



PEB Exchange, Programme on Educational Building 1999/14

School Libraries  
in the Information Society

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<https://dx.doi.org/10.1787/444055024620>

## SCHOOL LIBRARIES IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY

PEB and the Ministry of Education of Portugal brought together 67 library and resource centre professionals, policy makers, educators and information technology specialists from 21 countries around the theme "Designing Schools for the Information Society: Libraries and Resource Centres". The seminar, held in Portugal in June 1999, addressed how the growing use of information technology and the move toward schools as community learning centres are affecting the demand for and use of space in educational institutions, with particular reference to changes which promote lifelong learning and the creation of the information society. PEB will publish a report by John Mayfield on the conclusions of the seminar. Below are excerpts from some of the presentations.

### Australia

*The presentation by Tim Sandercock, manager of Education Services and Community Development at Delfin, focused on two projects in Australia associated with large urban developments. The theme of his presentation "The Library – An Endangered Species or the New Heart of a Community" demonstrated how he is working with education service providers in planning new models and partnerships.*

The society changes challenging the old education models are important to restate as they are the reasons why we are looking at new models of delivery:

### Education in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

- Focused on children.
- Information sourced from books.
- Predominantly funded by government.
- Preparatory stage before work.
- Only available in special places (schools).
- Took place at special times.
- Only available from special people (teachers).
- Conventional technology (chalk).
- Assessment and accreditation local.
- Providers independent and competitive.
- Work place practices embedded.

### Education Tomorrow

- Focuses on all ages, everyone in the community is a learner.
- Information digital technology – computers/Internet accessible to all, "Information Age".
- New funding **partnerships** between providers and those organisations requiring education services.
- **Lifelong** process – seamless, ongoing.
- Increasingly become available in the home and the workplace as well as special places – "**anywhere**".
- Education on demand **anytime**.
- Less teacher centred, learner controlled.
- New technologies – rapid change occurring in information and communication technology.
- Assessment and accreditation **national/international**.
- Providers collaborating and co-operating and sharing.
- Work place practices diversifying.

Over the years in Australia we have seen the evolution of the school/community library – a bringing together of both school and community services – usually housed in the school and strongly driven by the sound economics of it. We believe that these new school library models will become "The Heart of the New Community".

### Caroline Springs

Caroline Springs is located 22 kilometres west of Melbourne, Australia's second largest city of three million people. The site is 800 hectares in area and will eventually accommodate 25 000 people in 8 000 dwellings. The scale of the project and the holistic planning approach provide opportunities for the project to accept innovative approaches to the delivery of service and facilities. Three major activity centres are proposed. The first village planned incorporates the Brookside Centre.

The Brookside Centre will provide a range of community facilities and education services. The community facilities are located around the town square. The multimedia centre (library) is the major focus. It will provide the multimedia information technology (IT) services for the community: information data, processing, Internet and interactive communication.

### Mawson Lakes

Mawson Lakes is located 12 kilometres north of Adelaide, a city of approximately one million people. The site will integrate 3 000 new dwellings with an

existing campus of a university and an existing technology park. At the heart of Mawson Lakes education facilities will be the Mawson Centre, a learning and information centre focused on educational, information and community services.

The Mawson Centre will be a resource information centre providing knowledge, ideas and opportunities. It will symbolise the learning focus of the new community. The Centre will provide a variety of services and facilities (educational, information, community and commercial) and include information shop-fronts for universities, TAFE and other educational providers, a research information centre linked to the University of South Australia and Technology Park, private training providers, a community library/resource centre, conference and cultural facilities, computer hardware and software retailing, IT support services as well as a bookshop and a news agency.

The Mawson Centre will also incorporate a general education information, advisory and brokerage service for all people living, working and learning at Mawson Lakes. This will provide information on the range of educational services available at Mawson Lakes and outside, including those that can be accessed directly from Mawson Lakes by on-line technology.

