

Report of professional visit to The Württembergische Landesbibliothek- Stuttgart.

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Acknowledgments

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I would also like to extend my heartfelt thanks to Dr. Ahmed Zayed, Director of the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, along with Mrs. Dina Yousef and Mrs. Hend Elshenawy, for their encouragement and unwavering support that made this exchange possible.

This visit provided me with a valuable opportunity to exchange ideas, share experiences, and expand professional knowledge with colleagues at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek in Stuttgart, Germany, enriching both my personal and institutional perspective.



Background

The Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB) in Stuttgart was founded in 1765 by Duke Carl Eugen of Württemberg as the Ducal Public Library in Ludwigsburg and moved to Stuttgart in 1777. Although its historic building was destroyed during World War II, the library was rebuilt and today serves as the largest academic library in Baden-Württemberg, holding over six million items, including rare manuscripts, early printed books, and one of the world's most important Bible collections.

The Württembergische Landesbibliothek is centrally located on Stuttgart's renowned Culture Mile (*Kulturmeile*), a lively area that brings together many of the city's most important cultural and academic institutions. This quarter is home not only to the WLB, but also to the State Gallery (*Staatsgalerie*), the State Theatre (*Staatstheater*), the House of History (*Haus der Geschichte*), and the State Academy of Fine Arts.



The library's position in this cultural hub highlights its close connection to the arts, education, and public life, making it a key part of Stuttgart's intellectual and cultural landscape.

WLB Collections

The Württembergische Landesbibliothek serves as the regional and state library for Baden-Württemberg, providing access to a huge collection of historical and contemporary resources across disciplines.

WLB holds over 6 million items: 4 million books, 15,500 manuscripts, 7,100 incunabula, plus maps, autographs, and sound/media

The library's mission includes preserving cultural heritage, supporting scholarly research, and promoting public access to information. It offers services both to the general public and to academic researchers, making it a central hub in the regional knowledge landscape.



Legal Depository Role

As the state library of Baden-Württemberg, WLB functions as a legal depository library. According to the legal deposit law, publishers within the state are required to deposit copies of every publication produced within six weeks after publishing. This ensures that the library continuously receives and archives a comprehensive record of the publishing output from the region.

It serves as one of Baden-Württemberg's two legal deposit libraries (alongside BLB), entitled to copies of all publications from the Stuttgart and Tübingen regions since 1964

This role significantly improves the library's collection, especially in documenting the local and regional print culture. The depository also supports long-term preservation and access to these works for future generations. Legal deposit publications are catalogued and made accessible through the library's online catalog.

Membership Policy

To borrow materials, use internet stations, reserve reading seats, or request items from the stacks at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB), users must possess a valid library card. Registration requires a German ID or passport along with proof of residence from a local registration office, while minors must provide parental consent. The fee structure includes a €30 annual fee for standard adult users and €8 for temporary cards valid for less than three months. A reduced fee of €15 per year applies to individuals performing national or voluntary service, the unemployed, and social welfare recipients. Fee exemptions are

granted to students, apprentices, minors, and employees of state institutions.

Lending Policy

At the Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB), open-access items can be borrowed directly from the shelves. All books of the magazine stock must be ordered via the catalog, even if they are borrowed for home use. The standard loan period is four weeks, with the option to renew if the item is not reserved by another user. Rare books, reference works, and valuable materials are restricted to in-house use and must be consulted in designated special reading rooms. Overdue fines begin accruing automatically after the due date, regardless of whether a reminder is received. Users may extend their loans online, and automated notifications are sent as a courtesy.



Interlibrary Loans

The Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB) is fully integrated into Germany's national and international interlibrary loan network, allowing users to request materials not available in its own collections. Requests are submitted through the online system and processed by the lending services desk. Depending on the lending library's policies,

delivery typically takes a few days to a week. The service enables broader access to academic resources and supports research beyond the local holdings.

Digitization Projects

The Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB) operates a dedicated in-house Digitization Center equipped with high-end scanners designed for handling manuscripts, rare prints, and historical materials. The digitization process follows a standardized workflow using Kitodo, producing TIFF master files, JPEG access versions, and XML metadata enriched with persistent identifiers (PURLs/URNs) and supporting OAI-PMH export for interoperability. All digitized content is made freely accessible online, in line with the standards of the German Research Foundation (DFG), ensuring both long-term preservation and public access to cultural heritage.

