



2006

## LIBRARIES AND LIBRARIANSHIP IN HUNGARY





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IN HUNGARY  
2006



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# Foreword

It is important that citizens of different countries get to know each other and become aware of the similarities and the differences of their respective cultures and everyday life. The awareness and knowledge of other cultures, as well as the presentation of our own values has gained even more importance since Hungary joined the European Union.

Various professional sectors - in our case the library field - also need to increase their international visibility and at the same time, become more familiar with international trends and practices. During many years, we have been aware of the need for a publication that would give a brief and accurate overview about Hungarian libraries and the Hungarian library field. This brochure aims to fulfil such a role.

After a short historical introduction, our publication focuses on the present. Our intention was to show the readers the conceptual and policy background, as well as the achievements and challenges related to the development of the library field.

Hungarian libraries underwent radical changes over the past 15 years. The “change of regime” of the Hungarian library field is linked to the new Library Act that came into force in 1997. The Act opened unprecedented opportunities for Hungarian libraries. Among many other stipulations, the Act laid down the criteria of the successful operation of the library system under the responsibility of the Minister of Culture. Two of the most important criteria are:

- Setting up new, centrally operated national services for the benefit of the entire library system
- Ensuring state funding for the developments set out in the Act

The current country-wide developments have been implemented according to the strategic objectives of the library field, focusing on increased access to information, equal opportunities, content development and quality development. In these days marked with serious economic restrictions, libraries are facing a contradictory situation. While they are suffering from insufficient funding for their everyday operation, there are increasing funding opportunities available for the development of the quality of services both at national and local level. Libraries must be able to derive benefit from these opportunities.

The mission of the Hungarian library field is similar to other European library systems: its primary objective is to satisfy user needs. In certain areas, we can demonstrate great achievements, like the well-functioning National Document Delivery System, or the modernisation programmes that were extended as far as the level of village libraries. However, we have to admit that there is still much to do in the area of ICT development, especially in rural areas.

We are proud of our new library buildings – you will see them listed in this brochure – but we have to confess that there are many other libraries in need of renovation, the pictures of which we have not included in this publication!

But in summary, we can state that there are certainly more developments than setbacks and we hope you will agree with this statement when you read this brochure, or when you come to visit Hungary.

JUDIT SKALICZKI  
Head of Library Department  
Ministry of Education and Culture

# I.

## A brief historical overview

The history of Hungarian libraries began in the 11th century when the Hungarian state was established and Christianity was adopted as the state religion. During this period, the abbeys of Tihany and Pannonhalma held collections of valuable manuscripts, and the great Mediaeval Hungarian codices, the 'Anjou Legend' and the 'Illustrated Chronicle', were prepared at the request of the Hungarian kings.

Renaissance culture flourished under the reign of King Matthias (1458-1490), whose library, known as the Bibliotheca Corviniana, was one of the greatest

collections of illustrated chronicles and scientific and philosophical works in contemporary Europe. The library contained nearly 2,500 books (or „corvinae“), but the collection was dispersed after the death of the king, and today only 216 corvinae remain at various libraries worldwide. More than 50 of these are held in Hungarian collections.

During the time of the Protestant Reformation and the Counter Reformation, Hungarian written cultural heritage was preserved by the libraries of the Protestant colleges of Debrecen, Sárospatak and Pápa.

In the 18th century, library rooms furnished in a baroque or classical style became important parts of bishops' residences and the homes of noblemen. These contained encyclopaedic collections, classified by subject, and were held in richly ornamented wooden bookcases. Several valuable examples of these libraries are preserved today, including the library of the Teleki family in Marosvásárhely, Transylvania (today Tirgu-Mures, Romania) and the fine book collection of the Festetics family in Keszthely, Hungary.

The beginning of the 19th century was marked by the promotion of national identity, which fostered a new interest in the nation's language, culture and history.





The idea of establishing a national library – collecting, cataloguing and making available to scholars all the documents relating to the history of Hungary – was put forward by Count Ferenc Széchenyi. In 1802, the Count donated to the nation his own collection of 13,000 printed books, 1,200 manuscripts, and hundreds of maps, coats of arms, engravings and medals. In 1808, the Hungarian National Museum was established and the national library founded by Count Széchenyi became part of it. The library became an independent national institution in 1949 and relocated from the National Museum to its new premises in Buda Castle in 1985.

The Hungarian Academy of Sciences was founded by Count István Széchenyi in 1825, and its library was set up the following year when Count József Teleki donated his book collection of 30,000 volumes to the Academy. The library was opened to the general public in 1865.

The famous Jesuit University of Nagyszombat (today Trnava, Slovakia) was founded by archbishop and theologian Péter Pázmány in 1635. After the dissolution of the Jesuit order, the university moved to Buda in 1777 and then to its final location in Pest

in 1784. Named after physicist Eötvös Loránd, it has since become the largest and most prestigious university in Hungary. The university library holds a number of codices, 14 corvinae, and hundreds of prints and books from the 16th and 17th centuries. The Library of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics is another academic library with a prestigious historical collection.

