*** Special issue ***

EBLIDA Checklist in the face of the Covid-19 crisis (2)
No. 5. April 2020

Editorial by Ton van Vlimmeren, EBLIDA President

The 23rd of April is a special day for libraries. It is World Book and Copyright Day when the whole planet pays tribute to books and authors, encouraging everyone, and in particular young people, to discover the pleasure of reading. It is also a symbolic date for world literature: Cervantes, Shakespeare and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, all died on 23rd April and other prominent authors, such as Maurice Druon, Haldor K.Laxness, Vladimir Nabokov, Josep Pla and Manuel Mejía Vallejo were born.

Since its creation in 1995, there has not been a World Book Day as troubled and as difficult as this one. It is difficult for everybody and also for libraries. This is why we made a point of publishing this special issue of the EBLIDA Newsletter on 23rd April.

EBLIDA wishes to pay tribute to the hard work libraries are performing during the Covid-19 pandemic and the way they are tooling up for after the crisis. Libraries are locked down but they are more active than ever. This special issue, is dedicated to the state of libraries in Estonia, France, Luxembourg, Norway and Portugal. An additional special issue of the EBLIDA Newsletter will be published next week and will include reports from Cyprus, Ireland, Latvia and The Netherlands.
This Newsletter, too, is based on the “EBLIDA checklist for library associations and libraries in the face of the Covid-19 crisis” - a series of suggested measures, practices and possible services that library associations and coordinating centres could initiate for a partial recovery in an extreme situation as the one we are living.

**EBLIDA checklist for library associations and libraries in the face of the Covid-19 crisis**

The following questions can help you decide about strategic decisions your library association / library can take in a time when emergency locks down libraries.

We invite other EBLIDA Members to send their answers to the checklist to us. Should you have a question on a specific item, please ask: g.vitiello@kb.nl.

We will try to link you to a colleague in Europe who has been working on the topic highlighted in the text.

1. Does your (national) library association release regular website information, newsletters and/or updates on library posture in your country during the Covid-19 crisis?
2. Does information provided by your library association provide legal advice (or links to legal information) on the role, rights and duties of the library as an employer?
3. Do you provide any information or links about Covid-19 that are relevant for libraries (e.g. lifespan of the virus on paper and plastic)?
4. Is your library, or library association, participating in the general strategy of controlling the diffusion of Covid-19?
5. Is the Covid-19 crisis impacting on the financial position of your (national) library association (for instance, cancelled conferences)?
6. Does your association collect information on how the crisis impacts the financial position of the libraries?
7. Is your association negotiating with (local/national) government bodies for support to libraries in order to deal with financial effects and loss of results?
8. Is your association, the (national) library or other library coordination centre releasing regular information about the digital offer and library services to the general public?
9. Are digital services freely accessible to everyone? If not, is someone (association, national library) negotiating with relevant commercial partners and government to remove barriers as a crisis measure?
10. Have libraries organized specific hours/ helpdesks for the public to help them access the digital services?
11. Is there – especially in e-books- a more extensive and targeted offer for specific groups like elderly citizens isolated at home, young people and children?
12. Is there a (national) platform, list-server or otherwise where libraries can post their best practices of services during the Covid-19 crisis?
13. Is there a (national) platform, list-server or otherwise where libraries exchange and (re-)use digital products (e.g. Youtube movies with storytelling)?
14. Is there an exchange on physical services by libraries? On how libraries try to stay relevant for their patrons within the safety measures that have to be taken?
15. Is there an exchange on services by libraries to schools and education?
16. Is there an exchange of how library staff is working from home, doing (online) learning and training or delivering services?
18. Is there a (national) platform, list-server or otherwise for other tasks performed by library staff (e.g. helping (online) in the community information centre or giving telephone calls to isolated elderly patrons/citizens)?

