

REPORT ON THE STATE OF LIBRARIES IN GERMANY 2017 / 2018

DEAR READERS

The evolution of the media landscape is one of the greatest challenges we face today. And naturally, as a result, conditions under which libraries operate are also changing although their objectives continue to remain the same. Even in the digital age, libraries continue to represent a bulwark upholding certain fundamental rights – access to information, participation and equal opportunities, support with training, continuing education, research and teaching, the promotion of literacy and the provision of media and information literacy skills. They also provide an environment in which free time can be profitably spent.

Yet there is no doubt that new ways of undertaking these tasks need to be found in some cases in the digital age. In the interests of all our citizens, methods need to be adopted that are both in keeping with the times and future-orientated. It is the duty of library providers and the politicians responsible for culture, education and science to put in place the necessary legal and financial framework conditions and foster new services and innovation. The extent to which the digital revolution can be successfully implemented in libraries largely depends on the staff. If additional services for various target groups are to be provided, the need is not simply for more personnel. To ensure the future viability of the new services offered by libraries in the digital age, it is essential that existing staff receive continuing professional development. And here urgent action needs to be taken.

Since 2010, the German Library Association has published its annual 'Report on the State of Libraries'. The report informs decision-makers about the services provided by libraries and the conditions under which they operate, and formulates demands for library policies. A key objective of the Association is to provide support to libraries in order to ensure that all users have access to the best possible library services. This can only be achieved if politicians recognise the vast and well-founded potential of libraries when it comes to addressing responsibilities in society and strategically exploit this potential.

This is what the German Library Association and its more than 2,100 member libraries are working towards. It is campaigning for the establishment of a contemporary cultural and educational landscape in Germany that offers modern, effective and attractive libraries. And what needs to be done in order to achieve this, you will discover on the following pages. I hope you enjoy reading this report!

Barbara Lison
Federal Chairwoman of the German Library Association



WHAT THE POLITICIANS SAY

The ability to handle all kinds of information in an appropriate manner is one of the core skills required in the digital age. The quality filters that apply to analogue media cease to operate in this world. Only those who are capable of evaluating the validity and accuracy of news and other information are protected against manipulation by fake news, bots and other artificial or deliberately generated misleading information and are also in a position to appropriately explore and use the wide range of knowledge available on the internet.



How to provide media and information literacy is thus one of the biggest challenges faced by our society and libraries can – and must – play their part in tackling this challenge! The qualifications of library personnel, the advice and support given to library users and the active involvement with schools, training facilities and other partners in the field of education are important components that will enable libraries to continue in the future to perform their key function as institutes of information. Politicians, supporting organisations and experts from the library sector and the fields of education and knowledge generation must rapidly come together to draft suitable concepts.”

Isabel Pfeiffer-Poensgen, Minister of Culture and Science of the State of North Rhine-Westphalia



As real places where it is possible to obtain reliable information, participate in lively exchanges of knowledge and explore both analogue and digital culture, public libraries perform an indispensable role in our communities.

With their qualified staff who provide information and a varied range of activities, they guarantee unfiltered, free access to information. The ongoing expansion of digital services provided by libraries is essential to ensure they can continue to play this important role in the future, and make sure that as many people as possible have access to our invaluable reservoirs of knowledge and educational opportunities.”

Fritz Kuhn, Mayor of the City of Stuttgart (Alliance 90/The Greens)

Books are the gateways to the world. Libraries bring together the past, present and future under one roof. They promote knowledge, creativity and imagination.

We must ensure that these places continue to exist in future. The 'Culture in Germany' Enquete Committee has compiled recommended actions for addressing this issue. The need for federal state laws that protect libraries is as acute as it was 10 years ago. The support of public libraries by the German federal states should not be simply voluntary but needs to be made compulsory. To date, five of the states have gone down this road and it is to be hoped that the other states will follow. So again we would urge those other states – do something to protect these gateways to the world!”

Gitta Connemann (Member of the Federal Parliament; Deputy Chairperson of the CDU/CSU Parliamentary Group)



GERMAN LIBRARY STATISTICS FIGURES 2016

LIBRARIES IN GERMANY

There are some **10,000 libraries** throughout Germany and they are visited 219 million times every year.

More than **10 million active library users** can choose from around 500 million media sources.

They read, watch or listen to **360 million books, films and music tracks** in public libraries every year.

There are 32 million **e-media** resources that can be borrowed from research libraries.