## Austria

*"The Learning, Information and Communication Centre in Austrian Secondary Schools" is the title of the presentation by Manfred Hinum and Johanna Hladej of the Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs.*

The LIC-type library (learning, information and communication centre) must be strategically located so as to:

- be easily accessible for both internal and external users, including people with disabilities;
- foster the integration of services and technologies into curriculum-based teaching;
- facilitate supervision;
- facilitate the delivery and distribution of resources at school.

The school library as a means of providing information, knowledge and technologies, and as a learning and reading centre, must include the following function zones to create the appropriate basis for independent research and learning:

- an information terminal with the relevant catalogues (which also contain media available outside the LIC) for search purposes in conjunction with a PC for queries;



AHS Collegium Mehrerau, Austria

A learning information and communication centre in Austria



- a library utilisation zone for lending, assistance and access to the library;
- individual workstations complete with monitors and audio equipment (in addition to those available in the training room, conference room and/or multimedia corners) for teachers, students and external users;
- a space for stocktaking where the procurement, handling, servicing and maintenance activities for all the media take place;
- a space offering all the available electronic media (may be also for hire);
- reading places (zones) that should also be suited for group work.

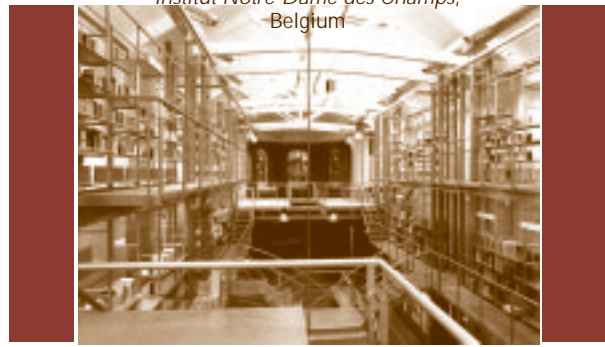
The teaching and training centre function of a LIC can be satisfied only by an appropriately equipped, well-working and networked school library with the additional provision of workstations or separate areas for:

- teaching and/or learning in groups;
- a computer and/or training room(s);
- a media workshop, possibly located in a separate room, suited for video and audio recordings, multimedia and Internet applications, video conferences, or for use as a video studio; if possible it should be located near the event zone;
- business training according to the type of school (e.g. vocational), for example a simulated centre for business administration or a "paper company" complete with office simulation (see article on training firms, p. 9);
- communication and events offering multiple options for both spontaneous and scheduled meetings, with the library and the media library forming an essential prerequisite and cornerstone for many of these activities. Here teachers and students may exchange views without any achievement pressures, motivate each other and discuss the subjects learned. In addition, the library ought to be more than a tool for work but rather a cultural and event centre providing the necessary free space for leisure and external activities.

There should be easy access to a canteen, restrooms and a cloakroom accommodating students and visitors. Part of the surface area designed for this purpose under current school room and design standards should to be moved to this area and included in planning and design.

The Federal Ministry of Education and Cultural Affairs has published a brochure on how to equip school libraries called "*Die LIZ-Schulbibliotheken*" (The LIC School Library).<sup>1</sup>

*Institut Notre-Dame des Champs,  
Belgium*



## Belgium

*Jean-Marie Moonen, Deputy Director of the Service général de garantie des infrastructures scolaires subventionnées (the department of subsidised school infrastructure in Belgium's French Community) presented the new multimedia centre at the Institut Notre-Dame des Champs in Brussels.*

As is so often the case when there is a significant advance in the area of school infrastructure, it was the unfailing determination and questioning of a headmistress that gave rise to the change. As early as 1984, she was wondering how best to harness the documentary resources of the school, which in her opinion were all too often consigned to oblivion in the school's cupboards.

