Policy plan
2023 - 2026

Words connect people

KB ⟩ national library
of the netherlands

Words connect people

Who is this document intended for?
This plan is a way of sharing our plans for the next four years. In the first instance, it is aimed at the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture & Science, to show them how we are meeting our statutory commitments. But we would like everyone to read our plans; this policy document is an invitation to respond and work alongside us. We will only succeed in our ambitions if we can act together with our networks and users. After all, what is a library without people? The value is in the connection: the whole point of stories and ideas is that we share them.

KB 〉 national library of the netherlands

Our world is built on words
and shaped by people.

Foreword

Every four years, the KB formulates a policy plan setting out how we intend to fulfil the tasks that have been entrusted to us. Before embarking on the policy plan, we first talked to the people within and outside our organisation: the people for whom, and with whom, we work. We also reviewed the previous policy plan: what worked for us, and what didn't? Using the information thus gathered, we compiled this document setting out how we intend to connect words with people during the next four years. Words are at the very heart of the countless stories that define our past and present. They are a source of knowledge and information for current and future generations. Every book, every story is unique, just as every person is unique, wanting to read, learn and discover in their own unique way. By enabling them to do this, the KB is helping to ensure that the Netherlands becomes a smarter, more skilled and more creative country every single day.

The KB is the National Library of the Netherlands, a role that is anchored in the Dutch Higher Education and Research Act (Wet op het hoger onderwijs en wetenschappelijk onderzoek). In 2015, this national role regarding the storage and provision of Dutch publications was expanded to include tasks in the public library domain. Since then, the KB has been responsible for the national digital public library, modified reading and system tasks. This expansion of the remit, in an ever-changing, increasingly digitised world, has posed a huge challenge for the KB over the past few years. However, it has also been an enormous opportunity to boost the KB's social orientation. In just over ten years, the KB's customer base of 100,000 loyal visitors using its physical location has grown to almost five million people using all the digital (network) services provided by the KB. In addition, the KB still plays a role in all kinds of programmes and programming, which reach numerous Dutch people (young and old) in a physical environment, including its own building.

Among the most important aspects of the KB's work are creating societal value, capitalising on the opportunities for digitisation and purpose-driven working. Purpose-driven working means considering what society wants or needs, and then finding the right partners to help us with the job. The urgency is great in many areas and we welcome the intensified government focus in several policy fields (connecting research and society, libraries and digital heritage). The increasing urgency of the tasks is forcing organisations to look beyond their own institutional horizons, and to stop competing with each other and start working together instead. This is why we work together with others in network partnerships on social tasks that are more extensive and complex than is manageable for a single organisation. These network partnerships can differ greatly, as can our role within them, but the focus on societal value is the factor that unites all of them. The social tasks we are facing correspond with a number of the United Nations sustainable development goals (SDGs), aimed at securing a better future for the world's population.

One of these SDGs is: providing quality education for all. This includes improving literacy, a goal that the KB is working on alongside the public libraries. Together with the public libraries, we are also trying to encourage more participation in the information society and the concept of 'lifelong learning'. This refers to the Dutch Cabinet's intention to ensure that the Netherlands develops a positive, strong learning culture. Our ambitions are set out in the Library Agreement and detailed plans are set out every year in a network agenda. Working together with heritage organisations in the Dutch Digital Heritage Network (NDE), we try to boost the societal value of our heritage by making it more visible, usable and sustainable. The National Digital Heritage Strategy forms the basis for this work. We join forces with university libraries and research institutes to raise the profile of open, accessible science, and we support research in social sciences and humanities. We want to reinforce the ties between research and society.

In our countless meetings with people, we often hear praise for the inspired way in which KB staff work. It is therefore only logical to add ''inspired' to our other four core values: reliable, connective, open and innovative. We would like everyone to read our plans; this policy document is an invitation to respond and work alongside us. We will only succeed in our ambitions if we can act together with our networks and users. The true value is in the connection: the whole point of stories and ideas is that we share them. And because the tasks are often bigger than the KB itself, we do this in collaboration with others. You can move faster alone, but you can go further together.

T.H.J. (Tjibbe) Joustra, Chair of the Board of Governors
Dr E.J.B. (Lily) Knibbeler, General Manager

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Our challenge

One of the main characteristics of life today is the huge increase in the amount of information we are exposed to. At the same time, we are reading less and millions of Dutch people are not equipped to participate in the digital society. This is exacerbating inequality of opportunity. Where science and journalism used to be seen as reliable sources of information in a democratic society, and libraries as trustworthy guides through the information landscape, the position of these institutions is now coming under increasing pressure. The role of disinformation, particularly in the online world, is growing, as regulation in this digital space lags behind. Democratic values are under pressure as people become increasingly intolerant of those who hold different opinions and values.

As a National Library, we cherish the importance of imagination and the power of sharing stories and ideas. We wholeheartedly support people's freedom to form their own opinions and their right to personal development. The KB enables all Dutch people to explore its sources and make up their own minds. Knowledge and stories are stored in our physical and digital collections. These are growing every day and it is crucial to ensure access to them and link them with other collections. We know that some voices in the KB collection are less audible, partly through past selections choices. We want to make these voices louder. Thanks to new technology, we can ensure that countless different avenues are open to as many people as possible to study and discover our written heritage. This is how we are enriching society with the power of words in every possible form.

We want words to have meaning for as many people as possible, which is why we do our best to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to read and develop the information skills needed to feel at home in an increasingly digital world. The KB is there for everyone who wants to learn more about their own world, and the world of other people.

We want to enrich society with the power of words in all their different forms.

Our mission

Mission
The KB (National Library of the Netherlands) connects people and words, contributing to a smarter, more skilled and more creative Netherlands, now and in the future.

Vision
The KB has always been a source of inspiration and innovation. Since our foundation in 1798, we have developed from a library that represents the people to a broad-based, versatile organisation, that ensures that the National Library collection is visible, usable and sustainable for all Dutch people, for any purpose, both now and in the future. We connect people and words, contributing to a smarter, more skilled and more creative Netherlands, now and in the future.

We bring research, reading, discovery and lifelong learning within reach of everyone in the Netherlands. At home and in the library, online and offline. We do this with a focus on specific tasks, together with numerous national and international partners, and with our visitors and users themselves. To do this, we consider a safe, accessible, dedicated physical and digital public space to be essential.

Our collections are the basis of our actions. The stories we stored in and about the Netherlands form a link in the chain of knowledge, and grow every single day. We make these collections, physical and digital, available to man and machine, we ensure that they remain accessible and we connect them with the collections of others. This is how we enrich society with the power of words.

What do we mean by a smarter, more skilled and more creative Netherlands?
The ability to read helps people to put themselves in someone else's shoes. Words enable people to share ideas and dreams and make society more creative. Stories and discourse teach people things they don't know and reinforce the communal reservoir of knowledge. In times of polarisation and disinformation, greater empathy and knowledge are essential if we are to create a more sustainable and positive society.

We are contributing to a smarter, more skilled and more creative Netherlands.

Core values

Our core values ensure that everyone inside and outside our organisation can see what motivates KB staff to help create a smarter, more skilled and more creative Netherlands. We have five core values. They are:

1. **Reliable:** the KB builds relationships on mutual trust. We are experts, we are keen to share our knowledge and ensure that our collections are (and continue to be) retrievable and accessible. Customers, colleagues and partners can rely on us, both now and in the future.

2. **Unifying:** the KB connects people and words. Sharing stories and making data transparent fuels movement. You move faster alone, but you go further together.

3. **Open:** the KB is interested in what is going on in society and within its own organisation. We stand for freedom of opinion, and encourage open discussion. We do this by granting everyone easy access to information.

4. **Innovative:** the KB innovates on the basis of technological and social developments. Innovation is not a goal in itself, but a necessity if we are to remain relevant in an ever-changing world.

