Mini-profile:

a day in the life of a serials and e-resources librarian

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Supporting the Bavarian State Library football team in an historic match in the Munich stadium

When I was asked to describe a typical working day, distant memories were awoken of one of my first English textbook lessons, which told the story of a week in the life of Mickey the classroom mouse. On the basis of such a sound educational background I felt up to the task and agreed to submit a day in the life of a serials and e-resources librarian.

The library I work for, the Bavarian State Library, is situated in the centre of Munich, the capital city of Bavaria in Southern Germany. Even though it takes me only about 15 minutes to travel to work in the morning by underground, this daily journey provides me with ample material for a long-term study on reading device preferences of my fellow commuters. So far, the paper newspaper – I always have a copy of the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* with me myself – seems to prevail, but the future, I would assume, will belong to e-papers on mobile gadgets.

Our building in Ludwigstraße is quite an impressive piece of architecture, which was erected in the 19th century for the library dating back to 1558, and which welcomes visitors and staff alike with four ancient philosophers carved in stone. Entering my own office, switching on the computer and checking the day's schedule tends to be a little more on the profane side in comparison.

My job description reads Head of Serials and Electronic Media, which mainly involves responsibility for the local serials and licensed e-resources collections on the one hand, and consortia negotiation and administration at the regional/Bavarian and national level on the other. A typical day would therefore be a mixture of deskwork, telephone calls and meetings, with topics related to local library business as well as reaching out to publishers, other libraries in the country and, to some extent, abroad.

A typical day would, for example, start with the analysis of an offer which a publisher has handed in for a national consortium. Due to the federal structure of the country, we not only have regional consortia in Germany – like the one we run for

Bavaria – but also licensing agreements at the national level which are negotiated by libraries like ours and partly financially supported by the German Research Association (*Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft*). Typically, such an offer will go to and fro many times before final agreement is reached. My morning message to the publisher will contain a number of points I wish them to address and I suggest a phone call later in the week.

Next item on the agenda is a meeting with a number of colleagues who are preparing a newspaper digitization project. Newspapers fall within the range of my department, but the technical process lies with our digitization centre. Back at my desk a member library of our consortium calls as they have a question about a licence agreement which we sent them recently. Before lunchtime there is just about time to answer a couple of e-mails, make a few phone calls and start out to read the first draft of a project report, which was prepared by a colleague and which is due rather shortly. Or at least such was the plan: the reading exercise is interrupted by an urgent phone call from the secretary of the library director who needs a statement on another project for a meeting at very short notice.

If there is time for a proper lunch, this is always a good opportunity to catch up with colleagues about news and developments in other departments of the library. Next on the schedule in the early afternoon is a short publisher meeting. This is, for a change, not someone we are already negotiating with, but a new face who wishes to

Show-casing the library at an Open Day with a colleague

introduce himself to our team and incidentally sell a couple of new products.

The afternoon continues with a telephone conference in which colleagues from other German libraries participate. They are members of a working group dealing with a long-term strategy for perpetual access to licensed resources. Telephone conferences are a very useful invention as I spend quite a bit of time travelling to meetings and conferences in various parts of the country and abroad. This provides me, though, with an expert knowledge of a broad selection of train stations and airports, and serves as an invaluable source of supply for my multicultural owl and hippo collections.

Before I can spend more time on desk work, I must address a couple of staff issues and discuss some problems we have had with the serials check-in workflow in connection with a particular agent. As an archival library we still collect print journals in addition to the e-version. The final task of the day is to answer a couple of pressing e-mails, which I didn't have time to attend to during the day, and to compare the to-do list drawn up in the morning with what has really been achieved. Not always an exact match as the precise course of such a working day is never quite predictable!

After long and intense hours at the office, during the summer especially, I quite enjoy a walk home. It leads me through the heart of Munich, across the central square *Marienplatz* and via the famous food market *Viktualienmarkt*. Such a walk gives me time to reflect on the day and to get a bit of exercise. Another way of relaxing is watching a good football match on television or listening to the radio broadcast. For a loyal supporter of *Bayern München* this is always a must, and there is the World Championship to be looking forward to. Occasionally there is even the chance to watch a live game played by our very successful library team. Of course, it would be even better to engage in more direct physical activity oneself, but that is another story…

An indispensable part of the daily routine is to read a good book in bed before going to sleep, currently a novel by the British author Kate Atkinson. A paperback book, but who knows what the future bedtime story reading device will be!