A "conspicuous" place had to be found, both central and, above all, big enough to meet all the requirements of the project. One idea was to dig underneath the school's car park, but the "cellar" status allocated to what were the lungs of the school was very soon dropped. It was the chapel, for so long a place of worship, that was to be chosen to serve a different purpose: opening up to the universal nature of knowledge.

A number of ideas were formed and a consensus soon emerged. It was based, first, on budgetary considerations, and then on timing and "technical/teaching" constraints. The time taken to complete the technical studies also served to establish how the centre was to be used. The credo arrived at was the following: "Students must be able to work quite independently in the multimedia centre. Students organise their work in line with their own needs, and teachers will adapt to these needs".

Six rooms give immediately onto the multimedia centre, enabling teachers to prepare tasks and define research methods before going to the centre. To facilitate this form of management, the whole school had to be

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equipped with an internal telephone system such that, at any given time, it was possible to reserve a room and/or know where individual users were.

Teachers can, moreover, call the centre from their “ordinary” classrooms, and whatever they ask for is provided at very short notice. As a result, the “ordinary” classrooms become satellites of the centre and enrich the schools educational goals.

After a year in operation, two weaknesses are apparent:

- A problem of poor acoustics, which stem from the premises’ origins as a chapel, needs resolving.
- Constant attention needs to be paid to the coding of new entries and articles (sites, books, reviews, etc.).

## France

*“Documentation and Information Resource Centres and New Technology in France”, the presentation by Guy Pouzard, President of the Committee on Information and Communications Technologies (CITEC) at the Ministry for Education, Research and Technology covered the following topics:*

- *the role of documentation in the French education system;*
- *the creation of documentation and information resource centres in France;*
- *recent developments;*
- *the future.*

In the 18<sup>th</sup> century libraries began to appear in Jesuit colleges, and then in public *lycées* (upper secondary schools) in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The functioning of the libraries to be set up in every primary school was organised by the Order of 1 June 1862 for the duration of the Third Republic. These libraries were intended not just for pupils, but also for families and, being used mainly for lending purposes, they became the “state school popular libraries” in 1880, numbering some 43 000 by 1902. They are evidence of a strong political will to provide the population with the key elements of culture.

From the time when school libraries and then state school popular libraries were first created, the general thrust of the French education system’s “simultaneous teaching” put in place by the Guizot Act of 1930 ranked documentation as being of secondary importance. Priority was given to the transmission of knowledge, lessons and the words of the teacher – at the expense of the pupil’s development and use of documentary

resources. Initiative was not promoted, any more than responsibility or creativity. With very few exceptions, it was not until after World War II that original thinkers put forward the principles on which “new education” was based. Central libraries “were to be a place where there could be a permanent dialogue between adults and students on an equal footing, a place where advice might be given on useful reading, school work and reading for pleasure”.

The 1989 Guideline Act pointed out that documentation and information resource centres (CDIs) were designed to contribute to the renewal process and were part and parcel of the Act’s three main objectives, namely to expand the right to education, increase equality of opportunity and put pupils at the heart of the education system. The CDI is also a place where one learns responsibility; it contributes to the teaching of success and is a central part of the school. One of the aims of the Act was to ensure that every school has a CDI.

## Italy

*Paolo Benesperi, Councillor for Education, Vocational Training and Labour of the Tuscany Region, presented an exposé on the region’s network of documentation and educational resource centres, an experimental project to support lifelong learning. He gave examples of three centres.*

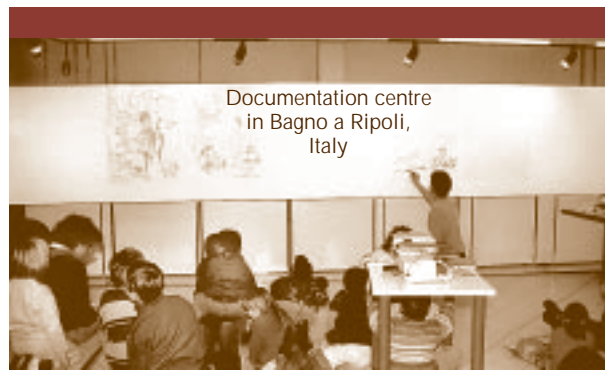
The region’s 15 resource centres are public structures created to encourage innovation, to support teaching-related research and school projects and to encourage community exchanges. Their scope of action varies – serving one community, several communities or a province – but they have a common goal: that the community co-operate in order to offer training opportunities to the entire population on a lifelong basis.