5. **Inspired:** the KB is an organisation of people with shared ambitions and open minds. We are interested in new insights and developments and we are passionate about our work.

Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)

Our social impact touches on the 17 sustainable development goals (SDGs) endorsed by the 193 member states of the United Nations. We mentioned the SDGs in our foreword and we will now explain how we contribute to them:

1. By promoting reading and digital literacy, we are helping to ensure that by 2030, all young people and a large number of adults, both men and women, achieve literacy and numeracy (SDG 4.6).

2. Our collections allow anyone conducting research to enrich our society with knowledge, whether they are interested citizens, students or scientists. This is our contribution to academic research (SDG 9.5).

3. The KB promotes diversity and inclusion in its own organisation, in our public programming, the formation of collections and in network partnerships. We are helping to create a literate and digitally skilled society, in which everyone can play a part (SDG 10.2).

4. The KB stores almost everything that is published in or about the Netherlands, from books, newspapers and journals, to websites. In this way, we are ensuring that our knowledge of the world remains accessible to future generations (SDG 11.4).

5. We make our collections as widely available as possible, and do our best to safeguard 'public values' on the internet. This means that privacy, climate aspects and digital safety are priorities in our online services. This is our way of ensuring optimal public access to information (SDG 16.10).

Strategic goals

The KB is a national public organisation that connects people and words in order to help people, and ultimately society, to develop.

People
People are different in so many ways. In colour, gender, age and sexual disposition, but also in terms of talent, health, social status and political convictions. People are both individuals and members of communities. The KB wants to respond to the needs of all its different users and approach people with an open mind. We and our partners ensure that everyone can read and explore, irrespective of their skills or experience. This means being aware of the different needs of different groups of people, and being prepared to discuss them when developing and testing new services.

Digital at the forefront
Digitisation is one of the most powerful ways of boosting access to knowledge and information. The KB is one of the largest public digital organisations in the Netherlands. We want to use the opportunities for digitisation to increase access to, and inclusion within, our collections. But we are not blind to the negative impact that technology is having on society. We are trying to help people who are digitally disadvantaged, and to reinforce the role of public values (privacy, climate, safety) in the digital domain.

Purpose-driven working in networks
The KB must also adapt and operate in an ever-changing environment. The boundaries of our organisation no longer form the boundaries of our work. We work together with network partners on purpose-driven assignments: based on the needs of society.

Strategic goals

We are working towards three strategic goals: the first ensues from the Public Library Provisions System Act (Wsob), the other two from the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW).

1. **Reading and digital literacy**
   Giving more people the chance to read and participate in the information society.

2. **Research and discovery**
   Strengthening the connection between research and society.

3. **Sustainable access**
   Managing the national library collection.

We will only be able to achieve these three goals if we focus on the following areas:

- **Information and technology**
  Using information technology to help us achieve our goals.
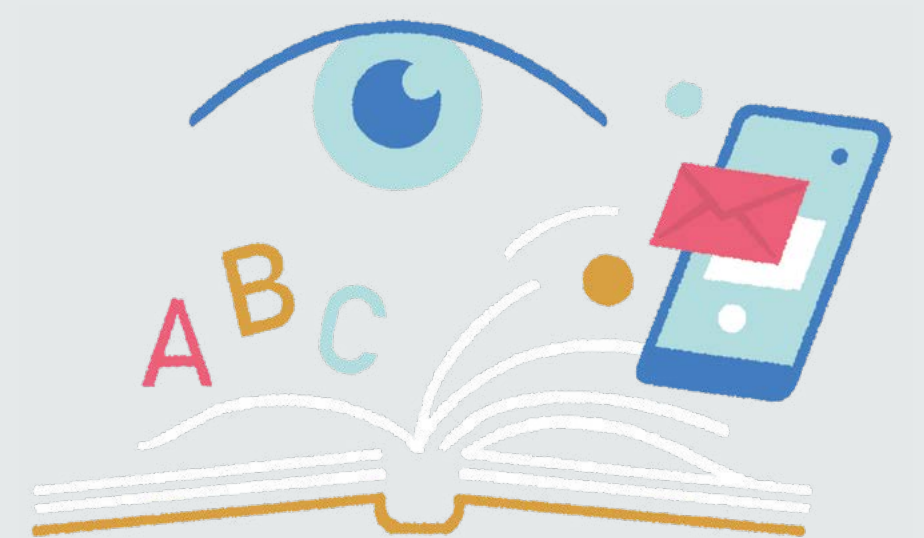

- **Organisation and development**
  Developing ourselves and our organisation, in partnership, and driven by purpose.

Reading and digital literacy

Reading shapes the way you think and expands your view of the world, but literacy should no longer be taken for granted. Two-and-a-half million people in the Netherlands are not sufficiently literate to successfully participate in society. Digital literacy is a challenge for four million people. Some have trouble using online services, which increases social inequality. We want to help change this, so that more people have the chance to read and play a part in society.

Giving more people the opportunity to read and to take part in the information society

We are working alongside the public libraries on three societal tasks: to bring about a literate society, to ensure maximum participation in the information society and to promote lifelong learning. These ambitions are laid down in the so-called Library Agreement for 2020-2023. We formulate our shared goals every year in the accompanying network agenda. As a National Library, we make a contribution to society by providing reading opportunities to everyone, including children, young people and people with reading difficulties. We also make digital reading available, via the library and via school. The public libraries are there to help people who structurally run into difficulties. Not just people with reading difficulties, but also people who want to improve their digital skills or need help of some other kind.

What are we going to do?

Reading
Reading for all
Although the Dutch are considered to be enthusiastic book-readers, the number of minutes that people spend reading per day ('reading time') is dropping. In a worrying development, children of secondary school age seem not to enjoy reading and a growing number of young people (particularly boys) are leaving school with poor literacy skills. The KB, the public libraries and the Dutch Reading Foundation develop activities to promote reading. We do this by means of a 'continuous reading line'. It starts with the BookStart suitcases offered to every baby born in the Netherlands, and continues via school libraries through to the assortment of library books available to adults. We see this book assortment as a kind of 'colour chart', with something for everyone. We focus specifically on the reading skills of children up to the age of 18 (particularly those in target groups with poor language skills), and try to whet their appetite for reading (or being read to). We maintain the national library catalogue, which makes it easier for everyone to find something to read, whether in print or digital.

> "Avid readers have a better chance of living a long and healthy life, and of mental well-being and social success."
>
> Adriaan van der Weel and Ruud Hisgen, authors of De Lezende Mens

Reading among young people

Good reading begins when you're young. If you read a lot when you're young, you'll find reading and studying easier and more fun as you get older. A new generation of readers evolves if children, their parents and grandparents are shown the joy of language as early as possible. The BookStart cases are given to all children born in the Netherlands, and BookStart is also active in childcare facilities. BookStart, along with the Library at School and the national reading promotion networks, is part of The Art of Reading programme, an initiative launched by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. This programme is also formulating a family strategy for families with poor language skills. The municipalities are playing a large role in this, as they will be in charge of policy on poor literacy as from the end of 2024. This part of The Art of Reading programme is itself part of the national 'Tel mee met taal' campaign, which will run until late 2024.

Digital reading

As well as the programmes already mentioned, we also encourage digital reading by making e-books and audio books readily available. Digital reading and listening took off during the pandemic, and more than half of the Dutch population now read an e-book every now and then. The online library has almost 40,000 e-books and almost 10,000 audio books in its collection, making it the perfect platform for reaching and catering to digital readers. We plan to develop activities that will encourage people who do not yet read to take the first step. A study conducted by the Dutch Reading Foundation found that young boys in particular, many of whom are not motivated to read, are easier to reach through digital reading.