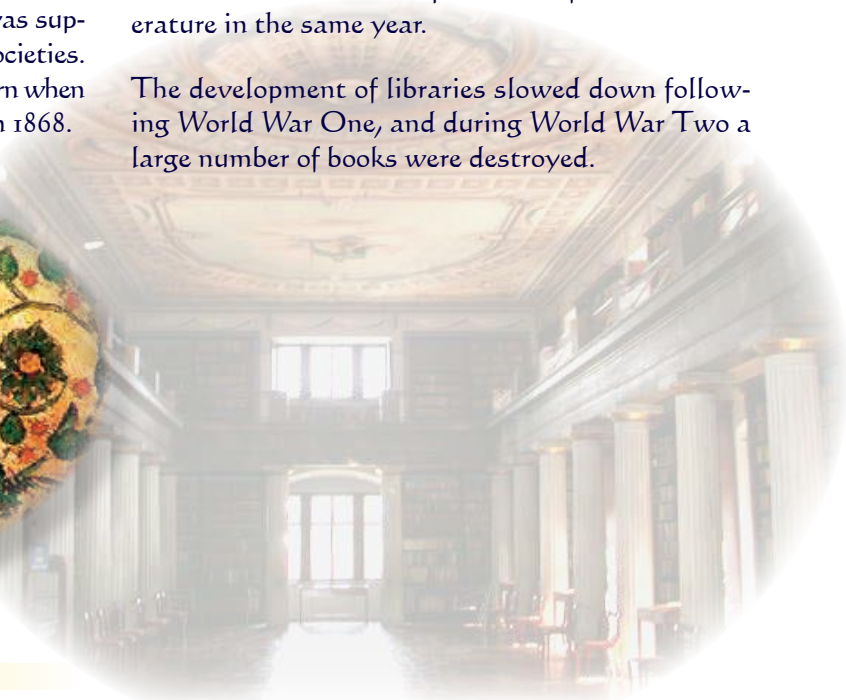


Following the political „compromise“ that established the dual monarchy of Austro-Hungary in 1867, the autonomous Hungarian state established its own administrative institutions. At this point the Library of the Hungarian Parliament and the Library of the Central Statistical Office were founded.

School libraries in Hungary have existed since the time of the Protestant Reformation, when schools had their own book collections, and college education was supported by collections belonging to students' societies. The concept of the modern school library was born when the law on public education came into force in 1868.

The antecedents of public libraries were reading groups and booksellers' lending libraries; the Anglo-Saxon model of public libraries was introduced by Ervin Szabó, who reorganised the metropolitan library of Budapest and opened it to the general public in 1910. The new metropolitan library had one central library and five branches. It opened its local history collection (called the Budapest Collection) in 1913, and made available a department of children's literature in the same year.

The development of libraries slowed down following World War One, and during World War Two a large number of books were destroyed.



After 1945, when the „socialist“ political and economic era started in Hungary, priorities in library policy changed. In order to create a new generation of intellectuals, the regime introduced an ambitious cultural policy aimed at increasing literacy in general and providing working class citizens with a wide variety of cultural and educational material. The policy was implemented via two networks of public libraries: council libraries, run by local authorities; and trade union libraries, available at workplaces.

The transition to democracy in 1989 brought radical political, economic and social changes that also had a considerable impact on the library system. Libraries faced new challenges due to insufficient funding from local authorities, as well as from the changing structures and policies of the cultural sector, resulting in a need for new systems

and solutions to ensure the successful operation of the library system in the new environment. At the same time, political openness and the prospect of European Union membership created a stimulating

atmosphere and encouraged new international links. As a result, Hungarian libraries needed to adopt entirely new strategies to ensure a modern library system by the beginning of the third millennium. In order to meet the new requirements set by library authorities and the changes in society, the following priorities were identified:

- a new legal basis for the restructuring of the library system
- focus on users' needs
- focus on diversified services
- the automation of libraries
- financing of the new system
- the introduction of modern library management at Hungarian libraries



# 2.

## The Hungarian library system today

### A. Legislation relating to the library field

The first Hungarian law concerning the mission and services of libraries, museums and archives was passed in 1929, and during the socialist period several statutory orders further regulated the organisation and operation of the library network. By the early 1990s, however, it was clear that library legislation required a complete overhaul. Act CXL of 1997 (on Public Library Provision) set the legal framework for the new library system, incorporating the following concepts:

- libraries are the core institutions of the information society
- the library system is a prerequisite for the free flow of information



- all citizens have the right to access services provided by the libraries which are „open to all users“ (see below)
- the development of the library system and national library services must be financed by the state

The Act introduced the term “libraries open to all users”, encompassing various types of libraries whose services can be accessed and used by any citizen, and set out the criteria required for a library to be included in this category. These criteria emphasise a focus on services provided to users; libraries that are registered as “open to all users” benefit from additional state funding for development (including collection development), ICT infrastructure and the continuing training of librarians. The Act also includes provisions for the national document delivery system and other central services and sets out the organisation and financing of the entire library system.

### B. The role of the Ministry of Education and Culture

Responsibility for the strategic development and professional supervision of the Hungarian library system falls to the Minister for Education and Culture,



through the work done by the Library Department. The main activities of the Department are:

- preparing legislation and regulations related to the library field
- operation of the system of professional supervision
- strategic planning
- the administration of ministerial funding

### C. Professional supervision

The practice of professional supervision was re-introduced in 2002, with the aim of raising the standard of the services provided by libraries. The programme began with visits to nearly 2,000 village libraries and continued with a pilot project on quality-based supervision of municipal libraries. Future projects will be directed at academic libraries.

### D. The strategic development of the library field

Since the implementation of the new Library Act, there have been three national library development strategies.

During the period **1997 - 2003**, the following strategic objectives were accomplished:

- the establishment of the National Document Delivery System
- the establishment of the “open to all users” accreditation system for libraries
- the acceleration of the automation of libraries
- the establishment of the Hungarian National Shared Catalogue
- the reintroduction of the system of continuous training of librarians
- the establishment of the Hungarian Library Institute
- the modernisation of the organisational structure and services of the National Library





The strategic document for the period **2003 - 2007** (<http://www.ki.oszk.hu/strategia>) includes the following four main objectives:

❖ **Raising the quality of services in order to meet European Union standards**

Hungarian libraries should stay up to date and in line with the libraries of other member countries of the European Union, especially those countries that demonstrate 'best practice' in library and information services. Along with a focus on library users' needs and high-quality services, a range of new activities, technical solutions and performance measures are required, including quality management in libraries.



❖ **Increasing access to library documents and information in line with the principles of democracy and equal opportunities**

Physical or virtual access to the wealth of information within libraries must extend to as many people as possible, irrespective of geographical location. As a consequence, the information infrastructure of the library network needs to be further developed, until it reaches the level of village libraries. Tasks include the coordinated digitisation of library collections; the retrospective cataloguing of the National Széchényi Library; and the incorporation of the catalogue records of the National Document Delivery System into the Hungarian National Shared Catalogue.

❖ **Developing the library supply of rural areas**

All citizens must be able to access the documents and information that they need regardless of where they live: prior to the second national library development strategy, access was guaranteed only as far as the level of cities. Library services for village communities will be covered by county or city libraries, which provide documents and services requested by residents of rural communities.

