Johnnic and Naspers exist in South Africa.

9.3 COPYRIGHT

Copyright may be defined as the sole legal right, held for a certain number of years by the author, composer or originator of a work, or by someone designated by him or her, to print, publish, sell, broadcast, perform, film or record his or her work or any part of it.

A work refers to any original authorship in a material form and thus includes literary, artistic and musical works, films, sound recordings, broadcasts (radio and television), as well as computer programs.



EXERCISE 9.1

At your nearest newsagent, find out who publishes the following magazines:

- (1) *Fairlady*
- (2) *Drum*
- (3) *True Love*
- (4) *Rooi Rose*
- (5) *Kickoff*

The law protects authors against plagiarism (i.e. copying without permission) or pirate copies. Copyright is protected by international agreements. Most nations offer copyright protection for their authors or artists and have their own legislation protecting published works from plagiarism and piracy.

The South African Copyright Act 98 of 1978 and its amendments reflect internationally accepted standards. Copyright exists automatically in any work authored by a South African or a resident of the Republic which is first published here. The work must be original and it must exist in a material form. In other words, an idea cannot be subject to copyright unless it is expressed in a material form.

One important element of the South African copyright legislation is that it is linked to **legal deposit** in terms of the Legal Deposit Act 54 of 1997. Legal deposit means that the producers or publishers of any type of publication are required by law to supply a certain number of copies of each of their publications to designated libraries or other institutions.

When a publisher in South Africa applies for copyright, it has to supply a free copy of the work in question to five legal deposit libraries – the South African Library, the National Library of South Africa (formerly the State Library), the Natal Society Library, the Bloemfontein Public Library and the Library of Parliament in Cape Town.

This ensures that a copy of everything published in South Africa is preserved for future generations.

The national library in every country is responsible for issuing an International Standard Book Number, or ISBN, for books and an International Standard Serial Number, or ISSN, for journals and magazines. These numbers are important because they allow for the easy identification of individual books and journals. The ISBN makes it possible to distinguish between different editions of a book and to identify its publisher and country of origin. It is a unique number that identifies each title individually.



EXERCISE 9.2

Name the legal deposit libraries of your country.

9.4 PUBLISHING IN SOUTH AFRICA

9.4.1 Market size

South Africa has a reasonably well-developed publishing industry, which is not the case in many other African countries. Nevertheless, South African publishers are restricted by a small market that is further reduced by the population's division into many language groups. Besides English and Afrikaans, there are nine African languages for which orthographies (written language) have been developed. The smaller the community using the language, the smaller the number of readers and the potential market for copies of a book in that language.

As a result of the lack of a reading culture in the country, the South African publishing industry is aimed mainly at the provision of educational textbooks for schools. It is estimated that 80% of the output of the industry is dedicated to this market, which is purchased mainly by government departments (Horowitz 1996:8).

The changes to the education system and transfer of functions to the provinces have compounded the difficulties which publishers experience with supply, inadequate budgets and changes to ordering procedures.

9.4.2 Illiteracy

An added problem is the high level of illiteracy in South Africa. In 1997, there were more than 5 000 000 (5 million) illiterate African adults in South Africa. Later figures indicate that 50% of children in Africa leave school before Grade 5. This level of schooling is too low to guarantee literacy. Research shows that eight years of schooling are required to ensure that a child will become a literate adult. Because they are not functionally literate, the large number of early school leavers will revert to illiteracy if they do not practise their reading skills regularly (Fitzgerald 1989:2).

To encourage literacy, it is essential to publish books for newly literate adults and for adult readers with minimal reading skills. These readers need books that deal with the issues that relate to their lives and that are written from their perspective.

Examples of issues of interest include the following: political systems, legal rights and legislation applicable to land ownership. There is also a need for humorous and escapist fiction (Fitzgerald 1989:3). We should emphasise that illiteracy has even greater consequences than mere hardship for individuals, as it is a significant barrier to social development (Mangla 1984:5). Publishers cannot publish for a market that has no reading culture (Botha 1996).

