

Knowledge Centre and Library of the South Transdanubian Region

Hungary
Ágnes
Fischer
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Pécs has a 2000 year old history of being a city where culture, education and the arts are well respected, and it is the European Capital of Culture in 2010. When the city handed in its application for the title, five key projects were identified: one of them being the relocation and modern new building for the City of Pécs and County of Baranya Libraries that would serve the whole region. The University of Pécs and its libraries joined the project early. After years of planning and feasibility studies, construction began in the summer of 2009 and ended in June 2010. The building was made possible by EU funding of about 22 million Euros. Moving in started in August 2010, with a pilot, restricted opening period from 20 September followed by the Knowledge Centre and Library fully opening to the public on 25 October, 2010.

The finished building extends over seven floors (one of them fully underground, housing the closed stacks), and has an overall area of 13000 square meters (ca. 140000 square feet). In addition to the Knowledge Centre and Library, it houses a lecture hall for 400 people (divisible into two smaller ones), a conference room, a bookshop, a small restaurant, several research centres and the Student Information Centre of the University of Pécs.

The focal point and symbolic centre of the whole building is the Beehive (Kaptár), a feature that extends to all above-ground floors on the inside of the building. While looking at it from above and outside it can be said to resemble a traditional oven. Its inside is covered by 52000 triangular pieces of Zsolnay ceramics, providing a colourful and awe-inspiring view from the ground.

The Knowledge Centre and Library is made up by the integrated collections and services