### ❖ **Making the image of librarianship more attractive**

Library professionals must have the knowledge and skills required for international best practice in library and information services. At the same time, they must be able to deal with all groups of users, including people with disabilities and disadvantaged members of society. In order to meet these new requirements, the system of professional training must be restructured and reintroduced. An appropriate system for career development, including competitive salary packages, must be offered in order to attract qualified information professionals to work in libraries.

The areas of strategic development for the period **2007-2013** were determined in accordance with the objectives of the overall National Development Plan, which aims to increase the competitiveness and employability of citizens. The key areas of the third library strategy are:

### ❖ **Improving the library and information infrastructure in villages**

People living in villages must be able to access the same documents and information services as the

citizens of towns. Access to these services needs to be provided through new or renovated library buildings or library service points, by mobile libraries and through extensive ICT development.

### ❖ **Widening access to the wealth of information and knowledge**

This area includes the modernisation of the National Széchényi Library; the setting up of regional libraries as knowledge centres; enhancing cooperation between academic libraries, county libraries and business partners; and the infrastructure development of municipal libraries.



### ❖ Digitisation of library collections

The digitisation of library collections follows from the National Digitisation Plan for Libraries issued in 2006. Projects will include the creation of the National Digital Library in accordance with the European Digital Library initiative, and the provision of access to copyright-protected digital material through the extension of the dedicated networks of the National Digital Data Archive and the National Audiovisual Archive.

### ❖ Enhancing reading

This nation-wide reading project will support the development of children's libraries and school libraries with the aim of enhancing the knowledge and creativity of young people. Developing the culture of reading will need stronger cooperation between libraries and the publishing industry.



## E. Two important national library projects

### ❖ The National Document Delivery System

Országos Dokumentum-ellátási Rendszer – ODR  
(<http://www.ki.oszk.hu/odr>)

The National Document Delivery System was established in 1998. The system ensures access to documents and information for all citizens from any library in the country. The system is based on 54 member libraries including the national library, the special libraries with a national remit, state-funded academic libraries, and county libraries. Together the collections of these libraries cover nearly all the documents held at Hungarian libraries. Library users can find the location of the documents in the catalogue and with the assistance of their librarian, can make a request via the system. The requested document is delivered to the library in printed or electronic form, or as a photocopy of the original document, in compliance with appropriate copyright rules. In the past few years, more than 500,000 documents have been delivered to users in villages and small settlements. The operational costs of the system are covered by the annual budget of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Member libraries receive funding for acqui-

sitions, technical and technological tools, and postal fees for document delivery.

### ❖ **The Service System for Rural Areas**

(Könyvtárellátási Szolgáltató Rendszer – KSZR)

Following the implementation of the National Document Delivery System, a system was required to extend the service to villages and small settlements that do not have a library. The aims and mechanisms of this new system were set out in 'The concept of library service provision for citizens living in villages and small settlements', published in 2004. The Service System for Rural Areas is based on libraries providing services (county libraries and the more important city libraries), and on small communities ordering and receiving these services via various instruments such as village libraries, library service points and mobile libraries. The range of services includes document delivery, online information services, and the organisation of events and exhibitions. Special attention is paid to the services provided to children and young people. Funding for the system is provided through a variety of state development programmes (see below). For example, with the cooperation of the Ministry of Local Government and Regional

Development, village communities were invited to „club together“ to apply for state funding for the introduction of a mobile library. Funding for this type of mobile library service reached 714 million HUF (2,580,000 EUR) in 2006, making it possible for 582 small villages to benefit from library services.

### **F. The financing of the library system**

The operating costs of libraries are covered by the annual budget of their local library authorities. Operation and development of the Hungarian library system as a whole is coordinated centrally and financed by the state: this additional central funding is made available through development programmes rolled out according to the strategic objectives of library policy. Eligible institutions can



submit project proposals in specific activity areas. Some of the programmes that libraries have benefited from are:

- **Matching funds for the collection development of public libraries.**

In this programme, local government authorities provide a matching grant equivalent to the amount requested from the Ministry of Local Government and Regional Development.

- **Grants for infrastructure development of the Service System for Rural Areas**

The Ministry of Education and Culture runs a funding programme that provides long term loans at discounted rates for local governments that wish to improve the infrastructure of cultural services in their community. Funding for the Service System for Rural Areas can also be requested through

this programme. Additionally, proposals can be submitted for the renovation and improvement of the premises where library services will be provided. In 2005 and 2006, 123 library projects were supported by this programme.

- **Grants for ICT development**

Through the national ICT development programmes of recent years, broadband Internet connections have been established at all the libraries of the National Document Delivery System, all municipal libraries, church libraries in the „open to all users“ scheme, and college libraries





- **Quality development at libraries and modernisation of services**

This three-year quality development programme targeted the member libraries of the National Document Delivery System. In the framework of the programme, performance indicators and service guidelines relating to specific types of libraries were set out. The application of these quality management tools ensures that services are consistent in standard and quality at different libraries: 56 libraries participated in this programme.

- **Grants for ensuring equal access to library services**

Between 2004 and 2006, various calls for proposals supported projects that aimed to improve access to library buildings and library services by disabled users. Special funding was made available for the purchase of library software and tools for the blind and visually impaired: 128 libraries received funding within this programme.

- **The National Cultural Funds grant scheme**

The funding available through this programme is overseen by the Minister for Education and Culture.

The programme has a library committee which makes annual recommendations for topics and activities to be supported through a bidding process for project funds. The topics are usually determined by strategic objectives of library policy, but other activities, like the purchase of technical equipment, quality assurance projects, professional publications, or the organisation of library campaigns and conferences, can also be supported from this budget.



# 3.

## Types of libraries

### The National Széchényi Library

<http://www.oszk.hu>

The National Széchényi Library celebrated its 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 2002. Its core mission is to collect, preserve and deliver to users documents that form part of Hungarian cultural heritage. The library has the largest collection of prints and books published before 1711 in the country. Some of the oldest complete texts in the Hungarian language, such as the codices incorporating the Funeral Sermon and Prayer (end of 12<sup>th</sup> century) and the Old Hungarian Laments of Mary (13<sup>th</sup> century) are held here, together with 32 “corvinae” from the library of King Matthias. The

collection includes other historical treasures, like the ‘Chronica Hungarorum’, the first printed book in Hungary, published in 1473, and a great number of manuscripts of masterpieces of Hungarian literature.