In research libraries, users access e-books **213 million times** and digital newspaper articles **79 million times**.

Research libraries train 553 thousand users every year.

More than **57%** of the expenditure for research libraries is earmarked for **digital media**.

Public libraries lend out more than **20.2 million e-media items each year***.

Libraries host **384 thousand events** per year, of which half are for children.

More than **80%** of the public libraries in towns with more than 50 thousand residents offer **wi-fi**.

Source: German Library Statistics 2016, except for * divibib GmbH and ciando GmbH

THE DBV CALLS FOR:

LEGISLATION ON THE BORROWING OF E-BOOKS IN LIBRARIES

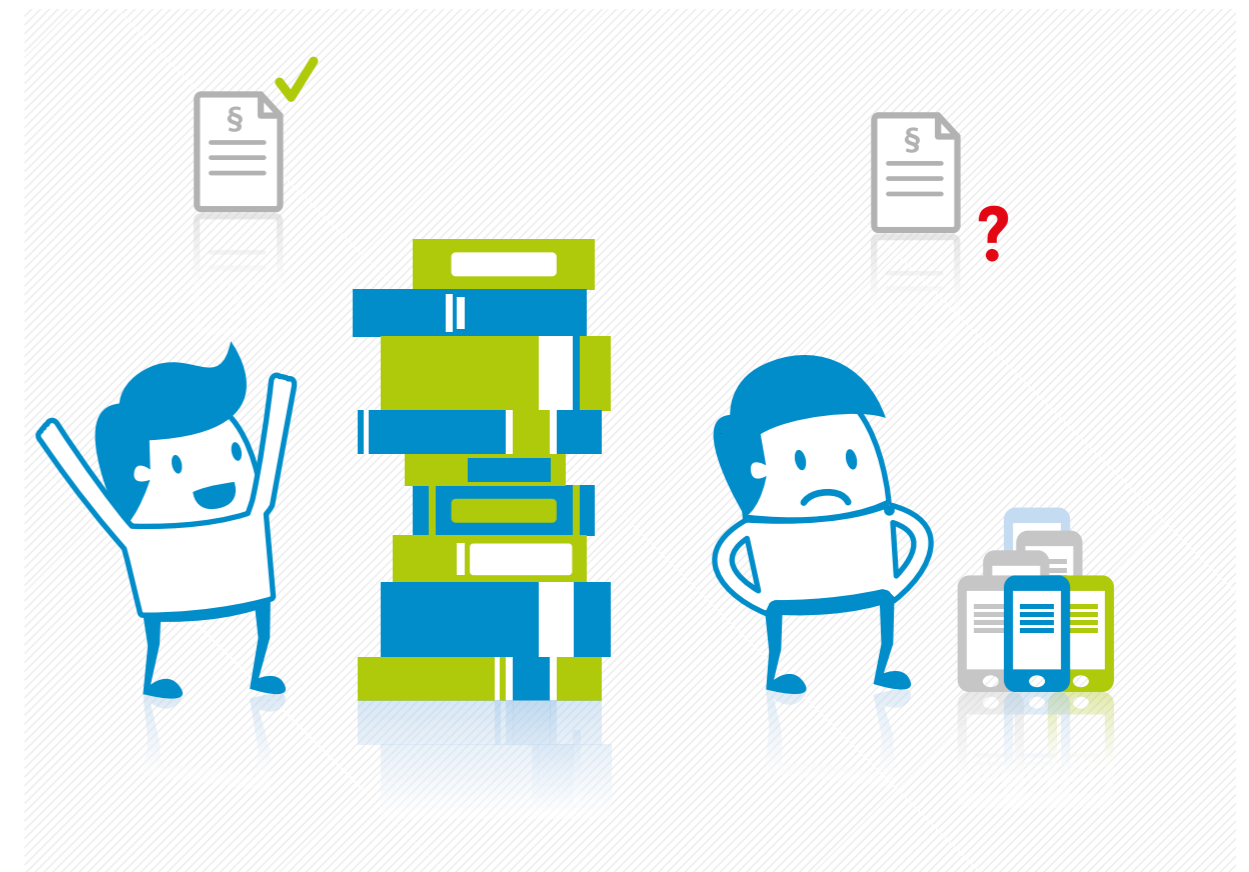
Libraries must continue to extend the services designed for all social classes and age groups, school and adult education, and also continue to act as points of contact for refugees – and all this also in digital form! Only if the services provided are effective will libraries be able to support the future book market.