Literature

Reading can introduce people to new experiences, ideas and situations that they would not otherwise encounter. This has a proven effect on people's willingness to connect with others. So promoting literacy is important, and clocking up reading hours is essential. There is always something that people will enjoy reading, whether they read sporadically or avidly, on their own or with others. We consider it important that people have access to literature if they want. The Digital Library for Dutch Literature (DBNL) and the Online Library both provide easy access to literature. Literatuurgeschiedenis.org and Lezen voor de lijst are designed to help secondary school pupils by providing information about literature. In addition, the KB and partners invest in reading innovation in the book world, whereby new forms, techniques and insight into reading and literature are developed.

We want more people to have the opportunity to read and take part in reading, in print and digitally.

> **"Please, let's be interested in each other. Literature can help us in this respect."**
> Adriaan van Dis, author

Modified reading

Over 1.1 million Dutch people experience reading difficulties. 250,000 of them are blind or visually impaired and over 850,000 people have dyslexia. Having reading difficulties affects the way people participate in day-to-day life. The KB wants to help make books and information accessible to everyone, to the same extent and on the same conditions, including people with a visual impairment or any form of reading difficulty.

We are working together on the premise that anyone who wants to read, must be able to read. The library network, supported by organisations such as Modified Reading, Dedicon and the CBB, set up the Modified Reading programme which provides modified access to books, newspapers and journals, via audio books, Braille, large print or combined reading. Digital accessibility is another focus area: this is a series of agreements and demands regarding the design of websites and apps so that everyone can use them. The European Accessibility Act (EAA), due to be introduced in 2025, will also have a positive impact on the accessibility of digital work.

Digital literacy
Participation in the information society

Digitisation and technology are here to stay. If you want to contact a government body, or find government information, you need to be digitally competent. Knowing your way around the internet is also handy if you want to find reliable sources of news. This affects all Dutch people, young and old, but the challenges are not the same for everyone. We want to help people take their place in the information society, in a world where more and more communication and work is conducted via the digital highway. We are working hard to boost digital literacy and digital citizenship. Our activities in this area correspond with the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science's basic skills master plan.

> **"For too long, we have underestimated how important it is that children learn to search for the truth at an early age; that they learn to consult various sources, that they will inevitably encounter different facts, and that their view of the facts is not the only truth."**
> Kim Putters, chair of the Social and Economic Council of the Netherlands

Basic skills

Four million Dutch people do not have access to digital technology or do not have the skills they need to participate in the information society, even at a basic level. Some are not digitally competent enough to play a part online; some 2.5 million people have poor literacy skills and therefore find it difficult to understand information and communication. Courses in digital self-sufficiency can help this group to a certain extent, as can the over six hundred Digital Government Information Points (IDO) in Dutch libraries, where citizens can get personal assistance in dealing with digital government services. However, the vast majority will need structural support, which is where the libraries have an important role to play. This is the second priority area in the network agenda for public libraries, alongside promoting reading.

Digital society

Finding your way in the digital society is never without its challenges, even for people with good digital skills. On the initiative of the Pica Foundation, we have joined the public libraries in developing a strategy for digital citizenship, to equip people with the skills and resilience they need to take an active part in the information society. We are working on the digital accessibility of our digital services. We also support the plans to give digital literacy a logical place in the curriculum of schools and other institutes of education.

It is essential that digital space is public space, both now and in the future. The KB contributes to and participates in the social debate about the role of public value in the digital world. We endorse 'digital sovereignty', which means: being in charge of your own personal data and being able to deal responsibly with digital facilities. The KB is actively involved with the Media Literacy Network, which organises activities to make Dutch people more aware of how media and journalism work, and the importance of a free press. We are also a partner in PublicSpaces: a network of media and cultural partners that works to safeguard public values on the internet.

The KB is working towards a so-called 'single identity', a simple way for people to gain access to the library's services in the digital domain. This could eventually be linked to other public services. We also support libraries in the digital domain by providing Website as a Service (WAAS). This is a combination of infrastructure and standard web pages, that helps libraries to create their own website. We are pleased that we can continue developing the network for the national digital infrastructure of public libraries in the years to come (2023-2031) thanks to extra funding from the government Work on Implementation scheme (WaU), which aims to boost the relationship between government and citizens. This is an opportunity to provide better support to more citizens, by offering information, collections and socialeducational programmes, and to strengthen the joint network agenda of public libraries.

Lifelong development
People don't stop learning when they complete their formal education; all things being equal, they continue to learn throughout their lives. A lot of people are also actively involved in society, or even still working, into relative old age. Libraries play an important part in non-formal and formal learning, whereby people can choose how they wish to develop themselves. As a term, lifelong development encompasses many facets. We have noticed a strong link with the following subject: making people enthusiastic and enabling them to explore, and particularly the 'continuous learning pathway to information skills'.

> "Sharing knowledge is at the core of education. Reducing access to knowledge will stagnate development."
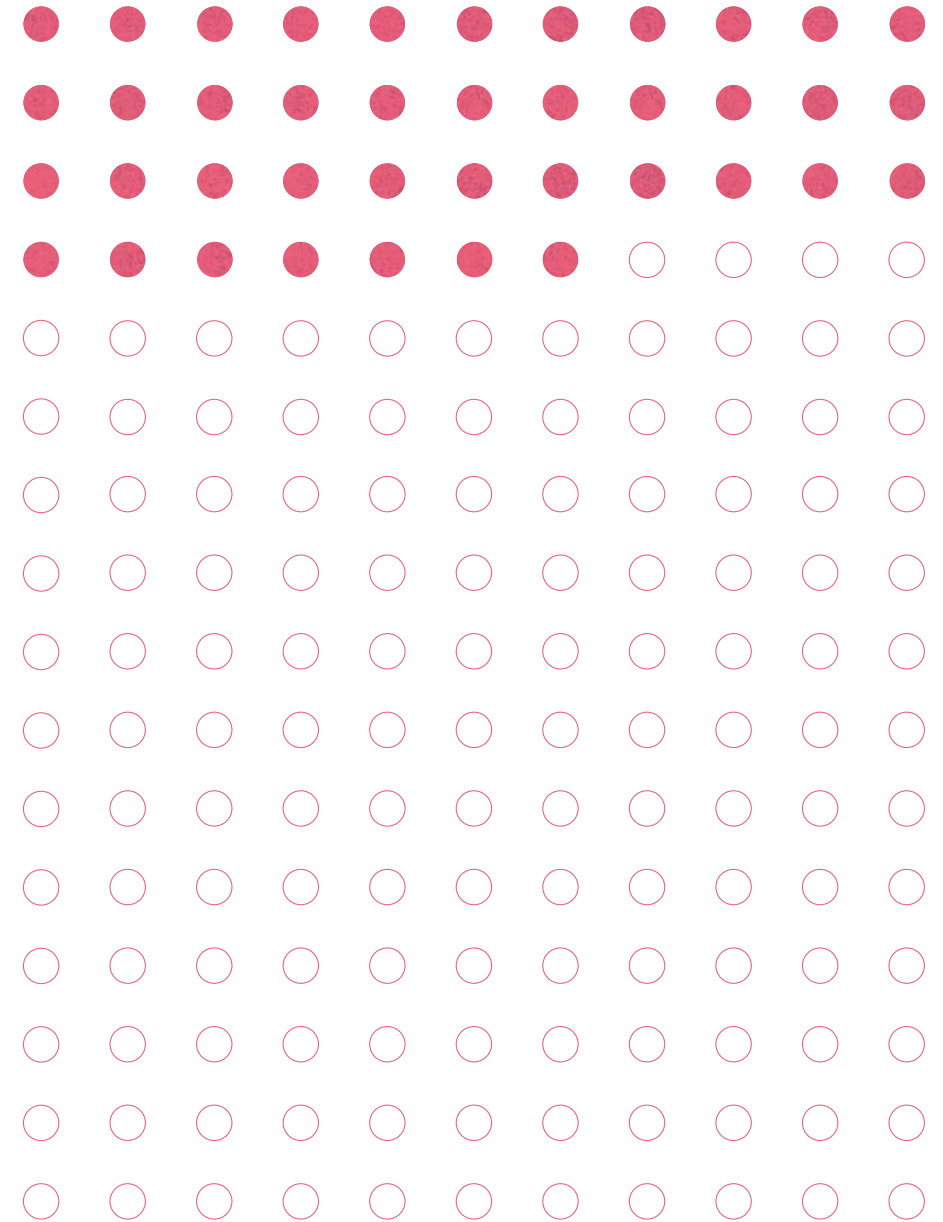> Guido Lacet, teacher at Sint Willibrordus school

Figure: Four million Dutch people do not have access to digital technology or do not have the basic skills they need to participate in the information society, even at a basic level.