In 2005, the library had 46,818 registered users and 213,000 one-day visitors. Approximately 65% of the users are students, and 10% are researchers.

The library publishes the Hungarian national bibliography twice a year on CD-ROM, but updates covering the last three months are also available online on the library’s portal. The library uses the AMICUS integrated system. Retrospective cataloguing of card catalogue records started in 2003, and the digitisation of the collection started in the late 1990s, with the first projects focusing on special collections.

### The Hungarian Library Institute

The Hungarian Library Institute – which is the national authority of public libraries – is included within the organisational structure of the National Széchényi Library, but managed by the Library Department of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Its mission is to provide services to assist the effi-



cient operation of the library system. Some of its tasks are:

- collecting and publishing national library statistics
- assisting in the setting of standards, guidelines and methods related to library and information services
- operating a special library of library and information science materials
- assisting in the collection development of libraries
- participating in the continuing training of librarians and the training of library assistants

## The National Library Board

The National Library Board was set up in 1999 as a consultative committee overseeing matters related to the functioning and strategic development of the library field. It consists of 9 members who are elected for a four-year period. The Board also observes and gives its opinion on the development and financing of the activities carried out by the National Széchényi Library and the Hungarian Library Institute, according to their charters under the Library Act. The Board reports to the Minister for Education and Culture.

## Academic libraries

The number of Hungarian university and college libraries – state-funded and private – exceeded 200 in 2005. Most operate as “libraries open to all users” and all university libraries are members of the National Document Delivery System.

The economic and social changes of the 1990s had a considerable impact on academic libraries. The number of students in higher education has risen dramatically during the last ten years, which has resulted in an unprecedented increase in the use of the collections



and services of academic libraries. The development of academic institutions has also been influenced by the process of integration of universities and colleges which started at the end of the 1990s. The merging of institutions brought many challenges for academic libraries at the organisational and operational level, and required a greater degree of resource sharing and cooperation. Academic libraries are increasingly providing online services, including access to licensed electronic journals and databases. Everyday activities for academic librarians now include the search for funding for academic literature, negotiating licensing terms and managing electronic resources. Academic libraries have also gained considerable experience in digitisation.

## Special libraries

Special libraries develop collections in specific scientific areas. They show great variety as far as their supporting authorities, history, collection and user groups are concerned. Among them are the libraries of state-funded research institutes, the Library of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, the Hungarian Parliamentary Library, corporate libraries, museum libraries, the medical libraries

of state hospitals and the libraries of non-profit institutions. There were more than 370 special libraries in 2005 and over 80 of them have obtained the status of “libraries open to all users”. Nine special libraries collect literature on a national level: these libraries participate in the National Document Delivery System and provide records for the Hungarian National Shared Catalogue. They are also in charge of providing national subject-specific bibliographies, thematic databases, subject-specific reviews, translations and studies.





## Public libraries

All local governments are bound to provide library services to their citizens. County and municipal authorities are obliged by law to operate a public library, while smaller communities can choose to run a library – on their own or in partnership with others – or order library services via the Service System for Rural Areas.

All county, municipal and village libraries must be registered as “libraries open to all users” and must respond to the requirements stipulated by the Library Act. There are 20 county libraries, nearly 300 municipal libraries and over 2,500 village libraries in Hungary.

Public libraries also have special roles, like the collection of local documents and information, assisting users in finding relevant information sources for everyday life issues, and supporting life-long learning.

## School libraries

There are nearly 4,000 school libraries in Hungary. The conditions of their operation, their collection and their tasks are defined by their respective educational institutions. School libraries provide statistics to and are professionally coordinated by the National Pedagogical Library and Museum. In 1995, the National Curriculum introduced the teaching of library skills as a compulsory subject.





	Selected statistics on Hungarian libraries (2000-2005)					
	2000	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005
Number of libraries	2 975	3 025	3 485	3 615	3 584	3 588
Number of library service points	4 360	4 712	5 090	5 386	5 190	5 077
Area (m2)	551 060	657 169	713 540	735 248	741 429	749 372
Collection (items)	102 345 708	105 122 357	111 371 771	114 510 976	114 103 722	115 569 203
Number of registered users	1 866 709	1 966 068	2 076 784	2 211 852	2 198 097	2 261 097
Number of library visits	22 177 866	26 728 312	31 833 406	28 923 774	28 132 176	28 106 461
Number of loans	12 479 615	13 522 280	14 316 638	14 551 813	13 927 757	13 678 203
Number of documents lent	41 361 715	41 798 185	43 359 337	42 482 897	39 994 562	38 786 784
Number of interlibrary loans	102 467	113 094	123 720	139 198	138 829	138 406

## Shared catalogues and national electronic services

### The Hungarian National Shared Catalogue

Magyar Országos Közös Katalógus (MOKKA)  
<http://www.mokka.hu>

At the end of the 1990s, 15 libraries (including the National Széchényi Library, the most important academic, research and special libraries, and the Metropolitan Ervin Szabó Library in its role as the leading public library of the country) declared their intention to join forces for the setting up of a national shared catalogue based on a single database. This initial group of libraries effectively covered 100% of the Hungarian publications and 70% of the foreign titles held in Hungarian library collections. In 2002, the National Széchényi Library took charge of the



operation and development of this national shared catalogue, known as MOKKA. Other libraries have since joined the system, bringing the number of participants to 39 by 2006. MOKKA makes available shared catalogue records in order to avoid duplications of cataloguing efforts. The database also supports the retrospective cataloguing being carried out by Hungarian libraries. Supported by “eCorvina” software, it offers a standardised, user-friendly system designed to be used by both librarians and readers. The development of the catalogue has been funded through various grants for national ICT development.

