

TRENDS IN THE CZECH LIBRARIANSHIP aims for 2015 and how to achieve them

Foreword

In the Czech Republic almost 6,000 libraries serve the public, their services are used by 40 % of adults and majority of children and the young. Annually they provide more than 75 million loans of books and other documents to all their users. The number of visitors exceeds 24 million per year, the number of electronic visits is even higher and continues to rise. It is up to every single librarian to keep library its readers and don't cease to be important institutions in the eyes of most people.

Trends in the Czech librarianship are described in the government approved document on libraries, the Concept of Czech Libraries Development in the years 2011–2015, whose shortened version we present.

PhDr. Vít Richter
Chairman of the Central Library Council

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Our mission

To offer and provide that kind of services, that our users require, to be able to get the information which they need.

Our vision

The reader, client or user of our services says:

„In the surroundings of a beautiful, friendly and comfortable library quickly served by pleasant, qualified, apparently satisfied and motivated staff I will obtain required quality service free of charge even from the comfort of home, regardless of nationality or handicap, anytime day or night.“

Where and which way are we going?

PROTECTING VALUES

To make all printed and digital documents and information available for research, education and leisure time to any interested person through libraries.

MAKING INFORMATION AVAILABLE

To provide latest and high-quality traditional and electronic information resources for educational, research, personal development or just for leisure time to anyone at any time through the library services.

EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE

To present libraries as a comfortable place to meet and spend leisure time, as a space for learning and self development. To introduce reading especially to children and youth as a simple method of obtaining information, education and entertainment. To offer the latest literature and information sources.

OPEN TO EVERYBODY

To ensure standardized quality of services and information resources together with provision of Internet access to all interested persons in any of almost 6,000 libraries.

PROMOTING QUALITY OF SERVICES

To offer and provide those services that our users require, at a standardized level, about that the general public will be well informed, and for these services will be known their social and economic benefits.

IMPROVING OUR QUALIFICATION

To be professionally trained and motivated personnel with a high level of computer and information literacy, who will actively assist the users in working with library collections and information resources. With effort to join volunteers, not only as source of auxiliary labour, but also as a mean of closer interconnection of the library with the local community.

1. PROTECTING VALUES

Part of cultural and scientific heritage nowadays create **digital documents**, that is digitized originally analog text, video, audio and audiovisual as well as documents published in digital form. For their preservation and accessibility it is necessary to create legal, organizational, technical and other preconditions. It is important to **establish a system of mandatory deposits of electronic documents** as a form of a legal deposit, these documents should be promptly processed then and made accessible centrally, at the same time tools for shared cataloging must be supported. It is also necessary to **optimize the system of legal deposit of printed documents**. This cannot be done without the development and implementation of conception for sustainable storage of traditional text documents – books, periodicals, manuscripts, historical collections and music. Equal access to all stored documents, whether for educational, research or development purposes; or accessibility of cultural heritage must be guaranteed.

AIMS

To make all printed and digital documents and information available for research, education and leisure time to any interested person through libraries.

National Digital Library

The aim of the project National Digital Library could be seen in a long term preservation and the accessibility of a significant part of Bohemian printed production (Bohemica) from 19th to 21st century from the collections of the National Library of the Czech Republic and the Moravian Library in Brno. By the end of 2019 it is scheduled to digitize more than 50 million pages, it's approximately 300,000 volumes. If the copyright law allows it, digitized materials will be mostly available free of charge through libraries. Priorities are given on the documents from the 19th and 20th centuries which are most threatened by acid-paper degradation, then on the most user-interesting and most requested publications from 1801 to the present and the most user-interesting historical documents until 1801 (including full-text translations). The project holder is the National Library of the Czech Republic, the Moravian Library in Brno is its partner.

2. MAKING INFORMATION AVAILABLE

A regular user should be able to use all the information capacity which libraries have. Through a **single system interface of the Czech libraries** it should be possible to obtain the document in a traditional print or in a digital form **anytime and anywhere**. This goal is connected by the need of **providing a system for supporting an acquisition of traditional print or electronic information resources**. These resources must be accessible to a wide range of users from all types of libraries. Special attention must be given to the information needs of institutions from research, development and innovation areas, so that they have access to the latest scientific information.

