

The Netherlands Library Statistics 2012



Introduction

Providing a statistical overview of Libraries in the Netherlands, mainly for international purposes, is the core subject of the FOBID Task Force NL Library Statistics.

The Task Force meets when all data about a certain year have been collected and verified, this time regarding the year 2012.

The annual meeting to discuss the data, also includes themes like possible alignment with international standards, application of new research techniques and including new aspects of library services in the overview.

This overview is not so much about comparing the data of different types of libraries, but more modest to bring those data at least in one national overview. The Taskforce is aware that the different types of libraries have a number of issues in common, but also some specialties, which makes comparison an exercise of comparing apples to pears.

FOBID is pleased to present this overview of 2012, as the latest dated back to 2006. Added to the statistical data are summarized explanations, to help the reader better understand the figures and the facts and processes they intend to describe and the library management they intend to support.

We hope that also in the wider European and international perspective improved data of library services will support the libraries' position in the increasingly global society.

Benchmarking

Since 2000, the thirteen university libraries in the Netherlands are involved in a benchmarking project. The libraries from Dutch universities of applied sciences started four years later with a similar project. Although not each university of applied sciences contributes, the largest ones all do participate.

Raw data on expenditures, provision of information resources and facilities, processing activities and use of information resources, are gathered on an Excel spreadsheet (universities) or a wiki (universities of applied sciences). Each year, slight adjustments are made to keep up with new developments. Data are analyzed in various ways.

1. Based on the raw data, several indicators are being calculated. Table 1 shows the calculation of the indicator 'loans per capita' and the calculation of relative scores, based on the median.

	Loans	Population	Loans per capita	Relative score based on median
Libr 1	242,431	33,589	7.22	221
Libr 2	209,682	32,835	6.39	196
Libr 3	212,684	24,604	8.64	265
Libr 4	203,264	34,543	5.88	180
Libr 5	91,096	27,518	3.31	101
Libr 6	59,585	18,263	3.26	100
Libr 7	92,997 *	21,087	4.41	135
Libr 8	53,084	24,857	2.14	65
Libr 9	38,879	14,107	2.76	84
Libr 10	56,326	20,644	2.73	84

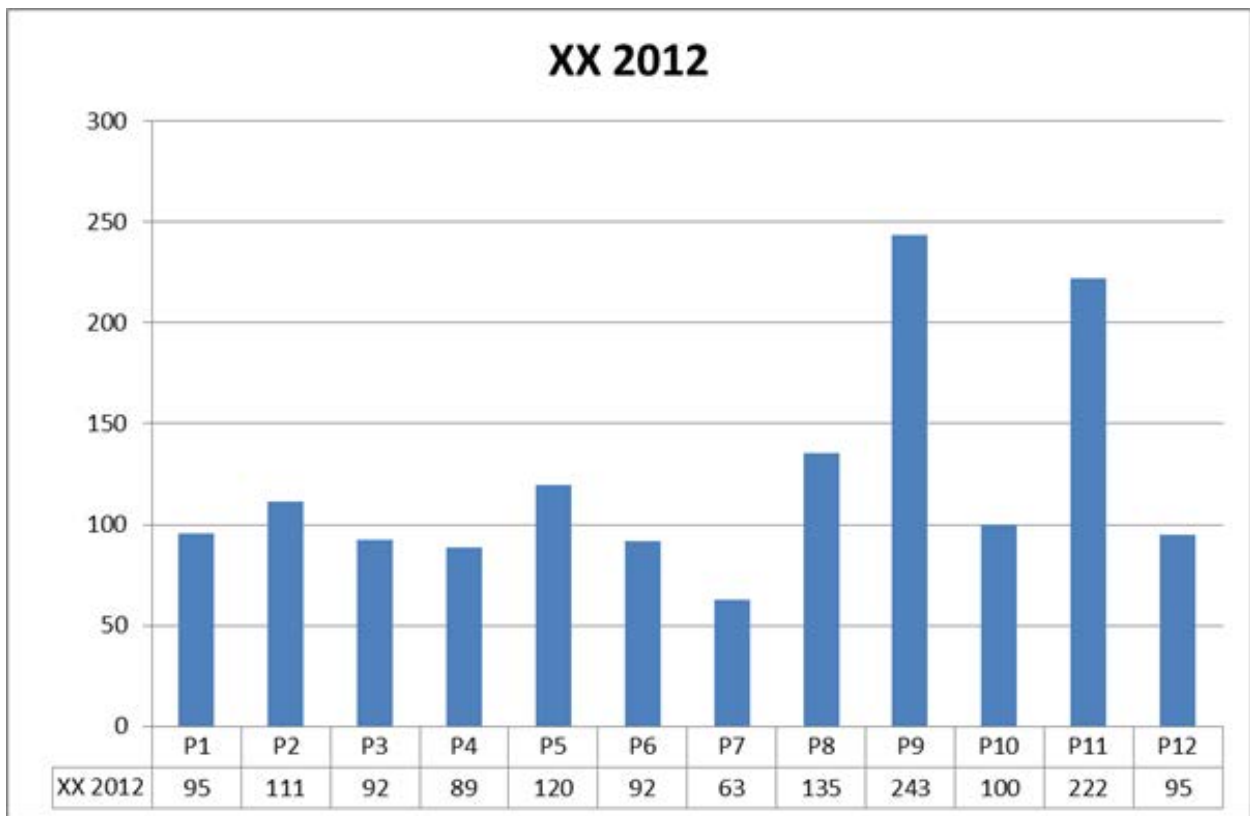
Libr 11	28,529	9,830	2.90	89
Libr 12	19,200	11,566	1.66	51
Libr 13	15,691	9,826	1.60	49