Some literacy organisations, such as Operation Upgrade, publish their own reading matter for newly literate people. The content of these books usually deals with the problems that are frequently experienced by those who attend their classes, for example those on letter-writing skills. One of the main problems is that literacy must first be taught in the mother tongue, and the newly literate person therefore needs books in that language in order to retain and improve the skills that he or she has acquired. It is difficult to publish books written in African languages, for editing has to be done in each language by fluent linguists. Literacy organisations do not have the expertise among their staff, nor the funds to pay for outside expertise.

Many children's books published in indigenous languages are based on European models and stories. Schmidt (1987:237) gives the reasons for this:

- (1) Many of the books are translations of books originally written in English or Afrikaans.
- (2) African managers controlled few publishing houses. However, change has taken place in many publishing houses. Kagiso Publishers is one example.
- (3) The market for children's books written in indigenous languages relates largely to educational books, which are usually didactic and display little originality.

9.4.3 Cost

Publishers are first and foremost business enterprises and must earn profits in order to survive. They face a small market and high rate of illiteracy in South Africa, which contribute to their risks and lessen the advantages to be gained by economies of scale in print runs, which would go some way towards reducing their costs as well as the item costs to the purchasers of their publications.

However, many highly specialised publications are now becoming available on CD-ROM instead of, or in addition to, the printed format. As yet, the costs equate roughly to the printed format, but the computerised production of material in this format is much cheaper and should result in savings for the consumer in the long term.



EXERCISE 9.3

List the factors that influence publishing in South Africa.

9.5 THE PUBLISHING BUSINESS

A publishing house usually has five departments – editorial, production, sales and marketing, publicity and promotions, and finance.

The editorial department seeks to recruit, evaluate and prepare manuscripts for publication. Manuscripts are evaluated qualitatively and in terms of potential sales, in other words whether the work will sell enough copies for the company to make a profit.

Most manuscripts have to be actively commissioned from authors once the publisher has decided to publish a book on a particular subject. An author is selected and an editor project-manages the work, which is normally accepted for publication.

Educational and “coffee table” books are usually published this way. However, some manuscripts may be submitted unsolicited by authors to a publisher.

The editorial department may screen manuscripts in-house, but external selectors may also be used. The chief editor or subject editors perform the task of selection and inform authors of the acceptance or rejection of manuscripts. Upon acceptance of a manuscript, a contract is concluded with the author. An editor or copy editor, who may suggest changes in content and language, then edits the manuscript. At this stage, production may be consulted about the physical presentation of the manuscript in book or other form.

The production department transforms the work into a physical publication in whatever form. It collaborates with the editorial department regarding the physical appearance of the work. In the case of a book, the print size, paper, binding and dimensions will be decided upon, together with the size of the print run which will determine the selling price. The greater the issue (in other words, the more copies of a book that are printed), the lower the book price will be.

The sales and marketing department has some say in the acceptance of work for publication as it will estimate the potential market size. It also advises on technical aspects such as paper, print and binding and the number of copies to be produced. However, the editor and author are responsible for all proofreading.

Most publishers sell directly to retail outlets (book dealers) without the services of an intermediary. Sales are usually brokered by sales representatives who accept orders for forthcoming titles as well as for titles already in print.

The publicity and promotions department liaises closely with the sales department in order to bring the publications to the attention of potential buyers. The main publicity media are the publisher’s website and printed catalogue, which may be divided by subject and will list all forthcoming titles.



EXERCISE 9.4

You have written a children's book. Explain how you would go about getting it published in South Africa.

The following types of promotion may be used:

- submitting copies for review by newspapers and magazines, as well as radio and television programmes that discuss and review books
- submitting new educational works for evaluation by teachers and lecturers press, television and radio interviews for authors of new works
- publicity tours for authors
- advertisements in literary and popular magazines and in bookshops
- exhibitions at literary or professional conferences and meetings

The financial department (finance) is responsible for the financial management of the publishing house.