AIMS

To provide latest and high-quality traditional and electronic information resources for educational, research, personal development or just for leisure time to anyone at any time through the library services.

Central gateway Knihovny.cz

The forthcoming central gateway of the Czech libraries Knihovny.cz should enable any user to get the desired document in traditional print or digital form at any time and from anywhere, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, not only in any of almost 6,000 libraries, but also from work or home. Easy and comfortable access to library collections and services is the intended outcome of this fully working gateway. It is expected that such conditions will be created that each library will act as an interface for accessing the entire library system and that any librarian can provide comprehensive services. This cooperation and sharing information resources will reduce the current fragmentation of provided library services and increase their user-friendliness. The gateway should be opened and deployed in 15 pilot libraries by the year 2015 and then gradually in all Czech libraries, which will be interested in using it. The Uniform Information Gateway (www.jib.cz) is considered to be its forerunner.

Further information about the forthcoming central gateway of the Czech libraries is available on the website www.knihovny.cz.

3.

EXPANDING KNOWLEDGE

Libraries should become natural community, educational and cultural centre and turn principal focus on the needs of the local community. It is necessary to support the libraries with an emphasis on the physical space as a counterbalance to the virtual world and as a **pleasant place for study, meetings and leisure time**. Libraries as important sources of information and space for informal education is essential to use in educational training programs and the concept of lifelong learning. But it is also necessary to **promote reading itself, especially among children and youth** as a mean of entertainment and knowledge acquisition. Closer cooperation between libraries and schools in the development of literacy projects could be seen as a solution. It is indispensably needed to **secure the increase in funding for the purchase of library collections**. Currently a quality of collections in Czech libraries is unequal. In connection with equal access to information, all groups of readers should have an access to a wide spectrum of current literature in both printed and digital forms.

AIMS

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Days and nights with the book

There are many forms of support of reading literacy among children these days.

I'm a reader – a book for first-year schoolchildren is announced by the Association of Library and Information Professionals of the Czech Republic (SKIP) in cooperation with its partners. The reward for successful completion of the project, which includes at least one visit to the library and other events leading to the development of interest in reading, is a book written and illustrated exclusively for project participants.

The Night with Andersen is held since 2000 to celebrate International Children's Book Day, which is commemorated each year on the 2nd April around the world on the day of birth of the famous Danish storyteller. The event aims at showing to children that reading is a great adventure.

During the magical fairy night are held various activities like reading stories, competitions, games and surprises. The event was established in the Bedřich Beneš Buchlovan Library in Uherské Hradiště. Every year it is attended by thousands of children in libraries and schools not only in Czech Republic.

The Day for Children's Book is a project that originated in the Municipal Library in Děčín. It's designed for promoting children's books, reading and also for libraries as cultural, information and educational institutions. As a pre-Christmas event is always held on the last Sunday before Advent and serves as a open day in libraries for children and their parents. On this day libraries prepare various events like exhibitions, competitions or announcements of literary prizes – always with the aim of better orientation for public in children's literature.

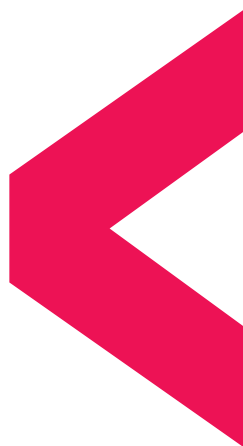
Other examples of good practice of community work in libraries represents Municipal Library in Sedlčany or Masaryk Public Library in Vsetín.

4. OPEN TO EVERYBODY

Libraries and their services should be **accessible to everyone**, regardless of age, health or socio-economic status – it means to provide barrier-free access to buildings, information systems for handicapped persons and discount in paid services. Libraries are guarantors of equal access to information on the Internet and therefore they must continue in offering **free Internet access**, promoting computer and information literacy of visitors by offering assistance service in their use. Generally, it is necessary to **develop regional functions of libraries** (i.e. professional methodological assistance to smaller libraries) and their cooperation, because the quality of offered services should not differ with the size of the municipality and the locality in which the library operates.

AIMS

To ensure standardized quality of services and information resources together with provision of Internet access to all interested persons in any of almost 6,000 libraries.