19. Is there any proposal you would like to make at European level?

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**EBLIDA checklist for library associations and libraries in the face of the Covid-19 crisis**

*ELA, The Estonian Librarians Association and the EBLIDA Checklist*

by

Tuuliki Tõiste

**Checklist Point 1:** During the Covid-19 crisis the Estonian Library Association has been releasing: website information with Covid 19-related info and links, as soon as news is incoming; it also issued a regular Newsletter and diffused information through social media channels.

**Checklist Point 2:** the legal advice provided by the Estonian Library Association concerns how libraries are expected to work (with useful links) and the rights and duties of the library as an employer. The webpage of the Estonian Library Association intends to be a one-stop window with information extracted from relevant official sites (*www.kriis.ee*).

**Checklist Point 3:** the Estonian Library Association is providing updated information from our national Estonian Health Board, also on how long the virus stays on surfaces (mostly books and plastic). Local governments are deciding whether to keep libraries accessible or not. State libraries are not closed, they have to be partially open, offer e-services and non-human contact home lending of paper books. Events and gatherings are prohibited. So libraries are acting as information providers, they are trying to offer mostly e-services but people need books; therefore, libraries are offering people a reason to leave their homes. (In Estonia we do not have restriction to leave home, but we have a 2+2 rule. This means: 2 people can be in the same place and keep 2 meters distance from everyone).

**Checklist Point 5:** Some events were cancelled for now, but we plan to re-arrange them in the Fall. C-19 had a limited financial impact on the ELA. Some local governments say that there will be retrenchment in library acquisitions, but this is not yet a clear rule.

**Checklist Point 6:** ELA sent a letter to the local governments reminding them that they are the library’s “owners” and that librarians are also types of front-end workers. We asked them to maintain the same funding level for libraries as before the crisis. The lesson we learned from the past is that libraries have always been important public services after economic crashes.

**Checklist Point 8:** The National library (Libraries Development Centre) and the Ministry of
Checklist Point 9: Access to digital resources has definitely increased, but not at the same rate for same for all types of libraries. There were increases in university and research libraries, since schools are closed and students are working in a distant-learning environment. Nevertheless, the increase has been moderate since all students have been using e-resources for many years. As university members access databases via VPN, people who are not part of the university should come to the library – and university libraries are closed for visitors.

Access to digital resources has boomed instead in public libraries. We do not have a national e-books lending system and libraries only deliver e-books to their registered users. Since 18th of March, the Tallinn Central Library has been opening its e-lending system to all people in Estonia; this was the only possibility to use the library, because physical loans were very limited. Compared to the same period in 2019 (13.03-19.04), access has increased by 1,400 percent! In 2019 there were 2,000 e-loans, and in the same period in 2020, there were 29,900. New registered users are almost 10,000; one year ago there were 373. Less consistent, but still significant is the increase of 45% (comparison between March 2019 and March 2020) in state libraries.

Finally, Estonia has a consortium for scientific libraries to get access to worldwide databases. This Consortium has asked suppliers to open their databases – unsuccessfully.

Checklist Point 10: Estonian libraries have organized specific hours/helpdesks for the public and offer consultations via e-mail and phone, some also via Skype or other channels. Every library has their own “opening hours”. Most librarians go to work or work from their home offices offering services via internet channels.

Checklist Point 11: Some libraries offer chatting groups to the elderly via Skype and others offer reading to children. Help for school homework is also provided, but there is no special offer about e-resources. During chatting, most librarians help people to find e-books and therefore they are instrumental in providing access to this huge e-book reservoir.

Checklist Point 12: Estonia does not have a special platform where libraries can post their best practices of services during the Covid-19 crisis. ELA is asking librarians to get information about their successful events and posts this information on ELA website; Facebook accounts are also used. ELA’s young librarians club is announcing collection photos and stories about librarian’s workdays during the crisis and a virtual exhibition is going to be published soon.

Checklist Point 13: Libraries exchange and (re-)use of digital products is done through a List-server. We do not have extra services for information exchange. Libraries’ offer of free digital cultural services is displayed via e-mail or social media. Lot of theatres and concerts and other cultural events are now online and libraries try to keep an eye on these entertainment offers for people who have to stay at home.