Publishing in South Africa has been characterised by a number of mergers and takeovers, which have resulted in the formation of large conglomerates involved in various aspects of publishing, from music, books and newspapers to internet and television broadcasting.

9.6 THE BOOK TRADE

Book publishers usually sell directly to retailers (ordinary bookshops as we know them) rather than make use of intermediaries. The reasons for this are as follows:

- (1) It helps publishers to keep in touch with the retail market and to find niches that they can fill.
- (2) The publishers' profit margins are greater if they do not have to operate through a wholesaler.

9.6.1 Wholesalers

However, wholesalers exist and they offer a few advantages.

Firstly, it is not necessary for the publisher to deal with each individual order, and secondly, the retailer does business with a far smaller number of suppliers.

Paperback books for the mass market are usually handled by wholesalers who often sell them on consignment; in other words, if the retailer cannot sell them, they can be returned for credit.

Most South African publishers deal directly with retailers. Many overseas publishers have subsidiary companies in South Africa that may stock copies of books printed by their parent company. Other overseas publishers usually appoint an agent to represent them in South Africa. However, book dealers do business directly with publishers who have no representation or subsidiary, or they appoint buyers overseas to handle their orders.

9.6.2 Retailers

Different types of retailers serve different markets, in terms of both stock and subject specialisation. They can be divided roughly into the following seven specific groupings.

9.6.2.1 General bookdealers

General bookdealers stock a wide variety of books to meet the needs of the public at large. They stock not only bestsellers but also slower-moving titles that may be attractive to browsing book buyers without specific purchases in mind. Staff are usually trained to advise customers, and libraries may sometimes use these book dealers because they can provide a special service. Exclusive Books is an example of a general bookdealer.

9.6.2.2 Children's bookshops

Children's bookshops specialise in children's books and stock a wide range of titles. Libraries and schools often purchase from them. However, the survival of children's bookshops is dependent on sales and the market for their stock, and they are not common in South Africa. An example is Hedgehog in Pretoria, which concentrates on sales to schools.

9.6.2.3 Religious bookshops

Religious bookshops stock only religious books and may either be multi-denominational or stock books for only one particular denomination. Examples are Lux Verbi and CUM.

9.6.2.4 Educational bookshops

Educational bookshops specialise in educational books for schools, universities or colleges, stocking mostly prescribed works for students. Examples are Van Schaik and Juta.

9.6.2.5 Africana, antiquarian and secondhand bookshops

Antiquarian booksellers are important overseas, but in South Africa there are only a handful of these bookshops, which are nevertheless well known to collectors.

Examples are Frank Thorold in Johannesburg and Clarke's Africana and Rare Books in Cape Town. They may also sell other secondhand books, which may not be rare.

There are also many secondhand bookshops, some attached to universities and schools, where students can sell textbooks they no longer need and purchase used texts at a cheaper price.

9.6.2.6 Other shops which sell books

There are other outlets for books such as shops that sell stationery. CNA, supermarkets and computer stores are examples. CNA outlets are widespread and found in most shopping centres. Besides stationery, they sell CDs, DVDs, computer hardware and software, toys and sweets as well as books and magazines, but they don't stock as wide a selection of books as the general bookshops. They concentrate on bestsellers and books by well-known authors. Their large turnover usually enables them to compete for substantial discounts from publishers.



EXERCISE 9.5

Find out which shops in your area, or nearest shopping centre, sell books. Classify them into the abovementioned types.

9.6.2.7 *The virtual bookshop*

Virtual bookshops offer a different way to purchase books and other items such as DVDs, software and cameras over the internet. Amazon.com is the best-known example. This company, based in the USA, has been in existence for over ten years and is the leading example of its kind. It does business exclusively over the internet and provides not only new books but also secondhand books. It is the largest operator and provides a wide range of items for sale from both the USA and sites in Europe.