Research and discovery

Our society is built on a foundation of knowledge and ideas. We have increasingly more, and increasingly more diverse, resources to help us explore and discover our world. But information can also be transient. It is not always easy to verify the source or the reliability of information and truth seems to be more fluid than ever before. Scientists are pushing back the boundaries of our knowledge. But we are all researchers in our own way. We are strengthening the connection between research and society, for inquisitive people of all ages.

Our ambitions for 2026
1. To strengthen the connection between research and society.
2. To make our collection a source of amazement and inspiration.

Who are we doing this for?
- Young people up to 18 years.
- Anyone who is interested in heritage and/or doing their own research.
- Journalists, teachers and other professionals.
- Students and researchers in the social sciences and humanities.

Who are we doing this with?
- Academic institutions.
- University libraries and universities.
- Heritage institutions.
- Universities of applied sciences and art academies.
- Researchers.
- Creators (artists, designers, writers, poets, singers, programme makers, theatre makers, etc.)
- Culture-lovers who want to know more about, and be inspired by, the KB collection.

Strengthening the connection between research and society

The KB supports a wide range of services for anyone who is eager to find out more: from children giving their first presentation to people conducting research in computational humanities. The KB can help you find anything that is published in the Netherlands, in any field. In addition, we are, and have always been, here to assist researchers in social sciences and humanities. We have a gigantic dataset of Dutch books, newspapers and journals specifically for researchers in these fields. This dataset forms the backbone of the large-scale infrastructure for social sciences and humanities.

As an academic institution that reaches a broad user group, the KB fulfils an important role by connecting researchers and scientific information to people who want to put academic research to good use. The KB is actively involved in developments around 'open science', whereby academic research is not only visible to other researchers and academics, but also made available to society, trade and industry. We are also helping to set up a large-scale social science infrastructure. In this way, we are contributing to a society in which people are more able to deal with the diverse, and sometimes contradictory, volumes of information and stories that are available to them. Our collections are a source of amazement and inspiration, and give everyone the chance to discover that there are various ways of looking at the world.

What are we going to do?

Strengthen the connection between research and society
Information skills

To conduct research, a person has to be media and digitally literate so that they can search for, refer to and use resources. A competent digital citizen can actively, skilfully and discerningly find their way around in the information society. People who have mastered these skills will feel more at ease in today's society. The KB and its partners are trying to establish what is known as 'a continuous learning pathway to information skills'. This pathway starts at an early age, when children give their first school presentations, or work on the first project for which they need to consult sources. It is important to be able to refer to these sources (digital literacy) and develop the information skills that will eventually lead to innovative, ground-breaking research.

> **"No knowledge without reading, and without knowledge, no motivation to acquire new insight or ask critical questions."**
>
> Nienke de Jong en Wibe Balt, history teacher trainers

We are all researchers
Everyone in the Netherlands is entitled to access to academic knowledge and has the right to conduct their own research. In partnership with the university libraries, other research institutes and the public libraries, we are exploring ways to make academic information available to everyone in the Netherlands. The information systems that will be used are based on open standards. We are contributing to developments regarding 'open knowledge maps' and the 'open knowledge base'. Our search domain is to be updated to allow everyone better access to academic publications and digitised collections.

The KB is continually improving freely available services, such as Delpher and the Digital Library for Dutch Literature (DBNL), and expanding them by adding new collections. Delpher provides access to millions of digitised pages of books, newspapers and journals, making it an indispensable resource in all types of research in socialscience and humanities. DBNL is a digital collection of texts from Dutch literature, linguistics and cultural history, from the earliest times to the present day. The collection encompasses the entire Dutch language field. We are also working to improve access to our digitised special collections, which include medieval manuscripts. We will be developing search

instructions and offering customised help to allow people to find their way around our information resources and services in the forthcoming years. Citizen science is a new trump card that can help to strengthen the connection between research and society even further. It is a form of academic research in which citizens play an active role. In the ongoing development of this movement, we are working with partners including the up-and-coming Citizen Science Network and the public libraries.

> **"At the core of every person is a researcher who applies scientific methods to their own life."**
>
> Robbert Dijkgraaf, Minister of Education, Culture and Science

Supporting research in the fields of social sciences and humanities
We not only support university researchers and students by providing Delpher, DBNL, and an online search domain, but we also provide them with a number of specialised services. We are updating the Dutch Bibliography: the online and freely accessible overview of all books, journals and newspapers published by Dutch publishers. This information is an important resource for academic research.

We make our works as freely available as possible. Work protected by copyright or privacy-sensitive items are kept securely and are only lent to researchers to read in the reading rooms. This applies to both printed and digitised publications. We are working to improve research opportunities for collections in our web archive. We are also exploring the possibilities of analysing sensitive data while the owner of the data retains full control. These developments should give users more options for researching the publications in our digital repository.

As well as investing in smart services, the KB is also investing in access to raw data. Making datasets available to professional researchers creates more opportunities for research in the field of computational (digital) humanities. Interest in these datasets is also growing in other academic disciplines, such as social sciences and computer sciences, and our datasets are becoming increasingly useful for research into and about artificial intelligence. In order to stimulate and simplify the use of our datasets, the KB intends to improve its range of data services over the next few years.

The KB will also do this as part of the Common Lab Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities (CLARIAH): a joint project aiming to develop a digital infrastructure for research in the fields of computational social science and humanities. In the next few years our work in CLARIAH will also entail working with ODISSEI: the open-data infrastructure for social science and economic innovations. This partnership makes it easier for users to access datasets from different collection management institutions. One of the tools used by the KB is a 'corpus selection tool', which makes it easier for researchers to compile their own datasets. In addition, we want to simplify the use (and re-use) of data via a so-called 'linked data environment', which links information from diverse sources.

We support researchers in the use of our datasets by providing them with a separate area in the reading room. The KB compiles instructions for researchers, offers them customised help and works with the local and thematic Digital Competence Centres (DCCs), which assist researchers conducting computational research. Together with these centres, we are contributing to the national research infrastructure and in the forthcoming period, we intend to play an active part in the European Open Science Cloud (EOSC). The EOSC aims to create a web of 'FAIR' data. FAIR stands for: findable, accessible, interoperable and reusable.

Providing professional researchers with access to datasets increases opportunities for research in the field of computational (digital) humanities.

Making our collection a source of amazement and inspiration
Digital amazement
Our collections reflect people's imagination and form a bridge between the past and the present. Stories are a means of uniting people; offering opportunities to explore is a way of fuelling people's curiosity and making life more interesting. Augmented and virtual reality applications bring the value of heritage to life. The KB is offering more and more of its collection via Wikimedia, which allows it to be reused freely. Together with our partners in the Digital Heritage Network, we are working on a new version of geheugenvannederland.nl. The idea is to find a user-friendly way of offering linked digital collections from various organisations. This will encourage creative reuse of heritage collections, in line with the Faro Convention drawn up by the Council of Europe in 2005. This convention states that wherever possible, heritage should contribute to human well-being and to mutual understanding between people and populations.