The Handicap Friendly Standard

The library may offer the Handicap Friendly Standard due to the fact that it is a "library friendly to users with special needs". The standard applies to all service areas of the library and information – from barrier-free access, over registration with a discount or free of charge for severely disabled users, trained staff to work with the disabled, special funds and technical equipment to make it available, up to partnership with organizations uniting people with disabilities.

Handicap Friendly Standard is developed under the **Section of services to people with special needs** of Association of Library and Information Professionals of the Czech Republic, for more information go to Bezbarierova.knihovna.cz.

Examples of good practice in this area you can find e.g. in Jiří Mahen Library in Brno or in Regional Library Karlovy Vary.

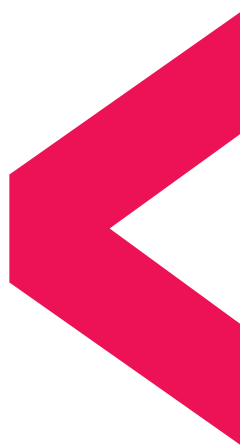
5. PROMOTING QUALITY OF SERVICES

The basis for the creation of new types of library services with high added value is to **establish the rules and responsibilities of libraries** in providing collaborative services and in the **development of quality of standards** for all the current services. It is not possible to do without a **survey of information needs of citizens** at national and local levels on the way to the improvement of the quality of services. It's necessary to familiarize the general public with the fact that the library is not just book rental service, but it becomes informational, educational, cultural and community center, which is related with the necessity of the **marketing support activities**.

Libraries, their operators and public authorities should have the tools to evaluate the contribution of libraries; therefore it is necessary to **develop the research of methodology of the return of investments (ROI)** in libraries, which will provide feedback on the social perception of library services and their value.

AIMS

To offer and provide those services that our users require, at a standardized level, about that the general public will be well informed, and for these services will be known their social and economic benefits.



The Standard for a Good Library

The revised methodological guideline of the Ministry of Culture defines standards of public library and information services for libraries established (or operated) by the municipalities and the regions. A detailed analysis of statistical data on the library activities served as the starting point for processing this standard. The standard aims for setting down such conditions so that libraries can serve well all people who are interested in their services. Standard deals with opening hours of libraries, creating library collections, web presentations of libraries and other significant issues for efficient running of the library.

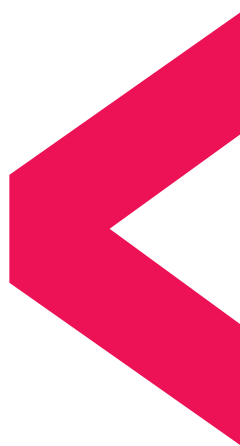
The Standard for a Good Library you can see [here](#) (in Czech only).

6. IMPROVING OUR QUALIFICATION

Professional requirements for a position of a librarian and information worker are constantly evolving, especially with regard to the development of information technology, so it is necessary to **increase the level of skills of library staff**. At the same time, it is important to be aware of the potential of volunteering in libraries and to **use intensively the volunteers in library activities**.

AIMS

To be professionally trained and motivated personnel with a high level of computer and information literacy, who will actively assist the users in working with library collections and information resources. With effort to join volunteers, not only as source of auxiliary labour, but also as a mean of closer interconnection of the library with the local community.



Volunteers in libraries

Volunteers are people older than fifteen (according to the Czech law) who within their good will, in their spare time and without entitlement to financial reward carry out activities for the benefit of other people or organizations. Volunteers are recruited among secondary school students or university students seeking practice, gainfully employed or unemployed or seniors interested in culture.

According to time schedule of the volunteers, they can help for a short time or in the long term. The Municipal Library in Louny, where volunteers help as lectures, consultants or translators, is an example of a good practice of volunteering in Czech libraries. Their volunteers help with a project called Third age, which is a lifelong learning project for seniors. In 2010 moving book collection with a live chain of primary school students, their teachers, mothers and school cooks was a great success. About forty thousand books were moved to the new library building.

Other examples of good practice from the Czech and Slovak libraries can be seen in the brochure *Volunteers for Culture* (issued by the Czech Office of Culture Program in 2011, in Czech only).