Loans per capita	
Minimum	1,60
Maximum	8,64
Mean	4,07
Median	3,26

* Libr 7: probably not reliable

Table 1: Example of calculation of performance indicator and relative value

2. By normalizing the values and presenting the results in a bar graph, each library can identify its own weak and strong points at a glance. See graph 1 as an example. Values above 100 are above the median, values below 100 are below the median. Values higher than 170 are considered as best practices



Graph 1: the relative scores of one library on twelve performance indicators.

3. By comparing the current values with those obtained in earlier years, each library can easily determine the changes during the past years. Table 2 shows loan data from thirteen libraries from 2009 – 2012.

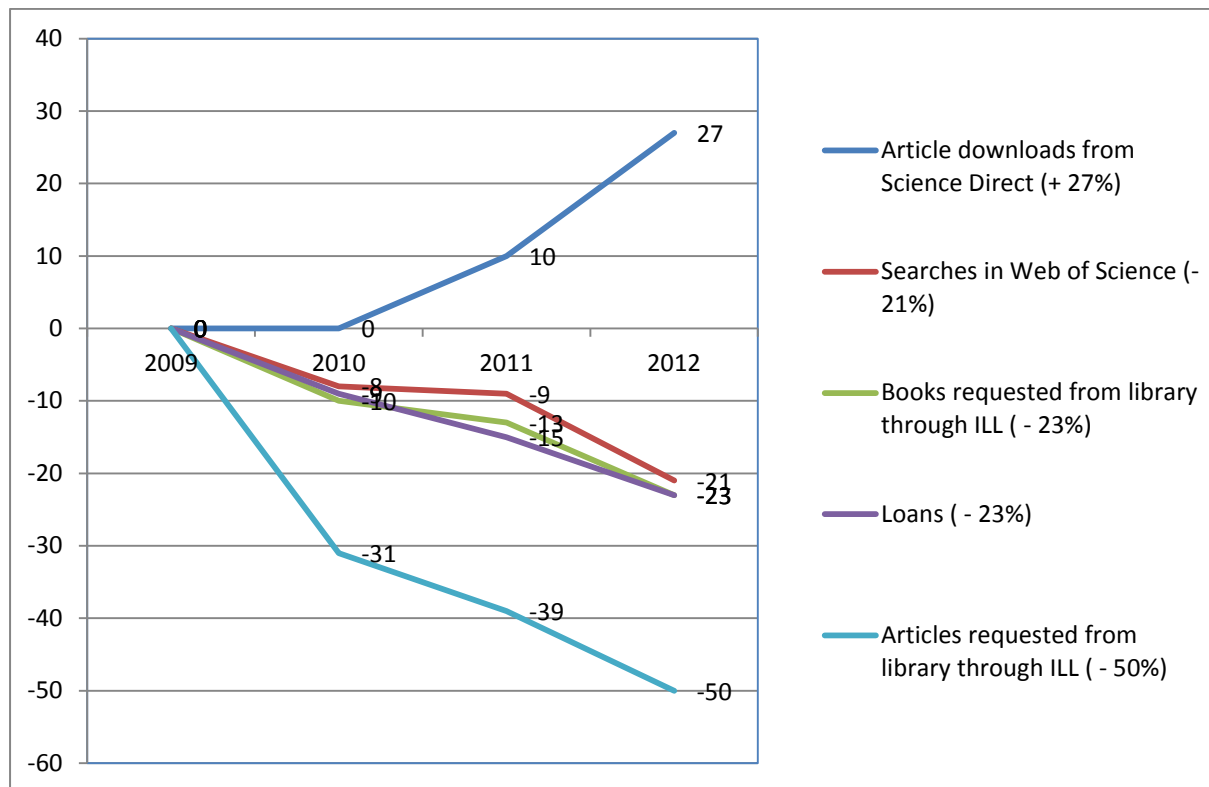
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2012 vs 2009 (%)	2012 vs 2011 (%)
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Libr 1	359,137	280,478	267,930	242,431	- 32.5	
Libr 2	257,649	244,512	229,773	209,682	- 18.6	
Libr 3	216,516	233,036	237,857	212,684		- 10.7
Libr 4	256,909	242,795	230,131	203,264	- 20.9	- 11.7
Libr 5	122,907	109,256	97,561	91,096	- 25.9	
Libr 6	66,099	55,735	55,783	59,585		
Libr 7	153,432	142,666	121,939	92,997 *	Xxx	Xxx
Libr 8	90,022	74,103	54,066	53,084	- 41.0	
Libr 9	51,837	46,332	44,651	38,879	- 25.0	- 12.9
Libr 10	72,482	67,396	62,876	56,326	- 22.3	- 10.4
Libr 11	44,576	39,412	28,351	28,529	- 36.0	
Libr 12	24,475	28,797	23,910	19,200	- 21.6	- 19.7
Libr 13	26,916	26,143	20,729	15,691	- 41.7	- 24.3

* Libr 7, 2012: probably not reliable

Table 2: Number of loans from thirteen university libraries from 2009 – 2012.