Orders are placed online via secure servers, and the purchaser can choose from a number of shipping options. Orders not received by the purchaser are usually replaced free of charge. Amazon.com provides updated information on dispatch and shipping, so that each item can be traced in the system. Thereafter, clients are advised by e-mail when similar titles to ones ordered are published so that Amazon's aftersales service assures the supplier of repeat business.

Similar services are offered by Barnes and Noble (USA), Blackwells (UK) and www.takelot.com in South Africa.

The prospective buyer is even able to view the front cover, the contents page and book reviews by earlier purchasers. Extensive search and browsing options are available and, as the prices are very competitive, this development has seen the internationalisation of the book trade across country boundaries. Many smaller bookshops have linked in to www.amazon.com, for example, and their stock may also be ordered from the same website, giving them additional publicity and much wider potential markets.

Other bookshops have followed the trend with a web presence and are exploiting e-commerce to increase their revenue. Bookselling has proved to be one of the most successful e-commerce ventures.



EXERCISE 9.6

Visit any two internet bookshop websites, such as www.amazon.com and www.takelot.com, and compare their prices for your favourite book title.

Make sure you view the ordering procedure on both sites.

9.6.3 Service to libraries and information services

Libraries buy large numbers of books and therefore have an effect on the publishing industry and book trade. Machet (1988b:106) notes that libraries may buy stock from the following:

- **Retail outlets:** These usually offer libraries a discount on catalogue prices.
- **Publishers:** Agents who purchase the library stock from publishers. In a certain sense they take on the role of wholesalers. They often negotiate good discounts from publishers off the retail prices because of their bulk purchasing of numerous copies of titles for libraries.
- **Internet dealers:** Retail and wholesale dealers, publishers and agents can use the internet for orders. The advantage is that any title in print or even out of print can be ordered and delivered as quickly as the library requires. The disadvantages to libraries are that payment has to be effected in advance by credit card as no orders are accepted on account, and libraries are not given discounted prices as they are by other dealers.

9.7 SUMMARY

We have discussed various aspects of publishing and the book trade, including the publication and distribution of journals, newspapers and magazines.

The book buyers' market is small and widely dispersed across a large area in South Africa. There are significant levels of illiteracy, and many languages have to be catered for. As publishers publish books suited to the local market and as literacy increases, the market will grow.

Improved distribution and marketing methods to meet the needs of the local population are needed.

Large retailers such as CNA purchase very selectively and affect the success of locally published titles. Educational publishing forms the backbone of the industry in South Africa.

9.8 SELF-ASSESSMENT

- (1) Write notes on the concepts "publication", "publisher" and "publishing".
- (2) Describe the tasks that the different departments of a publishing company perform.
- (3) What problems confront publishers in South Africa?
- (4) List five different types of retail booksellers and discuss the markets that they serve.

SOURCES

Bailey (1998); Bekker & Lategan (1988); Botha (1996); Feather (2003); Feather & Reid (1995); Fitzgerald (1989); Fourie (1996); Harrod's librarians' glossary (2000); Horowitz (1996); Machet (1988a & 1988b); Machet (1993); Mangla (1984); Maney (1999); Maree (1999); Moss (1993); Nassimbeni (1990); Schmidt (1987); Shields (2003); Van Rooyen (1996)

STUDY UNIT 10

Cooperation and Networks and the Virtual Library

10.1 COOPERATION AND NETWORKS

10.1.1 Introduction

We define and discuss cooperation between information institutions, networks and consortia. There has been a very strong emphasis on cooperation between libraries, and it is true to say that, to a large extent, there still isn't a great deal of cooperation between archives, records offices and museums. On the other hand, it is probably also true to say that more and more of these institutions are clients of SABINET Online, which is a computerised information network. Just a few years ago this network was referred to as a "library network". As you have noted in the other study units of this study guide, there have been so many changes in the library and information world that we definitely need to use the term "information network" instead. Because the majority of institutions involved in the cooperation and networks discussed in this study unit continue to be libraries, you will see that the terms "library collaboration" and "library networks" are still used.