Public programming
As well as serving as a resource for and source of research, we want our collections to be part of the social dialogue. In order to do this, knowledge of the collections is shared via publications, lectures and media appearances. Items from the collections are also loaned to institutions within and outside the Netherlands. The KB encourages creators, writers and thinkers to explore the collection and impart their perspective.

Apart from the role we play in promoting reading, consulting and research, over the next few years we also want to encourage a more diverse visitor group to come to our building in The Hague. We will do this by developing an alternating programme of activities and by opening our doors to partners who wish to organise public events together with us in our building. Experimenting with public programming, on our own and together with partners, will show us what works and what doesn't. The KB will work alongside partners from the cultural sector, creative industry, the media and institutes of higher education. Enticing more public into our building will bring more of the Dutch population into contact with our collections, and help us to stay in touch with what is going on at the grass roots level. Throwing open the KB doors for visitors and partners will also help to ensure that our services (physical and digital) correspond with the needs of our users.

Sustainable access
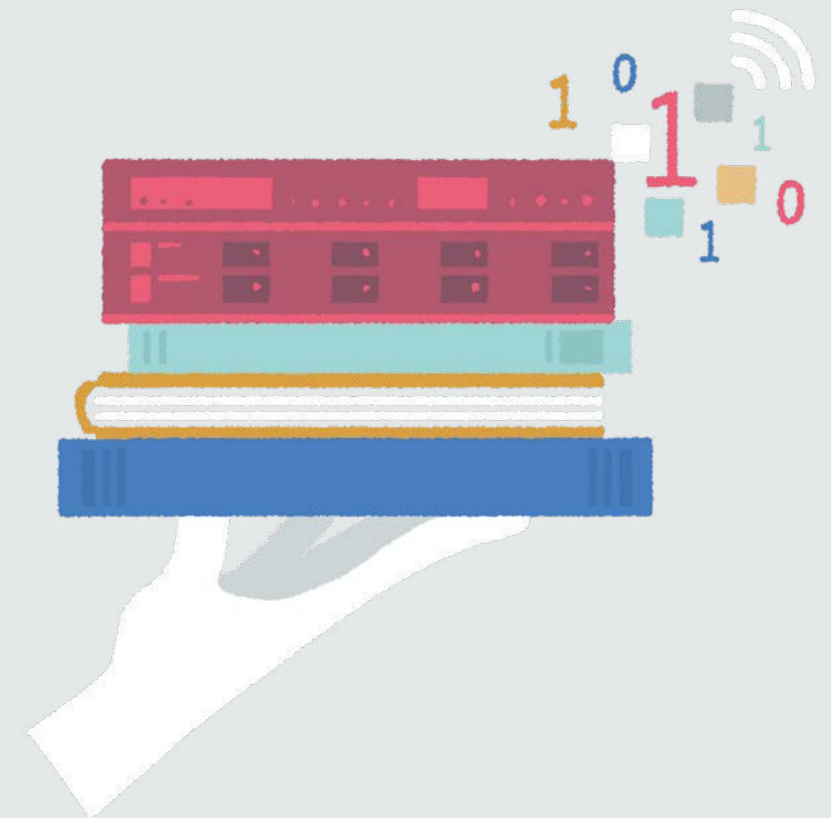
Words form the source of innumerable stories about the past and the present day. They are not only printed in books, newspapers and journals, but (increasingly) published in digital form. Today's online publication is tomorrow's digital heritage. Our current websites will give future generations a glimpse of life in the 21st century, just like medieval manuscripts help us to understand the world as it was many centuries ago. Words allow you to travel through time.

Managing the national library collection

As the National Library of the Netherlands, the KB stores as much as possible of everything that is published in or about the Netherlands, so that our knowledge will be preserved for future generations. We compile and catalogue the collections, making sure that they are optimally available to man and machine. This statutory task of managing the national library collection is laid down in the Higher Education and Research Act (WHW). The KB has been storing the so-called depot collection since 1974. These items are not given out on loan, but may be consulted. The collection of Dutch publications from before 1974 is incomplete, but can be supplemented on the basis of collections from other heritage libraries in the Netherlands and abroad. The KB's ambition is to link all these publications digitally, so that they will jointly form the national library collection. All the publications ever published are recorded in the National Bibliography. We try to fill any gaps in our collection through targeted acquisition to enrich our national library collection and make it more diverse.

But we don't preserve all this heritage on our own; we are helped by the National Archive, Sound and Vision, the Cultural Heritage Agency, the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences and other relevant parties. Thanks to funding from the Ministry of Culture, Education and Science, we can work from within the Digital Heritage Network to implement the National Digital Heritage Strategy. The aim of this strategy is to maximise the societal value of digital collections. We are also working with international partners to learn about preserving material that is published now for future generations.

What are we going to do?

Develop the collection
Developing a collection is an active choice. Conscious, well-argued decisions are made about what should and what should not be preserved, and in which form. The KB has opted to preserve as much as possible, as we cannot possibly know what may become important at a later date. The collection must ultimately reflect the era, the culture and the society during which it was compiled. We set out our principles for developing the collection in a strategic collection plan. Together with the university libraries, we also draw up a joint collection plan for preserving relevant academic digital publications. We have a joint collection plan with the public libraries with which we are able to align the use of physical and digital collections belonging to public libraries.

We collect as much material published in or about the Netherlands as possible, so that our knowledge of the world will be preserved for future generations.

> "To me, the beauty of science is the twinkling of ideas. […] In centuries to come, someone might look at my text and think: what was that woman thinking when she wrote this? That idea takes my breath away."
>
> Ineke Sluiter, former president of the Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences

A collection as a reflection of the Netherlands past and present
The KB collection reflects the choices of people past and present. Some voices are traditionally louder than others. Work by women, work originating from former Dutch colonies, and texts written within marginalised communities are still under-represented. We aim to remedy this by actively looking for more diversity in our collections.

Digital at the forefront
In the years to come, the KB will continue its endeavour to preserve digitised and born-digital collections. The latter means digital newspapers, journals and books, and websites. In the Netherlands, everyone is free to publish. Alongside traditional printing, social media, websites and internet forums have become primary publication platforms. In order to ensure that the KB collection continues to form a good reflection of Dutch society, we have agreed within the Digital Heritage Network which forms of digital publications should be preserved, and by whom.

The huge variety in forms of publications makes it impossible to collect everything. That is why the KB has decided to store just one form of any publication in the depot, preferably digitally. We are opting to collect more different works, rather than copies of the same work in multiple forms. In terms of printed publications, we mainly acquire additions to our special collections; publications that we missed in the past and works that differ in form or content from material that we already have.

The fact that there is simply too much to store constitutes new challenges for the KB. How, for example, should we deal with 'augmented publications', whereby documents have been supplemented with other material, such as research data, images or audio material? Which information published digitally should we store for the future?

This requires a statutory basis as heritage institutions may not copy public onlinepublications such as websites in order to store them, without the permission of the copyright owner. The Institute for Information Law recently explored the possibilities for web harvesting. Their recommendations need to be put into legislation before we can continue to fulfil our task.

> "In 2020, the number of digital bytes was 40 times greater than the number of stars in the universe as we know it."
>
> Sven Lieber, researcher

Sustainable access through digitisation

Digitisation provides access to printed work, irrespective of time and place. The KB is not only opening up its own collections by digitising them, but also other material that has appeared in the Netherlands. We publish digitised material via Delpher and the Digital Library of Dutch Literature. Delpher, for example, includes material from over one hundred heritage institutions. Metamorfoze is the name under which we digitise printed heritage: books, newspapers, journals, archives and collections. We mainly focus on the gaps in our digital collections of books, newspapers and journals, but give special attention to the digitisation of unique items, such as medieval manuscripts. The principles of the digital heritage reference framework apply when providing access to material that was digitised using Metamorfoze resources. This basically means that items are given an unchangeable web address (a 'persistent identifier' or PID), are linked to a network of terms ('linked data') and are assigned sustainable access.