4. By comparing aggregate sector-wide values throughout the years, general trends can be determined. See graph 2 as an example.



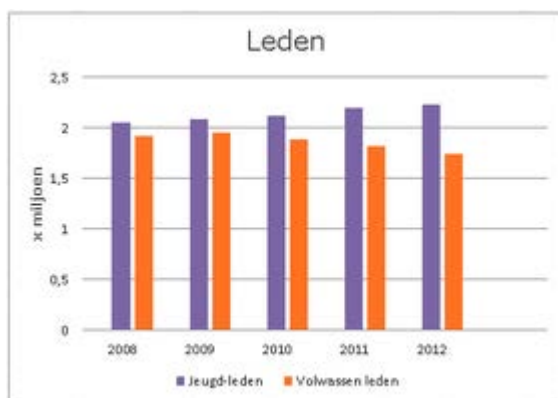
Graph 2: Use of resources 2009 – 2012. Raw data are converted to index numbers.

Development in public libraries

The main statistical data are collected by the Netherlands Public Library Association (VOB), through its Library Information System (BIS). The raw data are used to provide indicators, are used for the Official Statistics (CBS) in Statline, and for the library Monitor and further research and advocacy.

Based on a range of years VOB issued explanatory notes to the main subjects which are summarized here.

Public libraries in the Netherlands have the legal form of a foundation, which receives subsidy from the local government, and also has to work for own income. In the past decade a large number of libraries has merged in single larger library organisations. The policy of upscaling for reasons of efficiency and quality is clearly visible in the decreasing number of library organisations, counted as legal entities: 162; a library organisation serves more than one municipality; in rural areas a library organisation may serve to e.g. 17 different municipalities which all benefit as a common back office. The local libraries have taken many different forms, adapted to a specific user group, e.g. school children, commuters in a railway station library or a self-service library. That is why the actual number of libraries has gone down in 10 years from 1130 to 843 libraries (-25%) But the number of service points with a limited range of services has increased enormously.



Regarding the membership of public libraries, a recent trend has emerged whereby the younger members (under 18 years of age) have surpassed the number of adult members. This is all the more astonishing as the general population grows older. Everyone can use the library, walk in, read or view or listen to media. The number is now just over 64 million visits, not including the visits to the library websites. Libraries are increasingly part of multifunctional accommodations and offer a

wide variety of programmes, courses and exhibitions in partnership with social, cultural and educational institutions. This highlights the role of the library as a community meeting place. Borrowing materials is still popular, but the effect of using materials via internet, social media, databases and e-books is visible in the lower range of loans over the last decade. Libraries cooperate in efficient coordination of collections and development. The number of collections for adults has decreased with a third in a decade, youth materials with about 12%. The same is true for collections of audiovisual materials (AVM). AVM loans has gone down since 2003, but re-established itself at that level in the years 2009-2012 to 6.9 million loans. The financial crisis is visible in the statistics on finances, although the main decisions on budget cuts are first effective after 2013.. Libraries are spending less on collections (from 15 to 12% of total costs), although it is unclear whether they have reallocated budget from physical to digital collections. In seven years costs for housing have raised with 30%, for staff with 12%. Rising housing costs can be explained by investments in new or restyled buildings and design, by moving to multifunctional accommodations with more (cultural) institutes and services, and the general rising of Dutch real estate prices. The raise of staff costs may be related to the growing older of the staff population, and recruitment of other professional staff (IT, Marketing).

Perspective

For all the different types of libraries it becomes clear that the data gathered are insufficient to show the transformation which is taking place in libraries. This is true for the increasing demand for digital materials and digital services, but also for different ways of performing and working on classical aims as promotion of reading and literacy.

Especially for public libraries the aims of reading promotion and lifelong learning are no longer only met by making printed books available for loans. There is a wider range of other ways and services to meet these aims and needs of people of any age and background.

Libraries have become much more multimedia-based in their approaches. Cultural programming, organisation of debates and community meetings, together with an wide offer of courses are just a few of these newer ways to demonstrate added value for individuals and society. It is therefore no longer very useful to focus only on memberships and loans, as they no longer represent enough of the libraries current activities and value.

Libraries worldwide are looking for better indexes to account for the publicly funded tasks and activities as they wish to demonstrate good management and excellent performance.

It is also obvious that different stakeholders need adapted presentations of data. It makes a difference between data as part of a management dashboard, or an accountable overview for a municipal council or board. The increasing number of partnerships in which libraries are engaged is another element for being alert in data gathering, interpretation and presentation. The FOBID Taskforce makes efforts to underpin the value of valid data for libraries and to incorporate international standards where possible.