10.1.2 The concept of cooperation

Cooperation takes place between people or organisations working together to achieve a common end. Libraries cooperate mainly in response to scarce resources, although many other factors are also involved.

In the context of this module, cooperation is defined as follows: "Collaborative arrangements made between libraries (and information centres) to fulfill a number of functions, such as interlibrary lending, coordinated collection management (and) co-operative cataloguing ..." (*Harrod's librarians' glossary* 2000:183).

The expression "sharing of resources", which is used to explain "cooperation", is in general use in America. We feel that "sharing of resources" is more comprehensive than cooperation, which is why we use "cooperation" throughout this study unit.

Another definition for cooperation is that it entails two or more institutions working together to achieve or accomplish something which they would not be able to do on their own.

An older definition, which still holds today, is that given by Brong (1974:264):

Cooperation can be defined as the association of people or agencies in activities with common goals or objectives and with the intent of providing specific benefits for all. The key concept is that the benefits derived are shared by all. The verb co-operate implies combining, acting in concert, joining forces, working towards a common cause, and sharing successes and failures.

10.1.3 Cooperation in information institutions

Cooperation in information institutions may be applied to a wide range of activities, which could entail all types of libraries, information services and other information institutions, their material, services and staff skills. Cooperation is based on common goals which have benefits for all participants.

The aims of cooperation between information institutions are to improve services to users, to make optimal use of resources, and to prevent institutions from becoming isolated.

Although, in this study unit, we shall be referring to information institutions, in practice most of the cooperation still takes place between libraries.

In terms of the preceding points, we could define library cooperation as a range of formal or informal similarities between libraries which enable them to cooperate for the common benefit of all the users (Plaister 1997:263).

In the past, the same types of libraries usually cooperated when, for instance, public libraries in a certain geographic area shared their resources. Nowadays information technology has resulted in cooperation systems and networks of all types of libraries including information centres. Cooperation may be formal or informal; it may be limited to a geographic area; it may be organised according to the type and size of library; or it may be organised according to the type of task or exercise. Another pattern is international cooperation.

10.1.4 Why is library cooperation necessary?

Library cooperation is increasingly necessary in order to provide the best possible service to the users in a knowledge-based society. Cooperation has developed as the result of an increasing volume of information material, increasing user demands, an increase in literacy and decreasing funds. These factors have encouraged libraries to develop cooperative schemes in order to provide the best possible service to their users.

10.2.4.1 Increasing volume of information material

Traditionally libraries assumed that they should acquire most of the material that their users needed. They therefore bought as much material as possible. This approach was fairly successful until the end of World War II. Then the situation changed gradually but radically, partly as a result of the tremendous increase in the production of information, which is often called the “information explosion”. Because it was no longer possible for all information needs to be met locally, libraries saw cooperation as the solution.

10.2.4.2 Increased user demand for specialised information

A parallel development was the increasing demand from larger numbers of users with increasingly diverse and specialised interests. This was a result of academic disciplines becoming more specialised and new disciplines coming into existence. This meant that research workers needed more specialised information about an ever-widening range of subjects (Line 1983:74).

With the increasing use of computers, users have rightly come to expect information to be packaged according to their requirements. They realise that information is available instantly from a wide variety of sources.

10.2.4.3 Increasing literacy

The increase in literacy has led to more demands being made on the library as more people are able to read and use books for different purposes. This may seem like a contradiction in South Africa, with its high rate of illiteracy, but it is still true that greater numbers of people read now than was the case in the past.