Legislators must ensure that successful practices derived from the system of analogue media lending are adapted to the needs of the digital world.

The Association therefore calls for statutory regulation of e-book lending by libraries. The ‘Internet and Digital Society’ Enquete Committee already

proposed this in 2013, and the feasibility of the concept was also confirmed under applicable European law in November 2016 by the European Court of Justice (ECJ).

To ensure that the system is also fair to authors, the dbv has long been advocating that public lending rights legislation in Germany (under which authors receive payment for the loan of their books by public libraries) should also be extended to e-books. The federal government and the federal states on the one hand and the German copyright collective VG Wort on the other hand will need to reach a decision on the actual amounts to be paid.



THE DBV CALLS FOR:

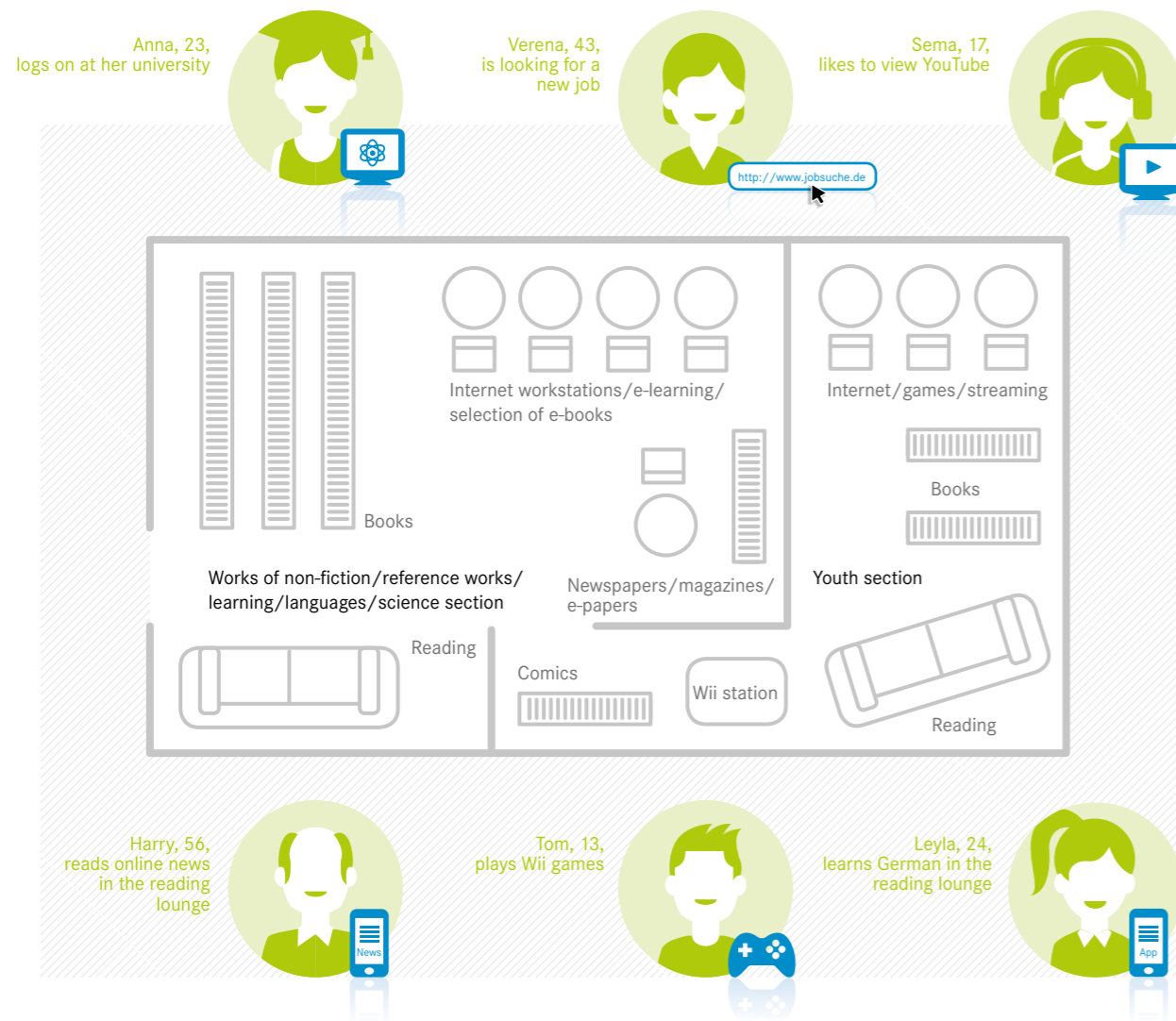
COMPREHENSIVE PROVISION OF DIGITAL FACILITIES IN PUBLIC LIBRARIES

With their various digital services, such as the provision of information and the promotion of digital information literacy across all generations and social classes, libraries enable people to access and navigate the digital worlds of knowledge. They can therefore help to reduce the digital divide within the population and provide significant support when it comes to meeting the requirements of the working world.

Libraries are places for lifelong learning and, in recent years, have developed new spatial, media and educational concepts in order to fulfil this role.

Libraries, to maintain their status as attractive public hubs of learning, need to be able to provide free wi-fi access together with the necessary technology and software. Library staff must also continue to receive training in this field.

The dbv therefore calls for the comprehensive provision of digital facilities for public libraries within the framework of a federal/state agreement. Through this necessary finances for the development and expansion of digital educational services would be provided.



THE DBV CALLS FOR:

MORE POLITICAL EDUCATION THROUGH LIBRARIES

Information is available at any time and everywhere through social media. Anyone can broadcast news and data on the internet and make it accessible. Yet unrestricted access to information poses new challenges, in the form, for example, of the mass dissemination of so-called 'fake news'. Given the flood of information in the modern world, it is crucial to be able to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant news and verify its plausibility. Giving guidance in this area is one of the core responsibilities of libraries.

One of their main tasks is to provide unrestricted access to accurate information for everyone. They help people to obtain information and teach skills in handling and evaluating sources. In this 'post-factual' world, libraries perform an important social function and thus help promote political education and democracy.