It is expected that the number of libraries participating in MOKKA will rise to 100 in the coming years. By this point, the group of libraries will cover 100% of the documents held in Hungarian library collections, fulfilling the function of MOKKA as a central shared catalogue. Further plans include the merger of MOKKA and the National Periodical Database in order to make periodical records available through the same system. Another important future project will be the fusion of MOKKA and the location database of the National Document Delivery System (see below).

## National Periodical Database

Nemzeti Periodika Adatbázis (NPA)

The National Periodical Database, operated by the National Széchényi Library, is the central catalogue of foreign periodicals held by Hungarian libraries. The database contains the bibliographical data of nearly 42,000 titles (periodicals, newspapers, reports, annuals etc.) and about 1,000,000 related location data. The oldest journal issues date back to 1665. Data is provided by 600 libraries.

## The location database of the National Document Delivery System

<http://odr.lib.klte.hu>

The catalogue of the National Document Delivery System contains both bibliographical data and document locations. The location database enables any user from any library in the country to search for a particular document, find out which library's collection holds the item and in what form it can be accessed, and submit a request for the document. The catalogue records offer links to the homepages and the OPACs of the libraries where the document is held. Interlibrary loan requests can be initiated directly via the system, from the same catalogue record. The database started to operate in 2000 and the number of records has reached 3,500,000 to date.

## The licensing of academic electronic content

With the availability of broadband Internet and computers in nearly all types of libraries, access to international information resources has widened considerably. However, the licensing of international academic journals and databases represent a major



burden for the budgets of individual libraries. In the 1990s, the licensing of electronic databases was organised through consortia of smaller libraries and was paid out of various state grants. In 2001, a national agency was set up for the licensing of electronic academic information for all state-owned universities and colleges (Elektronikus Információszolgáltatás – ELSZ). This national consortium, licensing a range of services including “Science Direct” and “Web of Science”, has also been extended to four special libraries with a national remit. Since 2003, the Ministry of Education and Culture has coordinated another major license:

this national consortium provides access to a multidisciplinary database package from EBSCO Publishing, and extends not only to academic and research libraries, but public libraries and other non-profit libraries too. Along side these national licenses, small consortia and individual licenses are in place for products in specific scientific areas. These licenses may be paid out of a specific library’s own budget, but the Ministry of Education and Culture also has a special budget for collection development of academic libraries that can be used for subscriptions to foreign journals and databases. This budget is made available within an annual grant scheme.





## The Hungarian Electronic Library

Magyar Elektronikus Könyvtár (MEK)  
<http://www.mek.oszk.hu>

The Hungarian Electronic Library started as a civil initiative in 1994. Thanks to the efforts of a group of enthusiastic librarians eager to set up an electronic library, the initiative became a project of the National Information Infrastructure Development Programme and received state funding for further implementation. Since 1999, the Hungarian Electronic Library has been hosted by the National Széchényi Library and constitutes one of its departments.

The Hungarian Electronic Library aims to collect and preserve freely available electronic documents related to Hungary and Central Europe in the fields of culture, education and academic research. Documents are collected from a variety of sources: the World Wide Web, publishers, and the authors themselves. The Hungarian Electronic Library also coordinates a large scale digitisation project, the Digital Library of Hungarian Studies, which will make available online thousands of books and reference works related to Hungarian studies.

## The National Electronic Periodicals Archive and Database

Elektronikus Periodika Archívum és Adatbázis (EPA)  
<http://epa.oszk.hu>

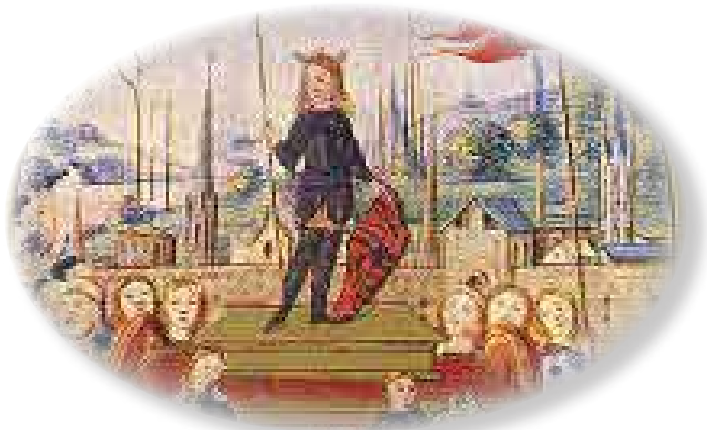
EPA is a bibliographic database that collects, archives and makes available Hungarian and Hungary-related electronic periodicals available freely on the Internet or on the servers of state-funded academic or scientific institutions and libraries. These resources may be the digital versions of printed periodicals or solely digital material. In addition to the central searchable database of the metadata and access information of these e-resources, EPA also provides hosting services and offers full-text content based on agreements with the publishers of the resources.



## Bibliotheca Corviniana Digitalis

<http://www.corvina.oszk.hu>

This ambitious programme of the National Széchényi Library was established in order to virtually reconstruct King Matthias' library (the "Bibliotheca Corviniana"). The virtual library currently makes available in digital form 36 "corvinae" from the collection of the National Library, and provides information on all the other "corvinae" held by libraries in 14 countries around the world. In addition to the digitisation of manuscripts, a comprehensive database is being built that will contain the full codicological description of the codices, their art historical context, as well as the full bibliography of the Bibliotheca Corviniana.



## National Digital Data Archive

Nemzeti Digitális Adattár (NDA)

<http://www.nda.hu>

As part of the national ICT development strategies and action plans between 1997 and 2003, state funding was allocated for a large number of digitisation projects to be carried out by libraries and museums, as well as scientific and cultural institutions. However, there was little coordination to prevent parallel digitisation efforts, and the sustainability of the projects depended entirely on the availability of ongoing state-funding. In response to this, the Hungarian Information Society Strategy was published in 2003. In a section related to the digitisation of cultural heritage, the strategy promoted coordinated and standardised ways of making available digital content. The National Digital Data Archive, created in 2003, aims to fulfil this coordinating role for the digitisation projects of libraries, museums, archives and other public institutions. NDA regards itself as a collaborative programme based on the use of a standard meta-information system and shared data operation, enabling high level cooperation between partner institutions and ensuring the highest level content and service integration for users. At pres-

ent, over 300,000 digital documents from 60 digital libraries can be accessed via the NDA's search engine. There are nearly 50 partner institutions working with the project.

