

INTRODUCTION

This second special issue this year is devoted to the continuing importance of libraries as vital institutions supporting knowledge, culture, information, recreation, and the development of human well-being, as well as to emerging problems that can disrupt the efficient fulfillment of user needs.

Although issues related to the role of libraries in the lives of individuals and entire communities have appeared in library science literature for many years, they remain highly relevant. Therefore, it is worth highlighting these wonderful, though sometimes lesser-known, libraries that play a key role in their communities, adapting to the dynamically changing expectations and needs of their users. They present a new perspective on what libraries can do to best fulfill their social and educational mission for their patrons. Often, however, despite their best efforts, many people remain beyond their reach. The same is true with readership. The situation in this area in Poland, despite some positive changes, still requires improvement.

A 2024 report from the National Library¹ shows that nearly 40% of Poles haven't read a single book in a year, although the percentage of people using e-books and audiobooks is growing. Unequal access to books and reading habits remain a problem. Unequal access to books and reading habits formed in childhood remain a problem.

Therefore, libraries undertake various initiatives to identify the problems of library non-use, the causes of low reading rates, and to initiate new ways, means, and methods of attracting those who cannot yet be called library users or readers.

To transform non-readers into readers, libraries foster an organizational culture that is open and focused on serving users and that actively builds the library brand as a friendly, accessible, inspiring place open to diversity, adapted to today's users. They also invest in the development of librarians' interpersonal skills, recognizing their crucial role as the "faces" of libraries

¹ „Stan czytelnictwa książek w Polsce w 2024 roku” [State of readership in Poland in 2024] (online). Available at: <https://www.bn.org.pl/aktualnosci/5611-stan-czytelnictwa-ksiazek-w-polsce-w-2024-roku.html>. Access: 20.11.2025.

and their most important social capital, who strengthen their activities and help users feel visible and understood, which encourages the use of libraries, their collections, and participation in the life of their community.

To meet the complex demands of satisfying diverse user needs, libraries are seeking and implementing the most effective solutions, with new technologies playing a key role. Their use enables the expansion of the scope and quality of services, from resource digitization and process automation to the development of digital platforms, leveraging mass media and AI, thus significantly improving user experience, quality, and universality of services and access to information.

The COVID-19 pandemic has been a significant test and impetus for these trends. The closure of brick-and-mortar libraries triggered a sharp increase in demand for digital resources and online services. Libraries that quickly adapted to the conditions have gained in popularity and importance, confirming that digital forms of access are essential to maintaining continuity of education and access to culture. The pandemic has forced accelerated digitization and the expansion of digital infrastructure, and has also increased public awareness of the possibilities of libraries in the online environment. This has provided a positive impetus for further investment and the development of libraries as hybrid institutions, combining physical and digital activities.

However, the implementation of these innovations also generates new challenges that have not been faced before, and “ordinary” users are unaware of the objective difficulties libraries face in fully meeting their needs.

To effectively respond to customer expectations, libraries require a legislative framework, appropriate regulations, procedures, and standards that adapt regulations to the new realities. This will also allow libraries to fully utilize the potential of technology, enabling development and innovation while ensuring the protection of the rights and intellectual property of owners and authors.

In this way, libraries can continue their mission of creating modern, safe, and legally compliant services that fully meet user expectations even in the most demanding circumstances.

In this issue, you will find the following articles:

* **Krzysztof Stachura:** Public Libraries as Spaces Supporting the Development of Well-Being.

* **Dorota Grabowska:** Cultural Animation in Public Libraries in Poland.

* **Anna Tułacz:** The Role of Libraries in Regional Education.

* **Barbara Głębiccka-Giza, Adam Wyżyński:** The Library of the Polish National Film Archive – An Audiovisual Institute as a Collective Social Actor in the Development of Film Studies Based on Primary Sources? Some Reflections in Connection with the Library’s Attainment of Scientific Library Status.

* **Dorota Bednarczyk, Maria Górska:** Digital Resource Sharing and the Information Needs of Users in the Sejm Library.

* **Teresa Święckowska:** Controlled Digital Lending: Legal Conditions, Social Contexts, Practices and Challenges for Libraries

* **Małgorzata Kowalska-Chrzanowska, Paweł Marzec:** Non-Users of the University Library In Toruń – Research on the Reasons for not using Library Resources and Services by Students of Nicolaus Copernicus University in toruń

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