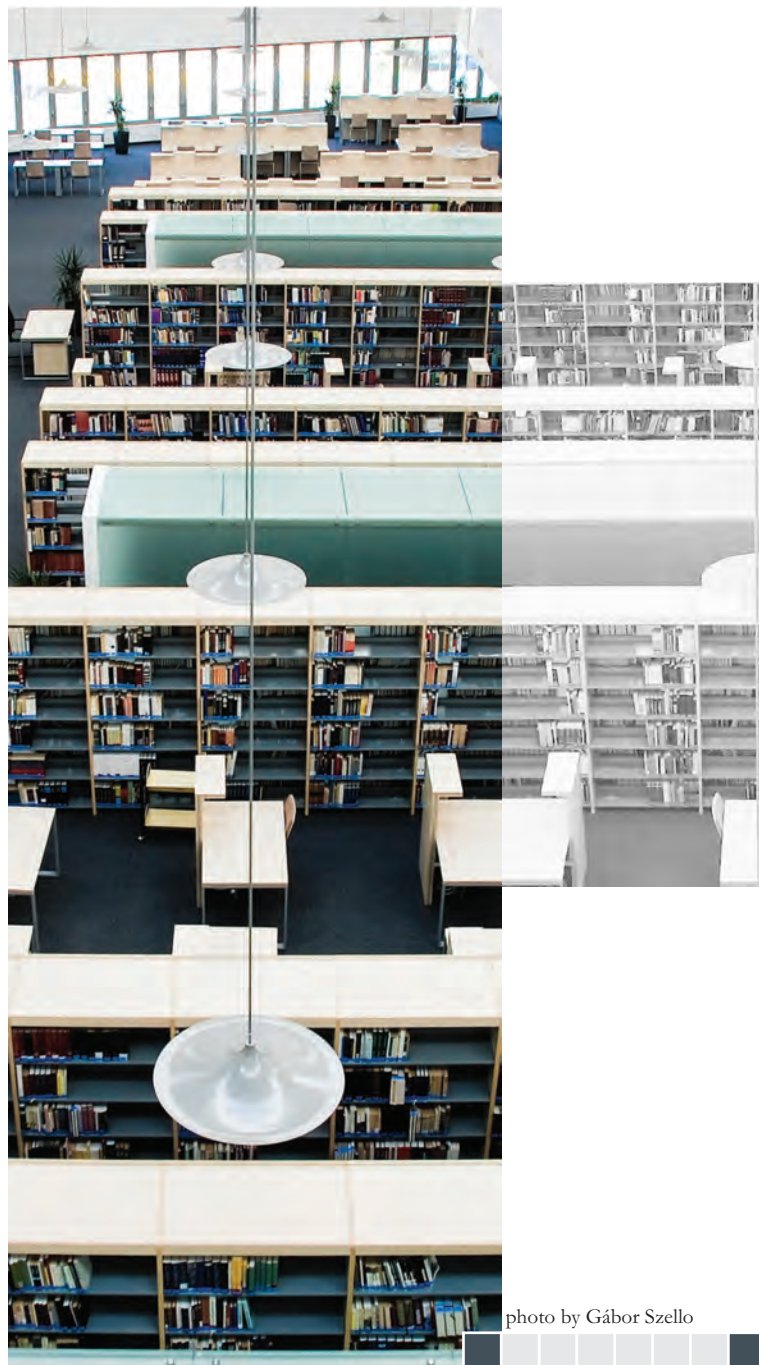


photo by Gábor Szello



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of two library entities (looking at it another way, four individual libraries) that have different functions and tasks according to Hungarian legislation, as well as separate legal identities. The Csorba Győző County Library of Baranya and the Library of the City of Pécs merged into one entity in the beginning of 2010, and are public libraries serving the population of the County and the City. The Knowledge Centre houses the collection of the County Library and a children's library from the network of the County and City Library, while other elements of the network remain in various locations across Pécs, providing services closer to citizens. The other participating library network is that of the University of Pécs, a higher education library from where the Central Library and the Library of the Faculty of Law and the Faculty of Business and Economics have moved into the Knowledge Centre, while other Faculty Libraries remain in their respective former locations. The move required a full integration of collections, services, and the establishment of a single technological and IT background in the Knowledge Centre, while taking into consideration the needs and legal duties of the two library networks.

The integrated Knowledge Centre and Library has a collection of about 1 million hard copy documents (books, periodicals, CDs, DVDs etc.) as well as access to dozens of electronic databases. About 380000 of these documents are available on open shelves on the four open library floors, while the others can be requested from the closed stacks. 630 readers can be seated at any given time, and the Knowledge Centre has 380 computers as well as wireless access. On all open floors, photocopy and scanning facilities as well as digital cameras are available for the use of the readers. In addition to the Self Service Ter-

minals allowing book return and loan, 109 librarians work to ensure a high quality service, from circulation and cataloguing to specialised reference services, digitalisation, management, IT services and event planning.

The ground floor houses the registration area and Self Service Terminals for book return, as well as the entrance to the library. Service integration meant, among other things, that the Knowledge Centre operates as a seemingly unified public library, with our registration and services open to all who wish to use them. Technological integration required the introduction of a new user and document identification and security system, based on 21st century RFID technology. All reader and staff ID cards and library documents have an RFID tag, with fixed and hand-held RFID readers available for staff use.

Integration of the library collections meant that - except for the so-called special collections and the children's library - all books and periodicals on a specific topic (mathematics, law, linguistics) or belonging to a certain category (fiction, poetry) can be found in one and one place only in the whole Knowledge Centre, regardless of which library bought them (naturally, acquisition policies are also harmonised). Both library entities benefited from this merging, with the extensive fiction and literature collection of the County and City Library becoming available to the University and the databases and in-depth printed scientific documents getting closer to the citizens of the region.

The first floor houses about 104000 books: these are on Hungarian and foreign literature, fiction books, books on literature theory, linguistics, foreign languages and grammar. This is also where our readers can find general



newspapers and periodicals. The first floor also gives a home to the Nationalities Collection (in languages used by and about ethnic minorities living in Baranya) and the Local History Collection (Pécs and Baranya history, documents issued/printed here) of the County and City Library, as well as the Gyözö Csorba Memorial Room (Pécs poet, writer, once director of the City Library) and the István Vas Collection (poet, writer, translator - the collection is his extensive personal library donated by his widow).

The second floor is the Science Collection. Here both researchers and interested citizens can find 120000 books and many periodicals on social sciences, philosophy, mathematics, biology, physics as well as art, sports and a thousand other subjects. The great Reading Hall, separated from the "Kaptár area" provides an opportunity for quiet reading and research.

The third floor is for economics, law, governance and administration, business studies and statistics. This is the Knowledge Centre version of the Benedek Ferenc Law and Economics Library that served the two Faculties

of the University (BF: professor of Roman Law). This floor has roughly 70000 books and periodicals, as well as several special collections: the European Documentation Centre (EU-related research), the World Bank Collection (international finance and economy) the Georg Brunner Collection (Central and Eastern European law and politics, minorities), a Terminology Documentation Centre, and a future Minorities Research Centre.

The fourth floor is for children and music: the two collections complete the Knowledge Centre into a whole that serves every citizen of the region. With 18-20000 children's books and about 30000 pieces of music notes, LPs, MCs, CDs and DVDs as well as a well-grounded collection of books on music, we have a great selection for every palate.

The Knowledge Centre and Library is, in a way, an experiment in Hungary: there is no other library that aims to serve both as a public library and a university research library. We hope to learn from each other, develop best practices and serve the every library user, whether from the region, working or learning in the region, or visiting us from far away.