## National Audiovisual Archive

Nemzeti Audiovizuális Archívum (NAVA)  
<http://www.nava.hu>

NAVA is the digital legal deposit archive for locally-produced programmes of Hungarian television channels and radio stations. Provided for by the Act CXXXVII/2004, it started to operate in 2005. The records of the database are freely accessible on the



Internet. The amended Hungarian copyright law authorises public access to the full content of the records for research purposes, via a dedicated service network ("NAVA workstations") operating at libraries, museums, audiovisual archives and educational institutions.

## John von Neumann Digital Library

Neumann János Digitális Könyvtár  
<http://www.neumann-haz.hu>

The John von Neumann Digital Library was set up in 1997 as a state-funded, non-profit institute for carrying out various projects in the field of digitisation of cultural heritage. Extensive work in the fields of collection, preservation and delivery of digital content and web resources have made the library a centre of excellence in digitisation. It produces various virtual collections supporting e-learning, and also runs the Digital Literary Academy, a collection of contemporary Hungarian literary works in full text. As these works are protected by copyright, a special funding structure is made available by the government to cover the costs incurred by agreements with the authors.

## **LIBINFO - a national online reference service** <http://libinfo.oszk.hu>

LIBINFO is the shared online information service of Hungarian libraries, hosted and coordinated by the National Széchényi Library and operated by a large consortium of libraries, academic and research institutes and even individuals. Questions can be submitted via an online request form and they will be answered within 48 hours by reference librarians participating in the service.





# 6.

## Librarianship in Hungary

According to the 2005 statistics, there are nearly 10,000 employees working in Hungarian libraries. A breakdown by qualifications shows the following figures:

- 4078 qualified librarians holding an academic degree in LIS
- 2023 professionals holding an academic degree in a different field
- 2073 employees with a post-secondary professional qualification in LIS
- 1771 employees with or without other professional qualifications



Librarianship in Hungary has faced a number of challenges over the past 15 years. First, the rapid development of new technologies affected library services in the same way as in other countries worldwide. At the same time, in Hungary and in other countries in Central and Eastern Europe, the political and economic transition of the 1990s brought many changes to the structure, financing and operational conditions of libraries. As a result, Hungarian librarianship had to redefine its place and role in the new environment. Regional discussions were held on the most important issues regarding the future of the library profession: topics included the knowledge, skills, attitude

and personal qualities required by the profession as well as the content and structure of professional training. Several studies were conducted on working conditions, remuneration, welfare and career development opportunities for librarians. Other factors affecting the situation of library professionals were also discussed, such as the “prestige of the profession” and the way it is seen by the public.



The new tasks and services undertaken by libraries also raised a number of ethical issues related to the practice of librarianship. Based on a wide professional consensus, a code of ethics of Hungarian librarianship was published in 2006. The code laid down:

- responsibilities arising from the delivery of public services
- attitude requirements deriving from the role of transferring cultural values to citizens
- the observance and enforcement of universal rules (personal rights, copyright law) related to information management in the library environment

# 7.

## Professional training

Until the end of the 19th century, staff at Hungarian libraries acquired the necessary knowledge and skills through practice. The first training course in Library Sciences was held in 1898, and a number of other training courses in LIS were organised between the two world wars for staff members of the most important libraries and other people with a background in humanities who were seeking career opportunities at libraries.



The first academic training programme in Library Sciences was introduced by the university of Budapest in 1948. Initially, the five-year graduate programme had a largely historical focus. Practical skills and the application of IT and computers were gradually included in the programme, and during the following decades, the universities of Debrecen, Szeged and Pécs started degree courses in LIS.

In addition to the library departments of the traditionally research-focused universities, a few colleges also started professional training in LIS in the form of 4-year degree courses. This more practical type of training started at the Teacher Training College of Budapest in 1951. Training in Library Sciences gradually expanded to other universities and colleges and more varied systems of study became available, including distance and part-time degree courses. The latest challenge for training in LIS arrived in the form of full European Union membership. In compliance with the Bologna agreement, the Hungarian higher education system underwent an overall restructuring, and the new system came into force in September 2006. As a result of the efforts of library training institutions and representatives of the

wider library field during the preparation of related legislation, training in LIS maintained its status a separate major in the 3-year BA programme, and is currently offered at 13 higher educational institutions. Follow-on MA degree programmes are currently being finalised by a smaller number of library departments. It is anticipated that the training will continue to be popular, as students graduating in LIS can find various employment opportunities, not only at libraries and cultural heritage institutions, but also at companies that provide information services.

In order to ensure the professional development of librarians and encourage life-long learning, the rules of Act CXL of 1997 set out the structure and financing of the system of continuing education. Continuing training is carried out in a 7-year cycle: library staff are required to attend a minimum of 120 hours of continuing education courses during the 7-year period. Eligible courses must be accredited by the LIS Accreditation Committee, and financing of the compulsory training system is provided by the Ministry of Education and Culture.





# 8.

## New and renovated library buildings

### New library buildings

The Library of the University of Szeged (2004)

<http://www.bibl.u-szeged.hu/>

The Central Library of the College of Nyíregyháza (2003) <http://viki.nyf.hu>

Municipal Library and Information Centre, Gödöllő (2002) <http://www.gvkik.hu/>

Halis István Municipal Library, Nagykanizsa (2001) <http://www.halisanagykanizsa.bibl.hu/>

Katona József County Library, Kecskemét (1996) <http://www.kjmk.hu/>



### Renovated library buildings

Móricz Zsigmond County and Municipal Library, Nyíregyháza (2005) <http://www.mzsk.hu>

Municipal Library and Information Centre, Jászberény (2005) <http://www.c3.hu/~libjbereny>

Berzsenyi Dániel Library, Szombathely (2002) <http://www.bdmk.hu>

Library of Foreign Literature, Budapest (2001) <http://www.oik.hu>

Central Library of the Metropolitan Szabó Ervin Library, Budapest (2001) <http://www.fszek.hu>

Eötvös Károly County Library, Veszprém (1999) <http://www.ekmk.hu>

The Music Collection of the Metropolitan Szabó Ervin Library, Budapest (1998) <http://www.fszek.hu>



## Library journals and professional publications

9.