Processing collections

We know a lot about our collections and how we register them, whether physical or digital, and we are keen to share this knowledge. Processing the collections efficiently and to a high standard means that they will be retrievable both now and in the future. Our processing and storage strategy is based on the so-called 'life cycle' of collections, both data and metadata.

The National Bibliography

As a National Library, the KB is responsible for the National Bibliography. The National Bibliography grants access to reliable information about all Dutch publications ever published. We are currently in the process of making the National Bibliography and its predecessor, the ShortTitle Catalogue of the Netherlands, more complete and more suitable for use by a range of target groups.

85%

Until 1900
499.897
titles

43%

1900 - 1939
248.876
titles

14%

1940 - 1959
202.881
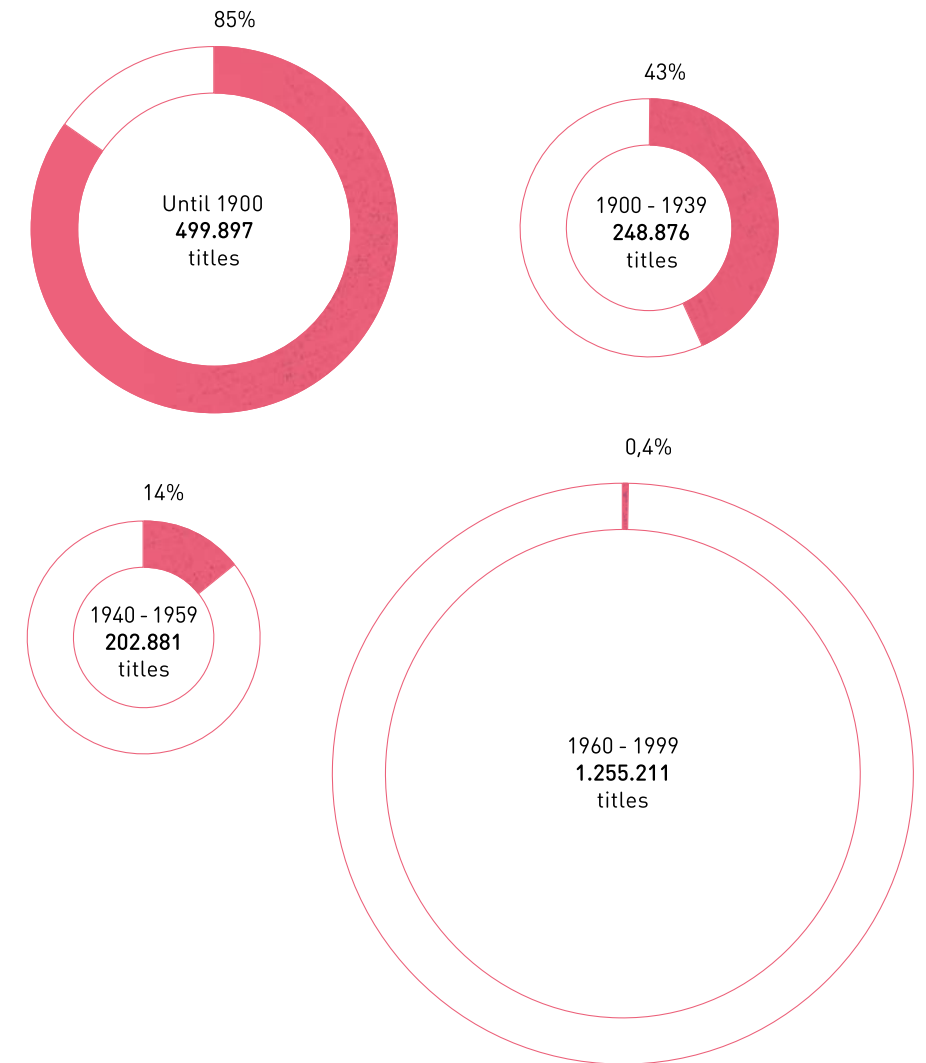titles

0,4%

1960 - 1999
1.255.211
titles

Figure: Digitisation provides access to printed work, irrespective of time and place. A large proportion of older Dutch titles has already been digitised.

Digitised
Not yet digitised

Future-proof registration

Over 55,000 printed and digital items are catalogued every year. These are additions to the national library collection and special collections. The KB also registers around 40,000 editions of journals. In the course of the last policy period, the KB took the first steps in the transition to a new collection registration system. Over the past forty years, a large proportion of Dutch libraries worked together in a national system with local standards. However, the majority of libraries have now switched to international systems with international standards. There is still a long way to go before the KB can complete this transition. The registration system forms the basis for important innovations, such as modelling metadata to new standards, which will enable the use of 'linked data'. We share expertise about the use of the new standards with our partners.

> ## "As a cataloguer, I form a bridge between the publication and the user."
> Saskia van Renswoude, catalogue assistant at the KB

The importance of data and metadata

The services provided by the KB are continually changing. User requirements change over the years and so we must also change the way we work and process and store data. We increasingly need to reuse content, or provide a different kind of access to it, in order to meet the specific needs of users or new services. Providing raw data for research purposes is a good example, or linking our own content to that of others in our network ('linked data').

Collection management and preservation
Managing the physical collection

One of the biggest milestones in the forthcoming policy period is preparing for the move to our new book repository in the Harnaschpolder. We need a new repository because the current building no longer has the space needed to store our ever-growing physical collection. The new repository will be a secure, long-term storage facility. The repository will be almost fully automated, operated by a robot system. The millions of books, newspapers and journals will be kept in low-oxygen conditions, making a fire impossible. The sheer mass of the building and the collection stored within will reduce the effects of the outside climate, dispensing with the need for active temperature and humidity regulation inside. Solar panels will ensure that the building is energy-neutral.

The collection is being cleaned in preparation for the move, we are making sure that we will be able to find everything after the move, fragile items are being packed in custom-made packaging and damaged items are being repaired. The upkeep of the current building until the move, the construction of the new book repository and the preparation to move the collection, will all require a huge effort, both from KB staff and from our partners.

Managing the digital collection

Alongside safeguarding our physical collection, we are also working on a new digital repository, in which we will store the first influx of collections in 2023. We have already set up the new digital repository and we plan to move the current digital collections in the near future. From now on, all new collections from publishers and other suppliers will be stored here.

The new digital repository will bring an end to the disjointed way in which our digital collections have been stored up until now. We are working on aligning our physical and digital collections with regard to the Levels of (digital) Preservation, this entails safeguarding the authenticity and integrity of the collections and maintaining their sustainable access.

The digital repository will be re-assessed in 2024 for the CoreTrustSeal quality mark awarded to the KB in 2021. As the preparations for the move, the move itself and the aftermath will take years, we will keep the current digital repository going for as long as we need to.

Practical, available and connected

A collection only really comes to life if lots of people make use of it. The KB collection can be divided into two: a collection for preservation (the depot and the special collections) and a collection mainly intended for use now. The collection intended for current use mainly comprises digital licences granting access to material covered by copyright. This collection also includes books loaned from other libraries: the so-called interlibrary loans. Swapping information with other academic and public libraries means that we can provide joint access to the Dutch library collection.

Sustainable access and usability

As a hub for libraries in the Digital Heritage Network, we are keen to link library collections so that we can increase their societal value.

We are also doing our bit in this respect by developing and implementing our vision on 'linked data'. In order to connect our collections with other collections, we use stable access systems to connect the content of our information with other information ('linked data'). We are working with other libraries to connect information about the collections by applying new techniques, international standards and data modelling. Active and substantive data management is a condition for ensuring that our collections are available for use by man and machine, both now and in the future.

