

Würzburg City Library



A patron's heaven

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Würzburg City Library in Germany was the proud recipient of the German Library of the Year Award 2005. From a self-help circulation desk to a reader's café the Würzburg City Library is considered among the leaders in public library services. In 2003 the library was rated as the best in the national library rankings in Germany.

Introduction

The Würzburg City Library is a well-preserved building guarded by a falcon on the top of the roof. The interior is modern, well equipped and well organised with a dedicated and multi-skilled staff component. Apart from the library of the year award, Würzburg Library has also

received awards for the best practice in management of resources, programmes and excellent service delivery - with staff that is regarded as experts in customer orientation - truly a 'library heaven'.

Centralised circulation section

The circulation section is at the entrance of the library where all issues and returns are simultaneously done at a centralised point. This is an excellent self-help strategic solution for staff shortages and constraints. Information desks are strategically placed

on each level of the building (which has five floors) where staff provide specialised and professional support.

Self-help circulation

A self-help circulation desk is one of four circulation service points in the centralised circulation section. Step-by-step instructions make it easy for users to issue and return library items without a librarian's assistance. However, many still prefer a warm smile and the welcoming words 'Guten Tag' from a librarian to the cold metal surface of a machine.

Readers' Café

The Readers' Café is a special place where readers can sit and enjoy a coffee or espresso while they read the latest news or gossip from local and national newspapers and magazines. The library proudly offers 50 different newspapers and 100 titles in magazines. The Readers' Café is multifunctional and is often used for author evenings. Income from the café contributes to the running costs of the library.

Music Library

Patrons can listen to music while they relax in the Music Library which is well equipped with material ranging from sheet music, autobiographies, magazines, books, DVDs to CDs. The collection is regarded as one of the best in a public library in Germany. With 9 000 CDs and 10 000 scores of sheet music - many dating back to

▼ Besides being able to relax with a cup of coffee and read newspapers, the Reader's Café is also the venue for regular author evenings



▲ The library is situated in this well-preserved 18th century building called Falkenhaus (house of the falcon) and is flanked by the Marienkapelle (Chapel of St. Mary), a late-Gothic Bavarian church built in 1481

◀ The self-help circulation desk, although rather impersonal, is very useful



the beginning of the 20th century - to choose from, choices become difficult.

Career and business studio

The studio is situated on the third floor and is equipped with Internet, MS Office, special software for applications, web design (Dreamweaver), music production (Cubase by Steinberg), CD-writers, scanners and Online Public Access Catalogue (OPAC).

Work desks are available with magnetic notice boards where patrons can add or find business and educational information.

A small study, equipped with a television set and DVD-player is also available for private sessions.

The studio as a whole is dedicated to the field of learning, studying, working and education and is also used for the Public Libraries in the Learning Society (PULLS) projects.

PC and Internet workstations

Personal computers are available and the Internet can be surfed at reasonable fees. Patrons can access a workstation by purchasing access time from the nearest information desk which is loaded onto an access card. The card slots into the keyboard where the system automatically grants access to all applications available on the specific computer including a CD-writer. Printing

▼ Patrons can relax while listening to music in the well-equipped Music Library



facilities are also available at a minimum fee. Remaining access time can be cashed in at the information desk. The PC and Internet workstations also generate income for the library.

OPAC

Various OPAC stations are available throughout the library with clear and easy step-by-step instructions on how to access and use the database.

Information queries via Internet

The Würzburg City Library is one of seventy libraries in Germany providing specialised research facilities for users who direct questions via the Internet. Patrons throughout Germany send enquiries to a centralised server that allocates the enquiry to the library specialising in the specific field. The Würzburg City Library is responsible for enquiries on topics related to theatre, dance and film.

PULLS project

Würzburg is one of eight libraries in Europe who participate in the PULLS project. The



▲ The PC and Internet workstations are available to patrons who can purchase access time from the information desk

aim of PULLS is to enhance the European dimension of life-long learning with the focus on information literacy, the creation of information-competent citizens and career development. The programme is designed to improve the lives of adults and disadvantaged people. Würzburg Library specialises in learning techniques; information retrieval; job applications; telephone skills; basic PC skills; e-life electronic equipment and time management.

Cataloguing

Time spent by staff on cataloguing of new material is considerably reduced by downloading the information from EKZ - a German library service provider - onto their database. The staff also reviews weekly annotations provided by EKZ before deciding on new publications. This is valuable for selection and purchasing.

Dewey Classification

Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) is not used in German libraries. Here a unique classification system based on main topics and subtopics is used. The main topics are represented by capital alphabet letters from

A-Y with lower case alphabet letters indicating subsections. Numbers follow the lower case alphabet letters only when necessary, for example:

L (Philosophy)

La (History of philosophy).



▼ Once a week there is a special therapy programme for parents and toddlers with emphasis on fun activities



New book wish list

Patrons can submit a special 'wish' to the library for a new book hot off the press. The request is then reviewed as soon as possible by key staff who approve or decline the 'wish'. A total of 70% of the recorded 'wishes' are satisfied with a record time of 45 minutes from purchasing the book, preparing it and phoning the patron to collect.

Special programmes

Würzburg City Library is well known in Germany for their special and unique programmes and library orientation and reading promotion start at an early age. A special programme for toddlers entitled *Bücherbabies*, is a library therapy programme for both parents and babies. Parents with babies up to three years of age meet once a week at the library where a volunteer - with a professional background - facilitates the fun session that includes singing traditional songs, performing and acting rhymes and dancing.

Children's Library

The Children's Library provides more than books. It is a place of fun and creativity. Children can watch DVDs and use the Sony PlayStation at their leisure.

Library passport

Primary school children are encouraged to visit the library and to read books by receiving a passport to the library. The

passport is stamped by 'customs' library staff with each return of library material. After ten visits the passport is full and the child is rewarded with a gift. He/she is then re-issued with a new passport.

Mobile library services

Disabled and homebound people are special patrons of the library. Volunteers who are book lovers and people's persons - travel throughout Würzburg with either a backpack or small trolley loaded with books to collect or deliver to these special patrons.

Pets and umbrellas

Dog-loving patrons are welcome to bring their dogs to the library. The Würzburg Library has created a special area where dogs can wait for their owners. Patrons also do not have to worry about inclement weather because the library even provides umbrellas.

Suggestions stand

Patrons and visitors are invited to place comments and suggestions in the suggestion stand in the entrance hall of the circulation section. These are viewed in a serious light

by library staff and are acted upon. In 2005 the library received approximately 700 submissions.

Membership benefits

Total items for circulation: 80 items (25 fiction, 25 non-fiction, 15 non-book)
Loan period: 1 month
Membership: annual fee
Transaction slip: with each issue and return with loan history available.

Statistics

No written statistics are used due to the 'inaccuracy' thereof. All important statistics are generated by the library system and security access system.
Total stock: approximately 201 800
Annual circulation: 1.3 million
Total members: active users 25 000
Staff component: 29
Floor size: 3200m² with 5 levels
Access security statistics: 703 000.

The Würzburg City Library certainly serves as an excellent example of going that extra mile to satisfy customers' needs.

Acknowledgement

www.goethe.de/librarian2004
www.stadtbuecherei-wuerzburg.de

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▲ The Children's Library provides many facilities such as this Sony PlayStation

◀ A permanent stand in the entrance hall for patrons to submit comments and suggestions

▶ Not only does Würzburg Library cater for the mind but it even offers patrons protection on a rainy day and a spot for their pets and umbrellas