Supporting subsidy programs of the Ministry of Culture

Ministry of Culture, Department of Arts, Literature and Libraries provides subsidies to non-commercial projects from the library area, to operators of libraries, civic associations and interest associations of legal persons whose main purpose are library and information services and their support. The grant programs are focused on meeting the objectives of the Concept of Czech Libraries Development. All the projects supported in following programs are intended for one year. Further information about subsidies you can see on the website of [Ministry of Culture](#) (in Czech only).

Library of the 21st century supports working with ethnic minorities, integration of foreigners, general availability of library services for handicapped people, cultural and educational activities or volunteering in libraries (since 2014).

The Czech Library is intended both for the publishers of Czech literature and for libraries, which supports in purchase of non-commercial titles, artworks of Czech literature, Czech illustrated fiction for children and young people, works of literary criticism, literary science and related sciences.

Public information services of libraries (VISK) supports the development of above-standard public library and information services based on information and communication technologies.

The program consists of nine subprograms:

VISK 1 – Coordination Centre of the whole program

VISK 2 – Extra-curricular education of library workers in ICT

VISK 3 – Information centers of libraries

VISK 4 – Digital library and archive for library information services

VISK 5 – The national program of retrospective conversion of catalogues of libraries in the Czech Republic (RETROKON)

VISK 6 – National program of digital access to rare documents (Memoriae Mundi Series Bohemica)

VISK 7 – National program of microfilming and digital accessing of documents threatened by acid-paper degradation (Kramérius)

VISK 8 – Information resources, Central gateway of the Czech libraries

VISK 9 – National authorities of the Czech Republic

The program of applied research and development of national and cultural identity (NAKI) aims through applied research and development to contribute to the preservation and development of national integrity and national specifics in the context of European and world culture in the 21st century, so that public funds invested in this area deliver tangible economic or other social benefits. The thematic priorities of the program are:

- Cultural heritage and national identity
- History and multicultural society
- Technologies, processes and materials
- Environment for development of arts and preservation of cultural heritage

Implementation of the NAKI program was approved for the period 2011–2017. Beneficiaries may be exclusively research organizations, and other entities only as co-beneficiaries.

And now back to the beginning...

This document is a brief version of government approved document on libraries, the **Concept of Czech Libraries Development in the years 2011–2015**. Its mission is not to replace the original material, but to give a quick overview of the topics and goals in the field of library and information resources which the government considers as the most important – in a more understandable form. The study of the original government document is necessary for all those who should implement this concept. In the original document they can find **SWOT analysis of the current situation in the Czech libraries**, and especially **details of individual topics and their goals**. Our goal was to make the Concept of Czech Libraries Development in the years 2011–2015 visible to all those who try to fulfill the vision of providing quality library and information services every day. We hope that we have succeeded, and that this new readable version will appeal to the wide professional public.

See the original Concept of Czech Libraries Development in the years 2011–2015 (in Czech only).

Last but not least... we recommend to see

This text was inspired by:

Great Britain

The British Library 2020 Vision

Published by the British Library (The British Library, 2010)

Available in English (British Library 2020 Vision)

Germany

21 Good Reasons for Good Libraries

Published by the Library & Information Germany

(Bibliothek & Information Deutschland, 2008)

Available in English (21 Good Reasons for Good Libraries)

and German (21 gute Gründe für gute Bibliotheken)

Finland

Finnish Public Library Policy 2015

Published by the Ministry of Education in Finland

(Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2009)

Available in English (Finnish Public Library Policy 2015),

Finnish (Opetusministeriön kirjastopolitiikka 2015)

and Spanish (Programa de las Bibliotecas Públicas Finlandesas 2015)

Quality Recommendation for Public Libraries

Published by the Ministry of Education in Finland

(Opetus- ja kulttuuriministeriö, 2011)

Available in English (Quality Recommendation for Public Libraries)

and Finnish (Yleisten kirjastojen laatusuositus)

The Council for Public Libraries Strategy 2011–2016

Published by the Council for Public Libraries in Finland

(Yleisten kirjastojen neuvoston, 2011)

Available in English (The Council for Public Libraries Strategy 2011–2016)

and Finnish (Yleisten kirjastojen neuvoston strategia 2011–2016)

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aims for 2015 and how to achieve them**

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