

INTRODUCTION

Libraries are institutions that are particularly important for social development, for the promotion of knowledge and science, and for cultural education. The local community can not only borrow books from them, but also increasingly benefit from a wide range of events such as workshops, exhibitions, and readings by authors.

At the same time, given this important social role of libraries, it is important to remember that, like all contemporary cultural institutions, they are subject to dynamic changes and face challenges related not only to ensuring physical safety but also psychophysical well-being and information security. In the context of ensuring safety in libraries, issues related to the theft of books and periodicals or their destruction are typically cited. However, the problem is much broader. A library is not only a place for storing and providing access to society's cultural heritage, but also a workspace for librarians and a space for readers.

The experience of safety in a library is a very subjective experience. It is generally accepted that it refers to the creation of conditions and policies that ensure a sense of well-being for employees and users, encompassing aspects of physical, mental, and social health. The aim is to ensure that no one suffers physical or mental harm while staying in the library, but also to prevent and counteract crimes against users, employees, the institution, and its resources while using library services.

Achieving this is facilitated by a positive organizational culture in libraries, with fundamental assumptions (at the deepest level), norms and values (at the middle level), and artifacts (behavioral, linguistic, and physical at the surface level). This culture, on the one hand, inspires creativity, commitment, and motivation among staff, creates a climate of trust, enables transparency in relationships, active communication, and team support, and, on the other, positively influences an atmosphere of kindness and friendliness for readers.

Libraries, as public institutions, also function administratively, fulfilling legal obligations arising from a wide range of normative acts (*GDPR Guide*, 2020, p. 7). Because they process a large amount of personal data and classified information, it is important for both employees and users

to have the confidence and peace of mind that the library is safe and their data is protected. This is achieved through computer system protection, monitoring, password policies, system access restrictions, and compliance with the EU General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) which governs the processing and protection of personal data, thus confirming the privacy and rights of individuals whose data is processed. It is worth mentioning that, specifically for Polish libraries, the Polish Librarians' Association published the "GDPR Guide" in 2020, which aims to provide them, as administrators, with substantive and practical support in the correct and effective application of personal data protection regulations, with particular emphasis on the specifics of library processes.

There is also increasing attention being paid to the need for psychological support and for building a culture of openness for both employees and users, one that fosters communication, prevents pathologies and stress, and counteracts mobbing and interpersonal conflicts as well as the occurrence of these phenomena in cyberspace (cyberpathologies, cyberthreats, and cybermobbing) which are, unfortunately, increasingly common. This is a very serious problem, as according to research by the Central Institute for Labor Protection published in April 2025 over 48% of employees have experienced at least one form of cyberbullying in the last year, and 12.8% were exposed to digital violence regularly—once a month (akar/mark. 2025).

A safe work environment in a library is the result of integrated efforts in work organization, psychological support, information protection, and counteraction against physical, digital, and social threats.

All of this requires a multifaceted approach to safety broadly understood, the quality of professional life, user comfort, and the protection of collections and access to information. Thanks to this holistic strategy of fostering a sense of confidence, stability, and security, the library becomes not only a safe and functional place but also an environment conducive to professional development and the comfortable use of its resources by staff and readers.

This latest special issue of "Przegląd Biblioteczny" is dedicated to the broadly understood issue of library safety. It contains nine problem-solving articles and a current review of Polish literature on the subject.

The presented articles are the texts of:

Hanna Batorowska: *Information Security Awareness - Between Ignorance and Consciousness of Threats.* The author explores the impact of information security culture on shaping an entity's awareness of information security. She highlights the factors that influence this awareness. She points out that society's ability to respond to threats in the information environment

requires intellectual and mental preparation, as well as institutional education in the field of security culture.

Maciej Saskowski: *Cybersecurity in Library Practice: Between Data Protection and Digital Education*, which explores cybersecurity threats in the library environment, with particular emphasis on user privacy and data protection. It also presents, through comparative case studies, examples of specific actions undertaken by libraries around the world.

Grzegorz Gmiterek: *Digital Security in Libraries. Challenges, Threats, and Data Protection in the Digital Age* presents selected challenges and threats related to cybersecurity in libraries and proposes comprehensive solutions to enhance data and user protection.

Agnieszka Fluda-Krokos: *Rules Governing the Provision of Access to Special Library Collections as a Form of Protecting the Most Valuable Elements of Cultural Heritage*. The author presents selected rules for the use of special collections in libraries as a form of protecting these resources, which are among the most valuable elements of cultural heritage.

Dorota Pietrzkiwicz: *From Historical Treasures to the Idea of Protecting Polish Written Heritage*, which presents the process of developing the idea of securing and protecting the most valuable objects in Polish libraries, i.e., the National Library Resource, and its importance in ensuring the continuity of Polish cultural heritage and building national and European identity.

Magdalena Cyrklaff-Gorczyca: *The Impact of Difficult Interpersonal Situations at Work on the Psychological Safety, Stress, and Well-Being of Librarians* – a research report indicating the types of difficult interpersonal situations experienced by public library librarians in Poland and their impact on their sense of psychological safety, stress, and well-being.

Dorota Grabowska: *Safety And Protection Of Minor Library Users in the Light of the so-called "Kamilek's Act"*. The author discusses the role of school and public libraries in meeting user safety needs in light of the "Kamilek's Act", which aims to ensure the protection of children and young people and develop appropriate standards in this area. She illustrates this with an analysis of guidelines prepared by public provincial libraries in Poland, ensuring safe relationships between minors and staff, policies and procedures for intervention in situations of suspected abuse or information about abuse of a minor, and protecting children from harmful content and threats appearing online and otherwise stored.

Andrzej Mycio: *Securing the Collection of Manuscripts and Early Printed Books at the University of Toruń Library*. In this case study, the author outlines the current rules for storing and accessing the most valuable collections held at the Nicolaus Copernicus University Library in Toruń.

Dariusz Grygowski: *Preventing Theft in Libraries*, which discusses methods for protecting library collections from theft and the problems that arise in this area. Practical methods for securing library collections from theft are illustrated using the example of solutions used at the University of Warsaw Library.

And,

Barbara Koryś: *National Literature Review*.

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