Contemporary History Library & Projects

The Contemporary History Library at the Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB) holds approximately 350,000 volumes covering topics such as military history, political developments, and social movements from 1914 to the present. Notable materials include personal diaries from World War I (1914–1918), offering firsthand insights into civilian and soldier experiences. The library is actively involved in the digitization of private archives, oral history collections, and documents from civil society movements, contributing to the preservation of regional memory. Through exhibitions, academic lectures, and partnerships with universities, the library plays a central role in supporting scholarly research and public engagement with 20th- and 21st-century history.

Digital Publications

The Digital Publications department at Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB) is responsible for managing and providing access to electronic and non-book media. Key tasks include cataloging non-book materials (NBMs) using RDA standards, coordinating digital legal deposits from publishers, and maintaining access to e-book packages.

Training and Research Support

At the Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB), users are supported through a comprehensive training program designed to enhance their competencies in research, reading, writing, presenting, publishing, and data analysis. the WLB offers targeted workshops and seminars to help systematize knowledge and develop practical skills.

Courses are held free of charge in a modern, well-equipped classroom, also offered online to increase accessibility.

1. Thematic Workshops & Seminars

WLB offers a range of free workshops and seminars during its academic terms (e.g., summer semester 2025), these cover:

- **Reading & Learning:** e.g., "Lange Texte lesen lernen," reading culture lectures
- **Writing & Publishing:** scientific writing, argumentation, citation ethics, Zotero, Open Access, and AI-assisted writing
- **Presenting & Communication:** presentation skills, podcast/video production, LinkedIn use, science communication

- **Working with Data:** AI-driven visualization and analysis, Transcribes for handwritten texts, data tools like Statista

2. Specialized Workshops

Example courses from summer 2025:

- **Präsentieren mit Wirkung** (Effective Presentations)
- **Literaturverwaltung mit Zotero**
- **Online: Daten intelligent nutzen** (AI-powered data analysis)

3. Guided Tours & Expert Consultations

- **Individual research consultations** on literature searches and database strategies
- **Subject-specific group introductions:** tours of the library and guidance on using relevant catalogs and digital resources

4. Course Booking & Access

- All courses are **free**, but require registration with a valid **WLB library card**
- Offered year-round; schedules are available via WLB's course calendar and online portal



Extension of Legal Deposit to Electronic Publications

Since 2019, the Württembergische Landesbibliothek has been designated as a legal depository for **electronic publications**, including e-books and networked publications, under Baden-Württemberg's Pflichtexemplargesetz.

Publishers must submit digital copies via standardized registration forms, and in some cases, larger data volumes can be transferred through automated channels. This extension demonstrates WLB's commitment to preserving both printed and born-digital knowledge in line with regional and national standards.

Innovative Projects: Full-Text Database & regiopen Publication Platform.

As part of its future strategy, WLB has launched a **full-text database** enabling comprehensive searching across digitized corpus, and (**regiopen**), an open-access publication platform for regional scholarly content and journals. Both initiatives enhance discoverability, encourage academic collaboration, and embody the library's core mission of "sharing knowledge" beyond conventional collections.

participation to enhance metadata . This project demonstrates a participatory and forward-thinking approach to cultural heritage.

Stuttgart City Library

Architecture, Design, and Collection Overview

The Stuttgart City Library (Stadtbibliothek am Mailänder Platz) is not only one of the most modern and visited public libraries in Germany, but also an architectural landmark in Stuttgart's Europaviertel district. Officially opened in 2011 and designed by South Korean architect Eun Young Yi, the building presents itself as a perfect cube—44 meters wide, long, and high—symbolizing balance, harmony, and transparency. The exterior is clad in glass bricks that softly diffuse light during the day and cause the structure to glow at night, offering an inviting presence. Notably, the word “Library” is inscribed on each of the building's four sides in four different languages: German, English, Korean, and Arabic—with the Arabic word “مكتبة” serving as a subtle tribute that resonates with Arabic-speaking visitors and evokes symbolic ties to institutions like the Bibliotheca Alexandrina. Internally, the library is centered around a breathtaking five-story open atrium, called the “heart” or “Zentralraum”, designed as a silent, contemplative core. Above it lies the iconic white cascading gallery, where visitors can see five open levels of book terraces with staircases crisscrossing in a symmetrical, almost surreal geometry. The architectural design emphasizes openness, light, and access to knowledge—mirroring the library's philosophy of being a space for all.