Their funding bodies and the responsible politicians are called upon to enable libraries to provide neutral and comprehensive information and thus open up reliable access to established facts. Libraries can only achieve this educational objective if they have sufficient well-trained staff and the required funding.

As well as being able to provide access to media, libraries must be put in a position to develop further their services with regard to digital literacy and intensify their collaboration with educational institutions such as kindergartens, secondary schools, vocational schools and universities.

There is thus the pressing need to reinforce existing potential so that it can be exploited to the full.



THE DBV CALLS FOR:

RELIABLE AND PERMANENT FUNDING OF A NATIONAL RESEARCH DATA INFRASTRUCTURE



In 2016, the German Council for Scientific Information Infrastructures (RfII) proposed the establishment of a National Research Data Infrastructure (NRDI) in order to create viable future-orientated conditions for the management of research data. However, improving access to digital research data must not only be discussed intensively at all levels – that of politics, research funding, scholarship and infrastructure – securing the necessary long-term infrastructures also requires the political willingness to provide the requisite financial resources over the long run.

In order to be able to manage the increasing volume of digital research data and make this available for subsequent academic use, libraries, data centres, media centres and professional associations are currently developing relevant strategies and constructing the necessary information infrastructures. These services are to be harmonised across technologies and organisations to allow users to work with the data inventories, information resources and knowledge pools provided by the academic world.

To ensure that an ‘Open Knowledge’ concept conforming to a suitable legal framework is also attractive for researchers, these infrastructures must be stable over the long term in order to guarantee the permanent availability and citability of publications. Currently prevailing project funding approaches encourage diversity, but also need to be permanently consolidated and coordinated. The NRDI has been established as a nationwide network that functions through collaboration. Other tasks of the NRDI include the long-term archiving and provision of data and publications, as well as dealing with the related issues of data and information security.

Building an effective research data infrastructure is a future-related task for society as a whole. The federal government and states are called on to assume joint responsibility for managing the digital revolution in the academic world by providing financial and administrative resources.

THE DBV CALLS FOR:

A COORDINATED APPROACH TO OPEN ACCESS PUBLICATION

In the academic world, Open Access is gaining increasing importance as a new form of publication of information. It means that academic publications can be made available free of charge and used without restrictions. In their role as suppliers of information for research and teaching, libraries will in future not only be responsible for providing the media but will also be involved in the publication process.