10.2.4.4 Finance

The growing pressure on available financial resources increased the need for these resources to be optimally utilised. You will see that effective cooperation between libraries as well as between libraries and non-traditional information centres can ease economic pressures in individual libraries and information centres.

Cooperation does not necessarily mean that a library will spend less, but it does enable a library to provide a higher level of service than would be possible at comparable cost without cooperation. As it is an objective of libraries to provide the highest possible level of service to their users, cooperation is a means of reducing the overall costs for participating libraries (Sewell 1981:89–90).

10.1.5 Requirements for successful library cooperation

Certain requirements must be met for a cooperative system to operate successfully:

- Cooperation between libraries should be based on an agreement about the services and responsibilities to be shared by all the participants. This agreement may be formal or informal but it must be adhered to if the system is to be successful.
- Participating members of a cooperative scheme should join it voluntarily, at their own risk and because they are convinced of its value.
- The advantages of the scheme need to justify the costs, which should not be so high that they discourage participation.
- Good communication links between all members are necessary.
- Procedures should be standardised as in, for example, the standardised bibliographic description of items or an interlibrary lending procedure.

10.1.6 Areas of library cooperation

Library cooperation can take place in a large number of areas of library exercise, and wherever there are scarce resources. Edmonds (1986:6–7) lists ten major areas. We shall discuss only the most common areas of library cooperation here – stock selection and acquisition, storage, processing, and making documents available (interlending). Information retrieval and dissemination, which are also important areas of cooperation, will be discussed under networking.

10.2.6.1 Cooperative selection and acquisition

Before studying cooperative selection and acquisition, you need to know the terms “minimally used stock” and “basic stock”. Every library selects material to meet the needs of its users. However, a large percentage of users’ needs are met by a relatively small percentage of the library’s stock. The rest of the stock, especially in big academic and public libraries, may be used less often by a relatively small number of users. An example of this may be seen in the Unisa Library. The study collection, which consists of books recommended by lecturers for assignments, constitutes a small section of the library’s stock and is heavily utilised by undergraduate students, who form the largest section of the library’s clientele. This part of the stock is the library’s basic stock. Although the remainder of the stock is used occasionally by undergraduates, it is mostly used by academic and research staff and postgraduate students. This part of the stock is minimally used. It is in the area of minimally used stock that libraries usually try to cooperate.

Logically, cooperative acquisition should be the first stage of cooperation, but it is this function that is most difficult to translate into reality. Individual libraries owe allegiance firstly to their users, and they select material either in response to an expressed demand or in anticipation of a demand, based on knowledge of their users' professional skills and needs. Any acquisition outside these criteria may be justified only if it still leads to the ultimate benefit of the users of the library.

Cooperative acquisition is based on the premise that by planned cooperative acquisition, participating libraries can avoid duplication of material and omissions of acquisition, extend the range of available material, and have speedier access to the material than through conventional interlending.

There are two methods of cooperative acquisition. The first is by subject specialisation; that is to say, each participating library specialises in a specified subject and acquires documents in this particular area, which are then made available on loan to the other participating libraries. The second method requires participating libraries to review items which are pending purchase so as to share out the purchasing within the group, or to come to some agreement about the common use of expensive items for which a low demand is anticipated.

10.2.6.2 Cooperative storage

Cooperative storage may be independent of a cooperative acquisition scheme or it may form part of the scheme. When storage capacity is limited, the libraries concerned may share storage on a cheap site. These stores may be regarded as warehouses from which shelving space is rented. It is also possible to monitor the use of this material over a period of time before it is disposed of or offered to a national store. Alternatively this material may pass to joint ownership of the participating libraries. The advantage of this is that duplicates may then be disposed of, thus saving storage space.

10.2.6.3 Cooperative cataloguing

The primary area of cooperative processing is cataloguing. Cooperative cataloguing provides for the sharing of skills of individual cataloguers. This means that newly acquired publications can be catalogued more cheaply and quickly without loss of quality. Cooperative cataloguing is usually carried out with the help of a computerised network and will be discussed under networks.

