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## INTRODUCING THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

### LOCATION AND HISTORY

The Milano Bicocca University library was **established in 1998** here in building U6, as a **Central Interdepartmental Library**.

Initially, the Central Library only served the Economics and Law Departments, but these were quickly joined by Psychology, Education Science, Sociology, Statistics and Computer Science.

The year **2001** saw the opening of the **Science Library** (mathematics, physics and natural sciences), close by in building U2, and of the **Medicine Library**, in building U8 in Monza, near the San Gerardo hospital.

The **three venues** of the Library are **open** from Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 6.30 p.m.

### COLLECTIONS, SERVICES AND PUBLIC

The **total holdings** of the University Library amount to about 200,000 documents and resources, including ancient and modern books, print and electronic journals, databases and CD ROMs.

All the venues have **open stacks**. **Books** (about 150,000) are shelved according to the Dewey Decimal Classification, while **journals** (42,000 yearly volumes and over 2,000 titles) are arranged by discipline.

**E-resources** (about 20,000 e-journals and 100 databases) can be consulted from terminals inside the Library and from the whole university network, via the library website. Home access is provided to institutional users (professors, students, university staff) through the university authentication system.

The Library has about 33,000 **potential users**, 30,000 of whom are students, while 3,000 are professors, researchers, staff etc.

In 2008, 10,500 users have **borrowed** at least one book, and the three venues of the library have registered 900,000 **visits**.

The University Library offers the following **services**:

- consultation on the premises
- external loans
- interlibrary loans
- document delivery
- subject specific reference (besides quick reference at the desk)
- photocopying
- carrels (only in the Central Library)

## FOCUS ON CENTRAL LIBRARY

In 2002 all **Central Library's** furniture and shelves are renewed, according to a project of the architect Vittorio Gregotti, which reconciles modernity/functionality and tradition/elegance.

Wooden shelves replace metal ones and several **reading rooms** are created:

- wide spaces, between journals' shelves
- narrower spaces, between books' shelves, called cells (ten of them)
- individual spaces: twenty "carrels", similar to those used in American campuses

**Carrels** can be reserved and used for ten consecutive days, by final year students, PhD students, professors and researchers of the University of Milano-Bicocca.

**Tables** too satisfy different needs: some of them are round shaped, others rectangular, with or without partition, and some are specifically intended for persons on wheel-chairs.

The **Central Library** extends on an area of 4,300 square metres, has more than 7,000 linear metres of shelves, offers almost 500 reading seats and about 40 pc terminals.

The **bibliographic holdings** of the only Central Library consists of almost 2,000 journal titles (34,000 volumes), 130,000 modern books and 900 ancient books, these last ones mainly in the field of the history of law.

In addition to the **ancient fund** (law), the Central Library holds some **special funds**:

- archival funds, like the Benussi fund (psychology) and the Stone fund (economy)
- book funds, once held by scholars and then left to the Library (Fondo Arnau, Chiancone, Guido De Rossi, Scarpelli, Mainardi e Musatti), and the LabSMA fund, with statistics, and finally the Bicocca fund for Peace.

## STAFF, FUNCTIONS AND GOALS

**Library's staff** at the moment consists of 42 people: 31 working in the Central Library, 5 in the Science Library and 6 in the Medicine Library.

In every venue the work consists in **Back office** activities (processing books and journals) and **Front office** activities (users services).

In the year 2008 the **job done** in the entire University library can be summarized with the following data:

- about 15,000 orders, catalogings and classifications
- almost 200,000 items treated
- almost 70,000 loans
- more than 1,000 inter-library loans and almost 700 active document deliveries
- more than 700 ILL and 5,400 passive DD (received)
- almost 600 reference sessions.

Besides, in 2007 and 2008 more than 80 hours of lessons on bibliographic research have been held to our users.

In the Central Library are provided some **central services** too:

- Information System
- Electronic resources and Digital library
- Training, Development and Communication

Our Library has always attached great importance to **measurement** and **evaluation**, gathering data and researching with quantitative and qualitative methods, towards both users and staff (questionnaires, interviews, focus groups).

After the setting up of a specific office, in 2004, the activities of **communication** and **marketing** of the Library have increased, with a Guide to the Library and a completely new web site, almost fully translated in English.

**Users'** and **staff's training** activities increased too, with a constant collaboration between the venues and a systematic analysis of training needs and evaluation of training provided.

Finally, during the last years a lot has been done on **technological and digital development**, to provide more and more advanced services to remote users.

Besides OPAC, which is managed by the Aleph working group along with the Insubria University, the University Library provides different tools for bibliographic research, managed by specific working groups composed by staff members from different seats:

- **LinX**, the free internet resources portal
- **MetaBib**, the meta-search engine for the Library's electronic resources
- **BOA**, the Open Archive which gathers the scientific output of Bicocca University.

The specific **goals** which our Library each year establishes are aimed at sustaining our University's teaching and researching activities, providing up-to-date tools and making the best of the existing resources, through managing strategies and pushes towards constant improvement.