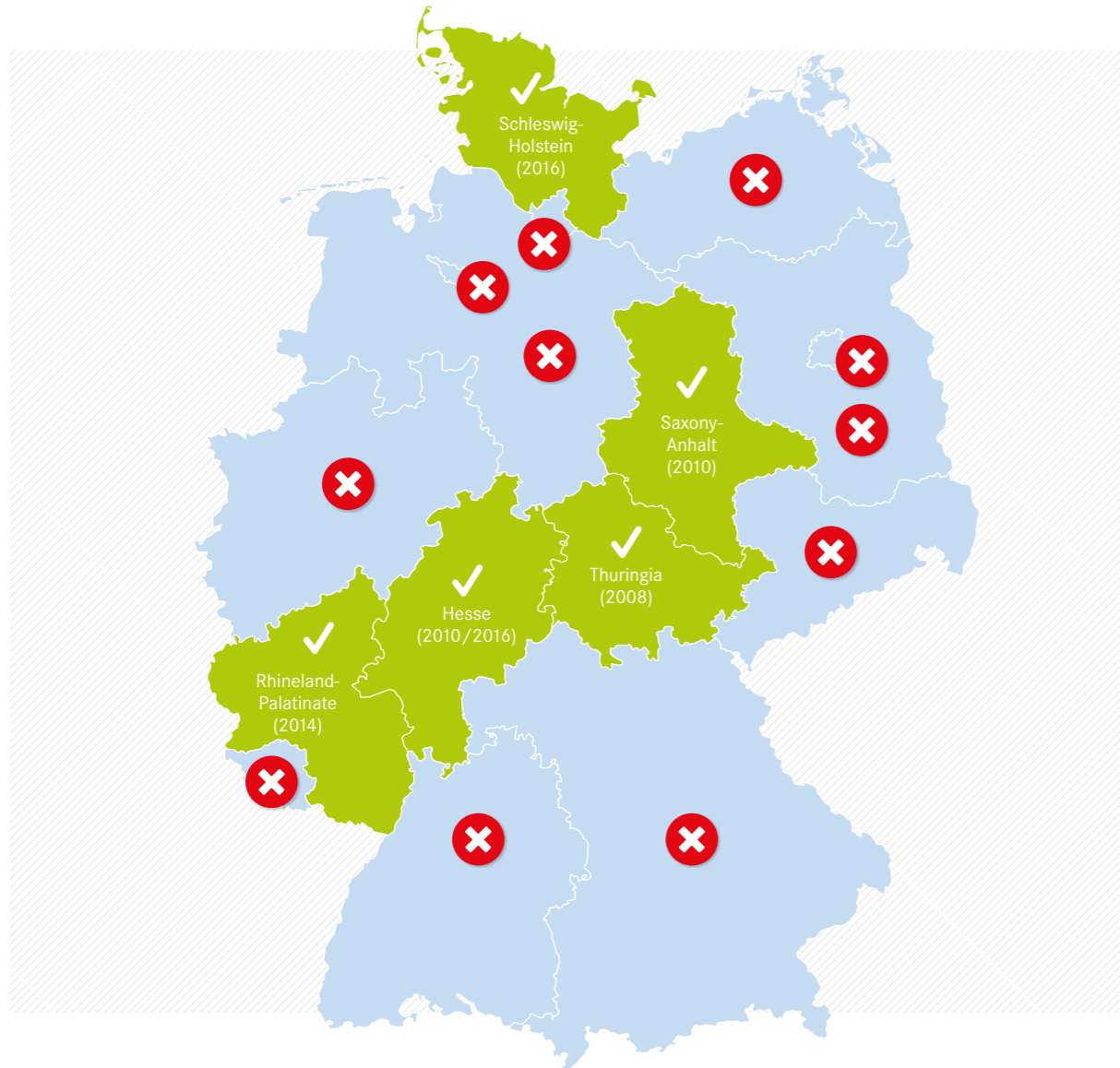
Academic publishing is undergoing a process of change. Libraries help academics to publish their research results in digital form through a range of advisory services – for instance by providing editing tools for online journals, repositories or university publishers and when it comes to the development and operation of research information systems as well as dealing with complex legal issues.

To be able to accomplish these new tasks, libraries need more secure framework conditions – this also includes security with regard to financial aspects. In order to more widely implement the Open Access concept in Germany, a policy approved by the federal government, states and universities is required. The Allianz der Wissenschaftsorganisationen, an organisation consisting of various research institutions in Germany, has made recommendations on how to move on. This will involve the coordination, networking, development and consolidation of materials and infrastructures, as well as the provision of coherent regulations, legal certainty and transparent financing models.