The Stuttgart City Library offers over 500,000 media items, spread across specialized floors. The ground and lower floors house the information center, event hall, exhibition space, and the Graphothek (a borrowing collection of visual art). Upper levels include the Children's Library, Youth Library, Music Library, Language Learning Center, Cinema, and Digital Media Zone. There

are also reading terraces on every level, individual and group workspaces, and conference and creative studios. The 8th floor, called the "Sky Room", offers panoramic views over Stuttgart and serves as a quiet place for study and reflection. The library also holds multilingual collections, including Arabic, Turkish, Russian, and Chinese books, emphasizing cultural inclusivity.

From a service perspective, the building is equipped with self-checkout stations, public computer terminals, charging points, and automated media transport systems. It provides free Wi-Fi, dedicated spaces for people with disabilities.

The Stuttgart City Library is more than just a repository of books—it is a vibrant cultural center, hosting regular lectures, exhibitions, concerts, and workshops on digital literacy, creative arts, and civic engagement.



University of Hohenheim Library

The University Library at Hohenheim is uniquely situated within the historic Schloss Hohenheim, a late-18th-century palace originally built by Duke Carl Eugen and his consort Franziska based on Versailles' design.

The library system operates under the KIM Centre, which integrates the Central Library (specializing in agricultural and natural sciences) and the Departmental Library in the palace.

The Central Library, housed in a modern building (rebuilt in the 1960s and renovated in the 1990s), accommodates study spaces, PCs, and open-shelf access for textbooks, biology, food technology, and interdisciplinary resources.

In total, the library holds approximately 510,000 volumes, plus around 1,400 print journals and 740 licensed e-journals, supplemented by 7,000+ e-journals via databases. Special collections include expertise in tropical/subtropical agriculture, banking and finance, and historical works (6,300+ pre-20th-century titles).



IFA Library Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen

The IFA Library in Stuttgart specializes in international cultural relations, foreign cultural policy, and global art and media. It serves researchers, students, and practitioners in the fields of diplomacy, cultural exchange, and international cooperation. The library holds over 30,000 titles, including books, journals, and grey literature, and maintains a strong emphasis on intercultural dialogue, soft power, and cultural diplomacy. Its collection includes materials in multiple languages and is complemented by online databases and the IFA-Edition publication series. The library is open to the public, supports academic work through curated reading lists and expert consultations, and contributes to IFA's broader mission of fostering peaceful and informed international cultural exchange.



Conclusion

My internship experience across several key libraries in Stuttgart has provided me with a valuable and multifaceted perspective on how modern libraries operate, serve their communities, and preserve cultural and academic heritage. The Württembergische Landesbibliothek (WLB) stands out as a research-focused institution deeply rooted in tradition yet actively embracing digitization, metadata standards, and open-access publishing. It plays a pivotal role in safeguarding regional intellectual heritage while offering robust IT infrastructure and specialized user services.

In contrast, the Stuttgart City Library represents a modern, people-centered approach to public knowledge access. With its iconic architecture, open and inclusive design, multimedia offerings, and vibrant public programs, it exemplifies how libraries can evolve into civic and cultural landmarks. It skillfully combines aesthetic vision with digital innovation to engage diverse user groups.

Meanwhile, the University of Hohenheim Library offers a unique synthesis of historical elegance and academic functionality. Set within a former royal palace, it blends classical beauty with modern services, supporting students and researchers in agricultural, economic, and social sciences through well-structured collections, digital repositories, and peaceful study environments.

Additionally, The IFA Library at the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen brings a specialized focus on international cultural relations, foreign policy, and intercultural dialogue. Its multilingual collections and targeted resources complement IFA's broader mission of fostering global understanding through culture.

When compared to the Bibliotheca Alexandrina, these German libraries reflect different operational scales and areas of specialization, yet share many common goals. The Bibliotheca Alexandrina is a major international research and cultural institution with wide-ranging programs, multilingual collections, and large-scale digital projects. While it offers broader regional outreach and a larger infrastructure, the libraries in Stuttgart demonstrate highly focused service models, strong integration of local cultural identity, and advanced user-centered technologies. This comparison has deepened my appreciation for how libraries, despite their diverse contexts, remain united in their mission to support learning, access to knowledge, and cultural dialogue.

This experience has enriched my understanding of library services, digital transformation, and the broader role of libraries as pillars of education, memory, and global connection.