Checklist Point 14: Books can still be borrowed during the crisis. Users choose books from catalogues, send their wishes to the library and librarians make packages and leave books outside the library doors; some of them use postal services. When books are returned, they are kept untouched for three days and then re-shelved.

Checklist Point 16: Lots of exchanges on how library staff is working from home, doing (online) learning and training or delivering services are made via phone or skype. Librarians themselves are at home and arrange meetings with colleagues via the internet. One of the tasks for home-working librarians is to learn themselves, some take extra courses, some look for new knowledge from different sources.

Checklist Point 18: In Estonia we have a national call center for everyone, it's 1247.
Checklist Point 1: During the Covid-19 crisis the French Library Association has been releasing regular website information, its newsletter and updates on library posture.

Checklist Point 2: ABF information is intended to provide: Legal advice (or links to legal information) on the role of the library; Rights and duties of the library as an employer with the creation of a dedicated e-mail address and regular information on a public digital forum called “agorabib”. ABF is working on a draft document on how to get back to normality, with health and sanitation aspects required for the public, agents and spaces as main item.

Checklist Point 3: the French Library Association is looking for a collaboration with a scientific institute in order to be able to obtain reliable advice on how to get back to normality. The French Library Association makes sure that the political system is well aware of the risks of spreading the virus where lending activities are concerned. It is the reason why the French association is looking for specific scientific advice. ABF also advises not to propose drive and delivery services which are not legally authorized and cause unnecessary risks.

Checklist Point 5: There has been no major financial risk for the French Library Association so far, since the annual French national congress has been postponed to October.

Checklist Point 6: Libraries are public institutions in France; we do not see major risks in the near future. Finances may become an emergency in the incoming year although the French Ministry of Culture seems to be well aware of the necessity to back the cultural sector. A budget will probably be allocated to help the book sector (authors and publishers). A budget should also be allocated to libraries to help them to face budget increases in accessing digital resources. The Ministry of Culture will diffuse specific news for libraries.

Checklist Point 8: the French Library Association launched a “padlet”, an online bulletin board, to gather all information in the field. The ABF is also officially supporting any initiative to make face masks during the lockdown, where libraries have 3D printers in their possession.

Checklist Point 9: Digital services are freely accessible to everyone. According to a flash enquiry carried out by the French Ministry of Culture on a significant library sample, 68% of French libraries are witnessing great increases in the demand for digital resources. Numerous libraries report increases by 200 and 300 % in number of connections. In some cases, increases have been “exponential” with a record of +1,500 % for a Video on Demand for young people. Digital resources that are offered by libraries cover a wide range of topics: self-training, video on demand, music, press, e-books. 79% of departmental libraries, including small municipalities and rural libraries, have seen an increase of their registered users. People’s access to digital resources is normally free but library subscriptions may increase in the future. In conclusion, 25
Checklist Point 10: There is a national platform and librarians are welcome to participate in that (https://solidarite-numerique.fr/).

Checklist Point 12: The ABF padlet and the national platform organised by BPI (Bibliothèque Publique d’Information, Paris) have a special platform where libraries can post their best practices of services during the Covid-19 crisis. (see: https://padlet.com/team_ABF/f2n7ge8tlos9 )

Checklist Point 13: Libraries exchange and (re-)use digital products through their own dissemination facility.

Checklist Point 14: Printed book return after loan is made in collaboration with both cultural and scientific institutions. The lock down is coming to an end on May, 11th, but it is expected that libraries will probably be closed until mid-July. Drive-in services could be proposed if we obtain clear directives from the ministry of culture and scientific institutions.

Checklist Point 16: Exchange of library staff practices working from home is being done through list-servers and social media. For example, the network of curators of big city’s libraries is exchanging weekly on that topic.

Checklist Point 17: There are 2 main learning and training platforms for library staff. The first, CNFPT is a training structure maintained by local authorities. CNFTP has opened its learning files and MOOCs when libraries were locked down to public libraries only. ENSSIB, the French High school for Libraries, proposes a webinar twice a week on several topics linked to libraries (academic and public).