THE DBV CALLS FOR:

MORE LIBRARY-RELATED LEGISLATION



Ten years after the publication of the final report of the ‘Culture in Germany’ Enquete Committee of the German Parliament, which recommended regulating the tasks and financing of public libraries through legislation, 2/3 of all federal states have not yet adopted any such library-relevant legislation.

To date, only five states have followed the recommendation: Thuringia (2008), Saxony-Anhalt (2010), Hesse (2010/2016), Rhineland-Palatinate (2014) and Schleswig-Holstein (2016).

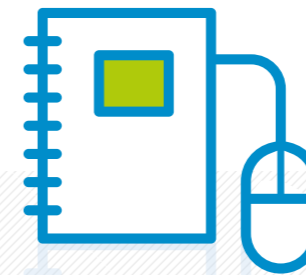
However, in no case did the legislation actually put in place what had been proposed and ensure that the provision of public libraries was not simply a voluntary responsibility but was made compulsory. Required are laws that set binding standards for facilities, services and financing. The libraries in the five federal states have at least been upgraded in legal terms, and the public awareness of their contribution as educational and knowledge institutions and the mainstay of the cultural infrastructure of our digital society has been heightened. Other federal states must now follow suit.

THE DBV CALLS FOR:

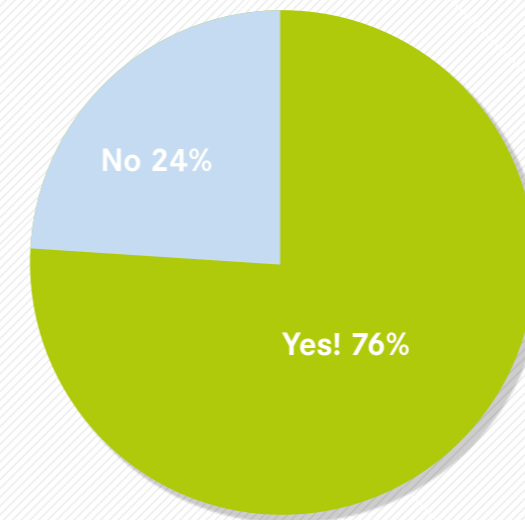
INVESTMENT NOW IN SECURING THE FUTURE VIABILITY OF LIBRARIES

Following the drastic austerity cuts of recent years, the budgets for many public libraries have been stagnating in spite of growing responsibilities and a rise in visitor numbers. The digital revolution and current social, cultural and educational challenges require urgent investment – in the training of staff, to improve the quality of visits, in order to create customised services for various target groups and to enhance digital services.

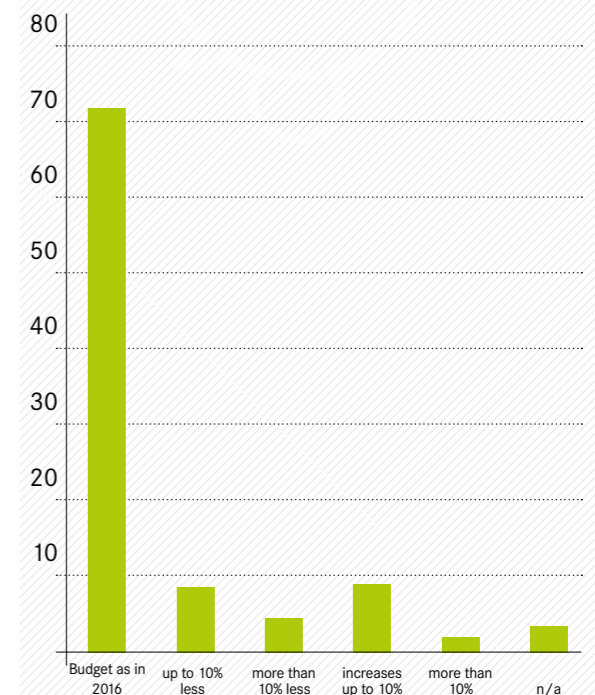
In times of positive economic growth and when public purses are full, there must be greater investment in the cultural and educational services provided by libraries. The aim is to secure sustainable financing for libraries as places of education and encounters – in the interest of all citizens.



Need for employees to receive training in digital service provision



The financial situation of public libraries



Figures (Source: financial survey undertaken by the German Library Association of ca. 1,350 public libraries, 2017)

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