10.2.6.4 Making documents available (interlending)

As stated, no library can meet all its users' needs from its own stock, and for this reason users need to be able to access material which the library does not have by making use of interlending. Interlending may be defined as a scheme whereby users of one library or information system may request their service

point to borrow from other library systems material not held in their own library system (*Harrod's librarians' glossary* 2000:384).

Interlending services supplement each library's own resources, enabling its borrowers to gain access to publications held by other libraries. Interlending is an expensive way of acquiring reading matter because of the labour-intensive processes involved.

Although interlending is conducted on a voluntary basis, its successful functioning depends on reciprocal services being provided by as many libraries as possible. If a library withholds its stock unnecessarily, it decreases the availability of literature by the number of books it does not make available.

Cooperation not only involves readiness on the part of the lending library to make its documents available. It also means that the borrowing library should provide adequate and correct bibliographic information in order to expedite the service. Requests should always be handled as quickly as possible.

To be effective, interlibrary lending must be well organised. Four elements are essential for an interlending scheme to be effective, namely the existence of a national book stock; the tools for tracing a record; record supply facilities; and effective communication.

10.1.7 International cooperation

International cooperation must be based on a need to improve services, share resources and serve users. International cooperation is cooperation between institutions rather than between individuals. Organisations like the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the International Federation for Documentation (IFD) usually provide the programming framework within which participants operate. Cooperation is taking place in fields such as international bibliographic networks and record delivery schemes.

10.2 NETWORKS

We will now look at networks in the context of library and information work. A network comprises a number of linked persons or organisations that cooperate for the benefit of each of the members. The converging information technologies are the primary factors which have facilitated library networks, but it is important to realise that networks existed long before the advent of computers or electronic telecommunications.

A network (in the context of library and information science) may be defined as follows:

Networks are **the informal links** that help people to make contacts, transact business, and find out what they need to know. Thus, although the word may be

used as a verb (“to network”), it is most frequently seen in its gerund form (“networking”).

Networks are **“bibliographic utilities”**. It is probably more accurate to just call them “networks” as they are the most complete networking systems and include database, hardware and telecommunications systems.

Networks are **“systems for online bibliographic searching”**, including such database vendors as Sabinet.

Networks are **organisations of libraries in a single area of specialisation**, such as law or medicine. They link to each other and to one or more national databases for the retrieval of technical and reference information.

Networks are **library cooperatives of any kind**. Although this increasingly common use of the word seemed inaccurate for many years, more and more cooperatives, systems and consortia are linked by telecommunications to improve their service to members, and this makes the synonymous use of the term more appropriate.

After having studied this section you will understand that, when it comes to library networks, we are in fact dealing with communications networks.

10.2.1 Non-computerised communications networks

The ultimate aim of a communications network is to provide a basis for cooperation which is to the benefit of each participating member of the network.

A communications network can best be understood by examining the meaning of the word “communication”. The most common method of communication between people is by speaking and listening, in other words by means of audible conversation.

However, as soon as the people who are conducting the conversation move out of earshot, they are no longer able to continue their conversation unless some other communication tool, such as a telephone, is used. Communication over distances is known as “telecommunication” – the prefix “tele-” means “far”.

Telecommunication is by no means a recent invention. Gradually systems for communicating information over distances have become more sophisticated. Systems whereby one person, or many people, communicate with many others simultaneously are commonplace. An example of a telecommunications network is the telephone network.

10.2.2 Computerised communication networks

The development of computers gave impetus to the development of networks. A computerised network is a system within which separate computers linked by telecommunications are able to exchange information and resources.

Like a telephone network, a computer network requires a physical infrastructure. This includes computers to send and receive messages, and a set of physical communication channels through which the messages or data can be transmitted.