Checklist Point 19: ABF proposal at European level would be to get strong advice on how to be able to reopen safely with a focus on 3 aspects:

- making documents (books and other media) clean and safe;
- welcoming public safely;
- keeping librarians safe.

Checklist Point 1: During the Covid-19 crisis the National Library of Luxembourg has been releasing regular website information, updates on library posture and articles about our current online resources.

Checklist Point 3: The National Library of Luxembourg provides information on statistics based on specialized databases like Statista and complies with measures undertaken by the
Checklist Point 5: Several events, for which informational material was already produced, were cancelled. NL events are normally free of charge.

Checklist Point 8: The National Library of Luxembourg is releasing regular information about the digital offer and library services to the general public every other day.

Checklist Point 9: Since the BnLis closed to the public, registration requests can be made via e-mail (not possible before) and are free of charge. NL has over 620,000 e-books in German, English and French freely accessible through a reader card and we have created reading lists on different subjects: music, leisure, literature and also for specific groups: parents in a home-school context, teenagers etc. These lists are presented on our website and social media. In comparison to the same period of the previous year, access to digital resources has increased by 40 % in March and 78 % in April 2020.

Checklist Point 10: Libraries in Luxembourg organize communication to the public via phone, email or social media (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram).

Checklist Point 12: A department within BnL coordinates a library network of 88 libraries, bibnet.lu, and works as a helpdesk for these libraries. The National Library coordinates a network of libraries bibnet.lu, including the library of the University of Luxembourg, school libraries and specialized libraries. Furthermore, Mrs Monique Kieffer, director of the BnL, presides over the “Conseil supérieur des bibliothèques publiques”, a council that assembles representatives of the Luxembourgish public libraries. We also have a blog/website to stay in touch and communicate with fellow libraries. These “platforms” are not specific to Covid measures, but their action has been reinforced in the current situation.

Checklist Point 15: We have an exchange on services provided to schools and education through the Portal www.schouldoheem.lu.

Checklist Point 17: INAP, a platform for public servants, (not specific to library staff, but useful in many respects) is the partner of the administrations and services of the State and municipalities of the Grand Duchy of Luxembourg in the field of initial and continuous training. INAP provides e-learning courses and workshops. The NL Luxembourg launched an online workshop on our web archive for librarians. We also offer a live guided tour via social media platforms.

Checklist Point 18: A Covid-19 Helpline was created by the Government and public servants can volunteer. Several members of the library staff did. The helpline is meant to give guidance for people with Covid symptoms.

Checklist Point 19: It would be good to set up a plan on how to respond at European level in times like these and recommendations/best practices/guidelines for the future.
For complementary information about Luxembourg

**Checklist Point 1:** During the Covid-19 crisis ALBAD has cancelled its General Assembly for health security reasons.

**Checklist Point 8:** The national and university library is offering its digital collection of media.

**Checklist Point 9:** The digital collection is made available under normal conditions and only resources for which copyright has been cleared can be used from outside the libraries. Especially in the first weeks (end of March) for example many people registered online in the national library as new users to get access to electronic publications.

**Checklist Point 11:** A more extensive and targeted offer of e-books is made available for students and teachers. Especially the publication of some new digitized material of national serials (the most famous national history journal) has been advanced and immediately made available.

**Checklist Point 13:** The national literary archives propose youtube-videos with readings from national authors. The authors are paid for their readings, generating extra revenue in these times!

**Any other comments:**
It's a pity that the association does not have connections in the (tiny) hospital library community to ask them for advice. Hospital (or even prison) libraries are dealing with infectious issues all the time. Their expertise on how to sanitise library materials and keep the library running, by lending media outside the library rooms, could be very precious.

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*LA, The Norwegian Library Association and the EBLIDA Checklist*

*by*

Mariann Schjeide
Checklist Point 2: During the Covid-19 crisis the Norwegian Library Association has been expanding legal information on libraries. NLA has been advising the Government and other authorities on how to work with libraries during the crisis. It has also expanded and clarified governmental information during the press conference on 7th April, when the government decided to lock down libraries.