Dealing correctly with copyright holders forms an important part of ensuring that people can use our collections. We work on the premise that anything in the public domain must remain in the public domain. We want everyone to have access to as many items as possible, as freely as possible, while taking account of the maker's entitlement to copyright. In the next few years, we will develop applications to assign data and metadata to publications; this will make it easier for a wider, more diverse public to find books in libraries. We will do this by using artificial intelligence, which we will use responsibly, developing applications in which human evaluations and automatic pattern recognition are complementary and compatible. The user will always be in control. These applications will enable us to generate better, more detailed data and metadata, which will in turn contribute to inclusive, easy-access services.

Information and technology
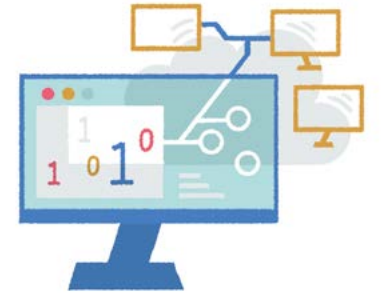
Digitisation is changing society. In addition to the physical space, we are also witnessing the emergence of a digital space, which is affecting more and more aspects of our lives. People, data and infrastructures are becoming increasingly intertwined. This increases the application opportunities, but also the complexity.

Since 2000, around 100,000 people came to the KB's physical location every year. In addition, some five million people have used one or more of our digital services. As one of the biggest public digital organisations in the Netherlands, the KB has a huge responsibility. We have a responsibility to be permanently aware of the public value of our information facility and our digital services, and to act accordingly. In all our activities, we pay heed to privacy, the climate and digital security, including in our choice of suppliers. Together with the university libraries, we have laid down our vision on public values and the role that libraries play in this. With other public parties, such as PublicSpaces, the public broadcasting services, Kennisnet and the SURF Cooperation, we are arguing the case for public access to information and public control of digitisation.

Information networks are becoming increasingly connected, and the KB wants to play a positive role in this. However, we are also aware of the flip-side of digital developments, such as the creation of bubbles on social media as a result of algorithms, violations of privacy, the abundance of information (which makes it difficult to separate the wheat from the chaff) and increasing polarisation between those with good digital skills and those without. The KB does not develop or use information, or applications based on information, which actively try to manipulate the way people think or behave. We are also aware of the cost of certain digital applications to the environment.

Digital is not a sideline activity for the KB, or something that we do in a specific department; it is a part of our core business and as such, impacts on every aspect of our organisation.

Our ambitions for 2026
1. To constantly improve our information facility.
2. To promote cohesion and play an active part in the digital infrastructures that connect us with our networks.
3. To protect the data of the people and objects for whom/which we are responsible.

What are we going to do?

Continually improve our information facility
Digital is inextricably bound up with almost all of the activities at the KB. If we are to work effectively and enjoy our work in a digitising environment, we must continually adapt to our ever-changing surroundings. Flexibility is important: agile teams manage and develop our information facility, always ready to respond to the latest developments. The 'DevOps'method involves integrating people, processes and technology in order to provide a constant high standard to our customers. The teams that are responsible for development, IT, quality and security work alongside each other rather than against each other. An 'ITroadmap' is used to translate strategic goals into bite-sized chunks of work. A portfolio management system is being set up to coordinate the strategic goals with the work carried out within the various teams. We make a careful selection of the digital services we manage and maintain ourselves, and the services we prefer to contract out.

Promote cohesion and collaborate in networks
The KB's ITinfrastructure is part of a network of information facilities: commercial, public and community-based. The KB tries to bring as much cohesion as possible to these networks. KBarchitecture is allied to the Dutch Government Reference Architecture (NORA), the Higher Education Reference Architecture (HORA) and the Digital Heritage Reference Architecture (DERA).

The KB is working with parties in the public library domain to realise a Collective Public Library Reference Architecture (COBRA). This will improve and simplify the process of exchanging information. We are a member of the SURF Cooperation: an initiative in which universities, universities of applied sciences, vocational training colleges, university medical centres and research institutes work together to purchase or develop the best possible digital services and to stimulate knowledge-sharing through continuous innovation.

In addition to its COBRA activities, the KB and the local public libraries have drawn up an information plan promoting cohesion in the information facilities of public libraries, including the ongoing development of the national digital infrastructure. The KB endorses the principles of the Distributed Web, whereby data is kept by the party owning the resource and linked via standards. In a promising move, important parts of the Digital Heritage Network have been incorporated into the Common Lab Research Infrastructure for the Arts and Humanities (CLARIAH). This infrastructure, which has been under construction for over ten years, is providing researchers with increasingly more opportunities and benefiting increasingly more uses.

The KB makes use of public facilities. The KB stores data, for example, in the Government Data Centre in Apeldoorn. A lot of basic services are purchased from the SURF Cooperation, and we are an active partner in PublicSpaces: a partnership of diverse public organisations that is trying to make society less dependent on big techcompanies and their platforms. We also follow initiatives such as Solid ('social linked data'): an international project that returns data into the hands of the parties that produced it (data sovereignty).

"I have always believed that the internet is there for everyone. That is why I'm fighting so hard with others to protect it."
Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the World Wide Web

Security
The opportunities created by digitisation are evident, but the threat level is growing. For the KB as a public organisation, the security of its digital collections and the personal data of its users are paramount. Procedures and processes such as raising awareness within the organisation are a structural priority. The Government information security baseline is the framework of basic standards used for this. We take part in joint cyber crisis drills (OZON) and devise policy to reduce the digital vulnerability of our services and platforms.

Organisation and development

Having a 225-year history is no guarantee for the future. Quite rightly, the KB must continually prove its worth. New ways to organise things and work together are constantly emerging, and this affects the expectations of our users, partners and staff. The KB works with network partners because we believe that we will go further together than we would on our own, and because the social challenges go beyond the boundaries of the organisation. Taking responsibility means recognising the negative effects of climate change and taking action to help reduce it.

In addition to tasks in the domains of science and heritage, in 2015 the KB was given a role relating to the public libraries. The KB has been in a state of flux ever since: societal value became the main theme, the pace of digital developments within the organisation accelerated and the focus on purpose-driven working in network partnerships changed the way that everyone worked.

Our ambitions for 2026
1. To make the KB the National Library for all Dutch people.
2. To bring about purpose and development-driven collaboration.
3. To be a flexible, resilient organisation.
4. To ensure that the accommodation keeps the collection safe and helps us to perform our tasks.
5. To help reduce the negative effects of climate change.

What are we going to do?

Making the KB the National Library for all Dutch people
In 2021, the digital services of the KB alone reached over 35% of the Dutch population. This makes us very proud. We aim to provide services that meet people's needs, and work alongside our network partners on important social tasks. In everything we do, we never lose sight of the fact that everyone is different: we want to be inclusive, in our activities as a National Library and in our workforce. When we say that words connect people, we mean all words and all people.

Bringing about purpose and development-driven collaboration
In the past few years, we have experimented with new ways of working that are better suited to a complex, dynamic environment. It has been a process of trial and error: we are learning as we go along, by keeping an open, inquisitive mind. Extra attention is being paid to the aspects of digital transformation that are needed to equip the KB for the task ahead in a dynamic, ever-changing outside world. Our organisation needs to keep pace, so change is not only unavoidable, but sometimes sweeping and painful. Breaking patterns means saying farewell to working methods that feel tried and trusted. But the ultimate aim of all this change is to ensure that the KB continues to be an organisation where people are proud and happy to work.

Figure: In 2021, the digital services of the KB alone reached over 35% of the Dutch population.