### Hungarian Book Review

Magyar Könyvszemle

ISSN 0025-0171

'Hungarian Book Review' was first published in 1876, in the same year as 'The Library Journal' was launched. The journal soon became the major forum for library research in Hungary, and the publication of the Hungarian National Bibliography was tied in with this periodical. 'Hungarian Book Review' has maintained its own traditions regarding content: in its quarterly issues, it publishes academic studies on the history of books, literature, printing, media, censorship and libraries. 'Hungarian Book Review' is jointly published by the Institute of Literary Studies of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences and the National Széchényi Library.

### Library Review

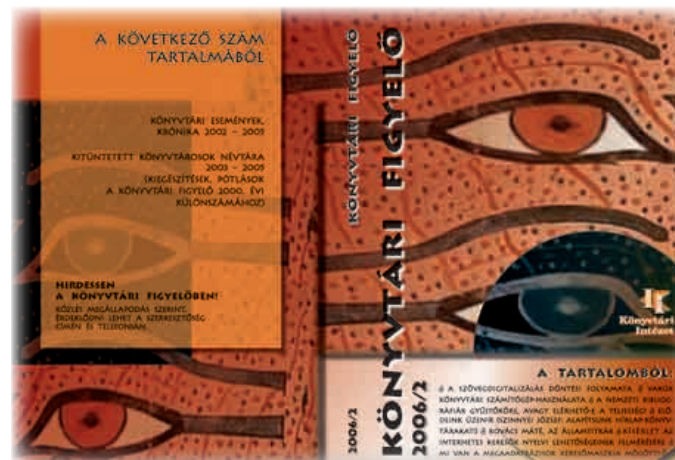
Könyvtári Figyelő

ISSN 0023-3773

<http://www.ki.oszk.hu/kf/index.html>

'Library Review' was founded in 1955 with an initial focus on reviewing the international professional

literature. Today its content comprises theoretical studies, literature reviews, conference reports and book reviews. It also publishes short Hungarian language summaries of selected articles from foreign library and information journals. These articles are chosen according to the current interests of Hungarian librarians as far as library development trends and new services are concerned. 'Library Review' is published quarterly by the National Széchényi Library and is indexed by several international bibliographical databases.



## Books, Libraries, Librarians

Könyv, Könyvtár, Könyvtáros

ISSN 1216-6804

<http://www.ki.oszk.hu/3k>

This monthly journal primarily targets public librarians. It was first published in the 1950s, with topics focusing on the promotion of books, literature and reading. Today it is published by the National Széchényi Library and covers a broad range of topics in the field of library policy, library and book history, library services and methodology.



## Library Correspondent

Könyvtári Levelező/lap

ISSN 0865-1329

<http://www.vein.hu/library/iksz/serv/kl/index.html>

This monthly journal is published by the

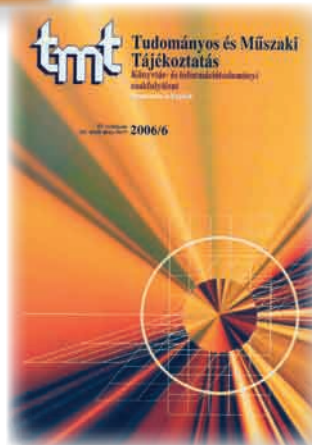
Alliance of Libraries and Information Institutes. It offers news and reports on current issues in the Hungarian library field and the everyday life of libraries. Its name suggests its aim to become a forum where librarians can communicate news and exchange information.

## Scientific and Technical Information

Tudományos és Műszaki Tájékoztatás

ISSN 0041-3917 <http://tmt.omikk.bme.hu/>

Since its foundation in 1954, this monthly journal has been dedicated to the publishing of articles related to both theoretical and practical aspects of library and information sciences, and to the promotion of the latest information technologies in the Hungarian library field. In the late 1980s, it was the first LIS journal to introduce a news section on CD-ROM and online products and services, Internet resources, and European Union information. The journal is published by the Library of the Budapest University of Technology and Economics.



## Libraries and Education

Könyv és Nevelés

ISSN 0454-3475

<http://www.opkm.hu/konyvesneveles>

This quarterly journal is published by the National Education Library and Museum and primarily targets school librarians. It publishes articles dealing with the pedagogy of reading, methodological issues and educational tools. It also publishes critical reviews of school-books and related bibliographies, and dedicates a section to literature for children and young adults.

## Hungarian Library and Information Science Abstracts

ISSN 0046-8304

This biannual English language abstracting journal was founded on the occasion of the 38th IFLA conference held in Budapest in 1972. Its aim was to make the most important publications (studies, articles, monographs and conference documents) of Hungarian LIS research available internationally. It also publishes a short bibliography of foreign language publications with Hungary-related topics from

international LIS journals and books. It is published by the Hungarian Library Institute.

## Regional newsletters

In addition to the national LIS journals, county and municipal libraries also publish their own periodicals and newsletters. These periodicals give reports on the everyday operation of community libraries, serve as a publishing forum for local history and local information, and promote the activities of the regional networks of professional associations.





### The Association of Hungarian Librarians

Magyar Könyvtárosok Egyesülete (MKE)

<http://www.mke.oszk.hu/>

Founded in 1935, the Association of Hungarian Librarians is the oldest library-related professional organisation in Hungary. It has 2,200 individual and 60 institutional members. The Association aims to:

- assist in the shaping and implementation of national library and information policy
- represent the library field in the national development strategies
- safeguard the interests of library and information professionals
- advise librarians in building strategic partnerships with authorities, sponsors and institutions in other sectors
- enhance the public relations of libraries
- promote cooperation between libraries at both national and international levels
- support the professional development of librarians

The Association runs 20 local groups organised at county level; a further 10 professional sections are available based on types of libraries, types of ser-

vices or other common areas of interest. Members can register for more than one section.