The main activities pursued are the following:

- consultation of teaching materials and related documentation;
- archiving of teaching-related research, including multimedia;
- experimental projects related to teaching the sciences;



Catia Franci resource centre in Florence, Italy



Documentation centre  
in Bagno a Ripoli,  
Italy

- training courses for teachers and others involved in education;
- community programmes with European partners;
- educational activities;
- multimedia teaching programmes.

The centres have been working in collaboration with the Tuscany Region for a number of years to network all of their archives, for a better dissemination of teaching materials throughout the area.

All of the centres are open to the community for courses outside of school hours and offer free access to their facilities and materials (archives, collections, computers and Internet).

The centres are located in schools, municipal libraries and other public buildings. Currently only a few play the role, in a small way, of computer resource centres for their area.



Computer laboratory at II Satellite in Livorno, Italy

## United Kingdom

*Clive A. J. Marsden presented a case study on the Alford Information Technology Centre in Scotland. He is the Centre's IT Manager. PEB published a report on the Centre ten years ago as part of its "Long-term Perspectives" series as Alford represented a new approach to the provision of IT in schools. The report explored through this experimental building the technical, managerial and building issues involved in the application of IT to rural secondary schools and to the communities in which they are situated.*

Alford is a rural village 24 miles west of Aberdeen in the north-east of Scotland. The Alford School is a community school with a rambling campus that includes a pre-school nursery, the primary school, the secondary school, know as Alford Academy, and Community Education that deals with adult education.

In 1986 the Alford IT Centre and Library were opened. The purpose built areas were to provide a community resource and a merged school and public library. Thirteen years later (1999) and to mark the 25 years of the Academy, an area adjacent to the library and IT Centre base was converted into a community/school resource area for information and communications technology (ICT) – known as the Jubilee Suite. The emphasis of the Jubilee Suite is the provision of ICT resources for community use and training using ICT.

Initially various issues required resolving and the pressure on space by the Academy saw a move away from the open access model that was originally envisaged. The IT Centre remains an integral part of the Academy, the technical staff having responsibilities throughout the building. The manager of the Centre has direct input into the management of the school and responsibility for ICT related equipment. The expertise of all the staff (as well as the resources) within the IT Centre are naturally transferable and has resulted in added value for the Academy. The funding of the Centre has been provided by the Education Department of the local Authority in terms of salaries, although it is not given a budget for materials and equipment, which is self funding mainly through providing a local printing and graphic design service. The funding has proved crucial to the functioning of the Centre and its continuing success and sense of ownership by the community.

The provision of the Jubilee Suite, funded from a range of sources, has provided the community with greater access to ICT resources and training, but has also created new pressures within the Academy. The range of resources available continues to expand and there is now a greater emphasis on a whole campus approach to the provision of ICT.

Jubilee Suite at  
the Alford Information  
Technology Centre in Scotland



### Installations and Organisation of Space, School Libraries

This booklet was published in 1998 by the Ministry of Education of Portugal to help schools transform their existing libraries into multimedia resource centres. It offers recommendations for the types and amounts of space, furniture and equipment needed for the different levels of education and identifies functional and technical methods for adapting space. Two-thirds of the publication is composed of layouts detailing the areas which comprise a multimedia resource centre (zones intended for reading, consultation of materials in various formats, graphic production, etc.) and different placements for the centre within the school.

The booklet exists in English, French and Portuguese.

*For information on obtaining copies, contact:*

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