35%
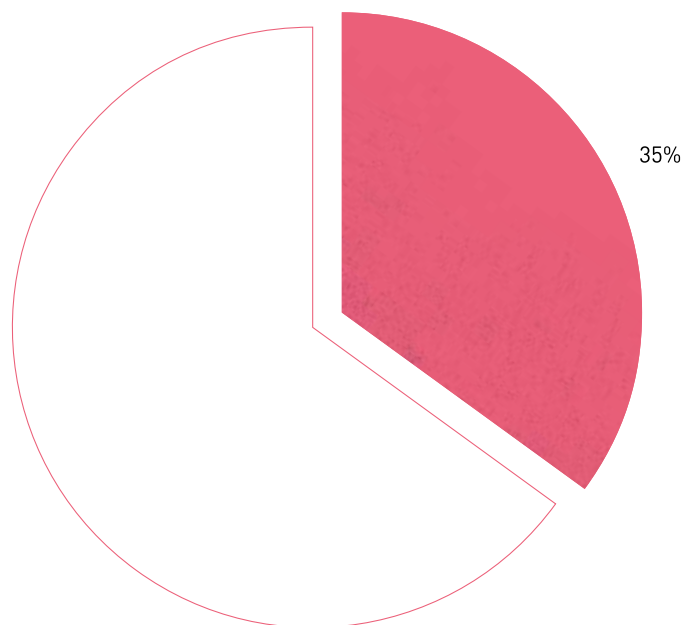
As well as working with our national and international partners, we also want to learn from them. Here in the Netherlands, we are exploring the possibilities and limitations of artificial intelligence within the Cultural AIlab, which has been approved by the Netherlands AI Coalition. Future explorations within the library sector are being carried out with the Future Libraries Lab, set up in association with TU Delft. We exchange international knowledge and experience with national libraries organisations, such as the Conference of European National Librarians and the Conference of Directors of National Libraries, and libraries in general, such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and the Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche (LIBER).

System tasks
In 2020, the government, the provincial authorities, the municipal authorities and the Dutch public libraries, signed the 2020-2023 Library Agreement. The libraries (KB, SPN Foundation and the Association of Public Libraries) and the government bodies agreed to jointly focus on three major social tasks: a literate society, participation in the information society and lifelong learning. The Cabinet has promised structural extra investments in public libraries: a decision that is sending an important message.

We are writing a management plan for the tasks we undertake in this respect, which specifically details the tasks of the KB in the public library domain. We have attached it to this policy plan as an appendix.

A network agenda has been compiled every year since the Agreement was signed, setting out how the network partners will work together on the joint goals, each with their own tasks and responsibilities. We are working towards a new agreement in the forthcoming policy period. The KB contributes to achieving social goals through its activities for the national digital public library and for modified reading. In addition, the KB has what is known as 'system responsibility' for the public libraries and coordinates the public library network in this capacity. The KB is itself a partner in the network in its role as the national digital public library. For example, in order to show how the system is progressing, the KB has a Data Warehouse, which is used as the basis for supplying the annual data and setting the lending fees.

Supporting our people and strengthening our organisation
<u>People</u>
If we are to achieve our goals, it is important to be able to recruit and retain the right people. The KB wants to be a good, attractive employer, for both permanent and temporary staff. So one of our priorities is to provide a pleasant working environment in which people feel appreciated and experience commitment.

Our position on the job market and staff recruitment will be high on our agenda in the years to come, particularly with regard to IT positions. We intend to introduce a few plus factors that will make us stand out: our social mission and impact, the diverse nature of our work, the vast developmental prospects, and the potential for staff to find a good life/work balance. We are continuing our efforts to develop into a less hierarchical organisation, with more purpose-driven self-organisation and appropriate decision-making in multidisciplinary teams. This includes a greater focus on learning on the job, and for the development of the new forms of leadership, formal and informal, required for purpose-driven working in a complex environment. As far as we are concerned, an inquisitive, development-driven mindset and the ability to connect are essential for all of us.

The KB is there for everyone in the Netherlands and for all Dutch people. This is why it is important that our workforce is as diverse as Dutch society itself. We are working hard to achieve this, in the same way that we want to give all voices a place in our collection. Every employee must be able to use their professional qualities and fulfil their potential, regardless of age, qualifications, gender, sexual orientation, cultural background and disabilities.

> ## "The KB rocks.
> ## Albeit cautiously."
> A KB customer

Reinforce the business operations
The way that an organisation works is just as important as what it does. Doing good things (being effective), and doing them well (being efficient), requires capable business operations, so that opportunities can be capitalised upon. But limitations are clear. Ensuring that the Netherlands becomes smarter, more skilled and more creative every day is a human task, and we are protective of our people. The KB is preparing to comply with new legislation that will affect the way we work, such as the Open Government Act. We are very aware of our surroundings and pay active attention to both the risks and the opportunities. Acquisition is a major part of the KB's business operations. As a public organisation, the KB makes optimal use of the available resources, while taking legitimacy, effectiveness and the climate into account.

Financial overview and other organisation figures
We publish various organisational perspectives on www.kb.nl/beleid, including a financial overview, annual reports and an organogram. As these elements are more dynamic than a four-yearly policy plan, up-to-date versions are published there more regularly.

Accommodation
Our current building is unsuitable for future use and so in 2017, we made the decision to move. We also took this opportunity to physically split the repository on the one hand, and the public areas and offices on the other. After the move, over 3.5 million books, 650,000 magazine binders and over 100,000 newspaper binders will be sustainably stored in a new physical repository in the Harnaschpolder, just outside The Hague. Preparations for the move will continue throughout the plan period, i.e. from 2023 to 2026. In 2026, a start will be made on actually moving our collection, an operation that is expected to take two years. For this reason, we need the current building to remain a safe place for our visitors, staff and collections until mid-2028. This asks daily care and attention on the part of our staff, and comes at a financial cost to our future. The digital collections will be moved and stored in the government data centre in Apeldoorn over the next few years.

"We shape our buildings, thereafter they shape us," said Winston Churchill about the English House of Commons. This is certainly our expectation of the new main building, which will be built in a central location in The Hague, yet to be announced. People will visit the location to consult our collections, particularly collections with a material value or which are unavailable in digital form. At the same time, the building will be a place where we can develop new creative opportunities to interact with the collection and each other, through public programming. We want it to be a place where we - together with visitors and partners - celebrate the importance of all those stories, of knowledge and imagination, of freedom of expression and of personal development. A place where we build on history, where opinions and perspectives are allowed to clash, where we fill the gaps in our collective memory, and where words connect people on their way to a shared future. It is essential that the National Library literally provides room for these ambitions. The new building will be an iconic house, standing for the vitality of words in our society.

> ## "National Libraries are, almost by default, visible, prominent, central. Key parts of the landscape of national institutions and very often also architectural icons in their environment."
> Barbara Lison, President of the International Federation of Libraries (IFLA)

Climate action
In the foreword and in Chapter 2, we referred to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). A number of these goals have direct links with the work of the KB. These are the goals that focus on fighting inequality, promoting literacy and science, and improving public access to information. As well as these social goals, there are also 'green goals'. The KB is working hard for goal 13: Climate action. Our staff do this individually, and we do it together as an organisation. We are already making good progress with regard to mobility, thanks to our location close to the main station in The Hague and our efforts to encourage cycling, but we also want to take steps in other areas, such as purchasing, sorting waste and energy consumption. We want to contribute to the Paris climate agreement and the Netherlands' ambition to be circular by 2050. Apart from behaving correctly, we also want to use our position in society to help combat the negative effects of climate change during the next policy period.

Concluding notes

We are currently working at the boundaries of our knowledge and capabilities as an organisation: we work hard, on the basis of solid plans. We don't make new plans every four years simply 'because that's what we do': it is an ongoing process. We are determined to keep improving as an organisation, to learn from past mistakes and from the results of experiments. Words connect people. This is true both now and in the future. We don't yet know precisely how, but we are preparing ourselves as well as we can. The path to provide societal value, as set out by our network partners, will continue, but the route will inevitably vary. Uncertainty brings both risks and opportunities; this can be tense, but it can also be adventurous and exciting. We are ready and looking forward to joining our partners in taking on the tasks and challenges awaiting us, both now and in the future.