The annual conference of the Association - organised in July and attracting 600-800 participants per year - has become the most important professional event in the Hungarian library field. Every two years, the international conference of Hungarian librarians living abroad takes place in conjunction with the national event.



## Alliance of Libraries and Information Institutes

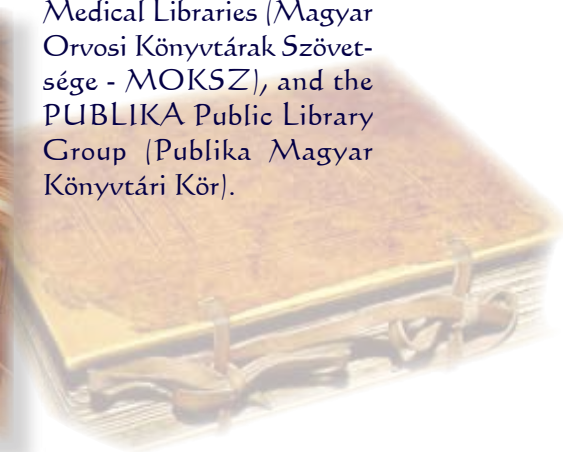
Informatikai és Könyvtári Szövetség (IKSZ)  
<http://vein.hu/library/iksz>

The Alliance of Libraries and Information Institutes was founded in 1990 and has become a large national organisation grouping more than 230 institutional members. Its mission is to increase and strengthen the profile of libraries both at national and local level through the development of library activities, the enhancement of library services and the cooperation of various types of libraries for mutual benefit. The Alliance of Libraries and Information Institutes has various branches according to geographical regions, types of libraries and other professional interests. It publishes 'Library Correspondent' and has issued a number of professional publications on library management.



## Other professional organisations

A number of other organisations representing various types of libraries were set up in the last 10-15 years. The most important ones are the Association of University Librarians (Egyetemi Könyvtárigazgatók Kollégiuma - EKE), the Alliance of College and Faculty Librarians (Főiskolai és Kari Könyvtárigazgatók Szövetsége - FKKSZ), the Association of Ecclesiastical Libraries (Egyházi Könyvtárak Egyesülése - EKE), the Hungarian Reading Association (HUNRA) and the Alliance of Hungarian Medical Libraries (Magyar Orvosi Könyvtárak Szövetsége - MOKSZ), and the PUBLIKA Public Library Group (Publika Magyar Könyvtári Kör).



# II.

## International relations

The most prestigious research libraries and the main professional associations have become active members of various international organisations, such as IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions), EBLIDA (European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations) and LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche). The National Széchényi Library also has extensive international relations with individual libraries as well as academic and cultural organisations worldwide, such as CENL (the Conference of European National Librarians), CERL (the Consortium of European Research Libraries), Gutenberg-Gesellschaft, and ABDOS (Arbeitsgemeinschaft der Bibliotheken und Dokumentationsstellen der Ost-, Ostmittel- und Südeuropaforschung).



The British Council, the Goethe Institut and the Institut Français have considerably assisted Hungarian libraries in building international relations. These institutes have provided funding for various conferences, special projects and individual scholarships. During the past 10 years, Hungarian libraries have participated in a number of projects supported by the European Union (LISTED, CULTIVATE-CEE, DELOS, PULMAN, CELIP, LICENCE, CALIMERA, MINERVA PLUS, TEL-MEMOR and Light).

Hungarian professional organisations regularly cooperate with partner organisations in other European countries and special attention is paid to the cultural associations of Hungarian minorities in neighbouring countries.



## Professional prizes and awards

# I2.

### Library of the Year

Since 1996, the Library Department of the Ministry of Education and Culture annually calls for nominations for the Library of the Year award. The aim of this competition is to encourage libraries to renew and significantly improve the quality of their services in order to become an integral part of their local community. The proposals must be accompanied by supporting documents, such as users' feedback and evaluation. The grant can be awarded to any type of library.

The Library of the Year is selected by a committee representing the professional organisations. The award is presented by the Minister for Education and Culture during the annual library week in October.



### Széchenyi Ferenc prize

This prize, named after the founder of the National Library, is awarded to one or two professionals in the library, museum or archive fields for exceptionally high quality professional achievements.





### **Szinnyei József prize**

This prize is awarded annually to six librarians for outstanding professional activity over a longer period of time, and for initiatives that considerably advanced the library field in Hungary.

### **Bibliotheca Commemorative Medal**

This medal is awarded annually to ten librarians for excellence in library management, library sciences or good practice in library services.



### **Commemorative Medal of the Association of Hungarian Librarians**

Since 1985, this medal has been one of the ways to recognise the value of the work done for the Association. The medal is awarded to five librarians – staff of the Association or other members who did voluntary work in the organisation of nation-wide campaigns and events - at the annual conference.

### **Young Librarian of the Year**

Promoted jointly by the Association of Hungarian Librarians and the Alliance of Libraries and Information Institutes, this title is awarded annually to one librarian under the age of 33 for outstanding professional achievement.





### **The Annual Conference of the Association of Hungarian Librarians**

Attracting 600-800 participants and held every summer in a different part of the country, this event provides the main forum for Hungarian librarians for presenting professional achievements, discussing important issues in the library field and meeting colleagues from all types of libraries. The event is structured and organised similarly to the annual conferences of IFLA.

### **Campaign for Hungarian Libraries**

Coordinated by the Alliance of Libraries and Information Institutes and held every year in October, this campaign mirrors the goals of the library weeks organised in many other countries of the world. Its objective is to raise public awareness of the value of libraries in the knowledge society through various library events and extensive media coverage (TV, radio and newspapers). Over one week, library conferences, exhibitions and literary events are held throughout the country, while libraries also use this opportunity to promote their services and enhance their public relations.

### **Internet Fiesta**

Hungary joined the Internet Fiesta in 2000, and libraries have become key participants in the one week campaign. Various programmes promoting the values of the World Wide Web, ICT technologies and online communities are organised for the general public. Many of the programmes organised by public libraries target families in particular, inviting children together with their parents and grandparents to take part in the activities and quiz programmes. Some libraries are open and provide services all night.



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