A restricting factor of computerised telecommunication networks is the speed at which the telecommunication computers can link the networks. This is an area in which there is considerable development. In some cases public telephone lines are used and a modem is required to translate the digital data into analogue form so that it can be sent. At the receiving end, a modem is needed to translate the data back to digital form so that the computer can “read” it. The development of the internet, together with faster communications via ADSL and VOIP, have altered communication speed.

However, more importantly messages may be stored for attention at any time.

10.2.3 Computerised library networks

A library network consists of a number of libraries which are linked and which work together and understand one another. You have already learned how libraries and other information institutions cooperate. Here, we explain how libraries cooperate by means of computerised communication networks. Nowadays, many libraries belong to computerised networks and, as a result, they are able to provide faster and better service to their users.

Computerised library communication networks may be defined as follows: Two or more libraries and/or other organisations engaged in a common pattern of information exchange, through communications, for some functional purpose. A network usually consists of a formal arrangement whereby materials, information and services provided by a variety of types of libraries and/or other organisations are made available to all potential users. Computers and telecommunications are among the tools used for facilitating communications among them.

In modern usage, a network is defined as a group of individuals or organisations that are interconnected. The linking must include a communication mechanism, and many networks exist for the express purpose of facilitating certain types of communication among their members. In the library world, institutions form *networks primarily to achieve better sharing of resources – resources consisting of bibliographic information and of collections – and better service to users.* Online networks use computers and link members to the computer resource by means of telecommunications connections.

To sum up, we could say that networks, like library cooperation, are intended to provide a better service, but that computers and telecommunication play an important role in this sphere. Initially only libraries in a specific region could be members of a network, but with technological advances there are now national and even international library networks.

10.3 VIRTUAL LIBRARIES

The virtual or digital library is a collection of information that is both digitised and organised in order to allow users to both access and retrieve information resources stored on computer. The user is also able to browse and sometimes move from collection to collection seamlessly without knowing where precisely the information is housed. In many ways the digital library approximates the traditional library but with one major exception – not all of the resources are available without payment. Yet the digital library has increased content availability as never before.

Many university digital libraries now place lectures on their websites, and these are available for downloading free of charge. However, as stated above, digital libraries need resources in order to exist. They have to make resources (information) available; they have to provide access (i.e. information retrieval); and the hosting of all the resources has to be paid for.

In many instances, printed material has been converted into digital format. This could result in copyright problems for the institution involved. Libraries run conversion projects at some cost to convert their material into digital form, and some large projects have been embarked upon by Harvard University, as well as Google, to convert literary works into digital form.

The printed images are scanned into digital form, and more interactive material is now being stored in this form. We should realise that exercises such as these will preserve our written and visual heritage but at the inevitable cost or loss to the originators and holders of copyright on the works.

Many valuable manuscripts have been stored in this way and are now more widely accessible than in the past. However, these digital resources have to be rendered accessible to users by means of interfaces that allow both visual and auditory viewing and downloading of the material retrieved.

One of the biggest problems that occur with the availability of all these resources on the internet from digital libraries is the widespread plagiarism that results from the unacknowledged use of such material. In the information era, many do not see the unacknowledged use of downloaded information as plagiarism, and this abuse is frequently encountered in education.

Another concern is the viability of storage for the huge amounts of material now digitally stored. Storage is expensive and providing immediate access even more so. A digital library should have some storage that is not immediately accessible if it needs to reduce costs.

Unknown dangers also occur in terms of the vulnerabilities that the communications networks foster. Extensive precautionary measures should be put in place to prevent hackers from compromising the safety of the resources stored digitally. Proper maintenance and updating of both hardware and software are additional costs that have to be borne in keeping the digital library collection accessible.

10.4 SELF-ASSESSMENT

- (1) Test yourself to see whether you are able to explain what is meant by the “legal deposit of publications”.
- (2) The following as an example of essay-type question:
Evaluate the use of cooperative networks for resource-sharing.

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