Checklist Point 3: The Norwegian Library Association has diffused health information on request concerning the many questions libraries were addressing; for instance: can libraries lend out books? Should the books be in quarantine? For how long? Should they be washed anyway? Safe pickup-points? For each of the questions we tried to find answers after consultation with the Government and the World Health Organisation.

Checklist Point 4: For the current year, the Covid-19 crisis has not yet had an impact either the financial position of the Norwegian Library Association, nor public libraries.

Checklist Point 8: During the Covid-19 crisis the Norwegian Library Association has released regular information about the digital offer and library services to the general public.

Checklist Point 9: There have been significant increases in the access to digital publications.

Checklist Point 10: During the Covid-19 crisis libraries helped libraries to gain access to digital services through their regular services.

Checklist Point 11: In Norway there are different platforms for access digital services and new ones are being created for e-lending. They were well known to the public as a whole. The biggest county in Norway, Viken, has ¼ of the population in Norway (1,2 million inhabitants). From the period of March 12th until April 15th, e-lendings increased by 139%, both due to the creation of new platforms and covid-19. Double effect, so to say. The National Library is enquiring about statistics on e-lending for the entire country and results will be published soon. There is no reason to think that the numbers for the rest of the country will be much different.

Checklist Point 12: During the Covid-19 crisis libraries posted their best practices of services through list-servers.

Checklist Point 13: Libraries exchange and (re-)use digital products through social media, of course. All libraries in Norway are active in Social Media.

Checklist Point 16: During the Covid-19 crisis library staff was working from home, connecting online to their library. The National Library of Norway maintains webpages for self-training and to deepen competences about certain topics. Librarians in Norway have been eager to have further competence/education-possibilities for librarians. Librarians compare themselves with e.g. teachers who have very good opportunities to continue self-education throughout their career. So the National Library has a web page where you can learn about certain topics. This is self-education, for which a degree is not obtained.

Checklist Point 18: Other tasks performed by library staff vary from municipality to municipality in the local communities, since the library law in Norway does say that each municipality is obliged to have a public library, but doesn’t say anything about the amount of fundings, staff, size of the library and so on. Therefore, tasks may vary.
Checklist Point 1: During the Covid-19 crisis the General Directorate of Books, Archives and Libraries has been releasing: Regular website information, newsletter, updates on library posture, and a platform with free online resources designed to help public libraries but open to the public. The national media have given a lot of attention to this platform, which was created on Flipboard by the Libraries Department, General Directorate, and is maintained by the Portuguese Library Association. A few days after, it became a collaborative tool among libraries. It also became a place where you can find a lot of library online activities (https://flipboard.com/@RNBP_DGLAB). We’ve collected on our YouTube channel (Rede Nacional de Bibliotecas Públicas) all the videos that Portuguese public libraries have in YouTube.

Checklist Point 3: the General Directorate of Books, Archives and Libraries provides information about Covid-19 with a special eye on related fake news. On the Flipboard platform, you can find two folders with online information about covid-19 and fake news related to this subject. In addition, you may find general information produced by governmental authorities, as well as information produced by the Portuguese Health Institute, WHO and other official sources. We’ve also put together here, links to all the online version of Portuguese newspapers that open the access to the public to all the news about covid-19.


Videos made by Libraries during this last month; called #BibliotecasNaSuaCasa (Libraries at your home https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL-c8cHNch0dSakywV-Ml3YQ0xJsY9oB55

Checklist Point 5: The Covid-19 crisis is already impacting General Directorate of Books, Archives and Libraries; we had to cancel the library national conference scheduled for May 2020.

Checklist Point 9: In Portugal there is no national (public) platform with digital content for libraries (books, newspapers/magazines, music, movie). As far as we know, there is no relevant running negotiation for a national platform. Some private sector companies open their content freely to the public, but this is a small initiative.

Checklist Point 14: Some libraries have implemented lending services with adapted rules and health care measures. Their number is increasing. At this moment we’ve 21 public libraries running book lending on take-away or book-thru* and home delivering. Information in Portuguese in General-Directorate website: http://bibliotecas.dglab.gov.pt/pt/noticias/Paginas/covidebibliotecas.aspx

Checklist Point 16: Each week we send an online form for libraries to report any changes. Most libraries and “Making” online activities are on Facebook and Youtube. Very few libraries reported about online learning or training. In any case the Directorate General of Books, Archive and Libraries has offered more webinars in April (2 to 8) and registered an increase in the number of
Checklist Point 17: The General Directorate of Books, Archive and Libraries are offering more webinar sessions in March and April (see Point 16). We are planning to do the same in May if lockdown persists. The Portuguese Librarians Association (BAD) has opened freely to the public all the recordings of the online training sessions between 20012 and 2019.

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**NewsGuard:**
websites spreading fake news on Covid-19 in Great Britain, France, Germany and Italy

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EBLIDA is promoting NewsGuard as well as any other software designed to combat disinformation and misinformation. NewsGuard's peculiar feature is that it works on website evaluation; therefore, it examines the context of news, rather than its text. It does not apply filtering systems intended to eliminate information, nor uses lexical or combinatory systems forcibly based on more or less biased algorithms.

NewsGuard provides credibility ratings and detailed “Nutrition Label” reviews for the information websites that account for 90% of online engagement with news in each country in which it operates (France, Germany, Italy, the U.K., and the U.S.). The ratings are conducted by trained analysts from diverse backgrounds, who review and describe the websites’ adherence to nine journalistic criteria. Each news website receives a Green or Red rating. Green-Red ratings signal if a website generally is diffusing accurate and correct information or knowingly publishes falsehood and propaganda.

Here is the NewsGuard list of websites which diffused fake news or disinformed citizens about Covid-19. For more detailed information, follow the Coronavirus Misinformation Tracking Center: [https://www.newsguardtech.com/coronavirus-misinformation-tracking-center/](https://www.newsguardtech.com/coronavirus-misinformation-tracking-center/)

**France**

AlterInfo.net  
AubeDigitale.com  
Cogito.com  
EgaliteEtReconciliation.fr  
EpochTimes.fr  
Fawks-News.com  
FL24.net  
Fr.SputnikNews.com  
French.PressTV.com  
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As COVID-19 has spread across the globe, NewsGuard’s team of journalists has been tracking, rating, and flagging websites spreading information about the disease in the Coronavirus Misinformation Tracking Center. The tracker lists a growing number of websites that have published false claims about COVID-19, from false cures and phony treatments to conspiracy theories about the disease’s origins.

Many of the sites in the tracking center publish the same hoaxes and myths as misinformation spreads virally from one domain to another and through social media posts that amplify false articles. Here, we document and debunk the top 10 COVID-19 myths that have spread across these sites—and trace how each myth emerged and began to spread across the internet.

Click each myth below to see its entry. Or scroll down to browse through the full list.

1. **MYTH:** “The COVID-19 virus was stolen out of a Canadian lab by Chinese spies.”
2. **MYTH:** “The COVID-19 virus contains ‘HIV-like insertions,’ suggesting it was engineered.”
3. **MYTH:** “The COVID-19 pandemic was predicted in a simulation.”
6. MYTH: “5G cell phone technology is linked to the coronavirus outbreak.”
7. MYTH: “Colloidal silver can cure COVID-19.”
8. MYTH: “Miracle Mineral Solution can cure COVID-19.”
9. MYTH: “Garlic can cure COVID-19.”
10. MYTH: “High doses of vitamin C have been proven to be an effective treatment for COVID-19.”

About the Newsletter

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Editors: Unless otherwise specified, all articles are written by the EBLIDA Secretariat.

EBLIDA-LIST is a general mailing list intended to foster communications between EBLIDA, its membership and members of the European library community. The goal is to facilitate information exchange as well as professional communication and development within the EBLIDA community. Subscribe now!

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