

What is being discussed

Almost 100 years ago, the first traveling library in Germany was founded in Worms. The book bus ran between the years 1925 and 1928 and was then discontinued. The first permanent traveling library was founded in 1929 by the Dresden Municipal Library. Since 1976, the bookmobile has also existed in the district of Cuxhaven. Today, there are 87 traveling libraries in Germany, about half of them in large cities, the other half in rural areas. And what about internationally? Internationally, there are truck-mounted libraries in Australia, small vans in Holland, book boats in Norway and living book transporters, such as elephants in Thailand and camels in Kenya - but how do book buses work in the age of digitization and AI? And what services do these mobile libraries offer and how do they fit into the modern media landscape?

In this country, outreach libraries also call themselves: Autobücherei, BI-Bus, Bibliobus, Büchermobil, Büchereibus, Fahrbücherei 2.0, MakerMobil, MedienMobil, Mobile Bibliothek der Dinge, Mobiler Makerpoint, Mobil Library, all the way to "Wanderbücherei," which can be visited in Cuxhaven. But what else needs to change, except perhaps the term, to give a future to the tasks, development and organization of traveling libraries? After all, mobile libraries are still considered "exotic" and outdated, and not only by library professionals. That's why, after the 2019 traveling library congress in Hannover, the second meeting in Cuxhaven will once again offer the opportunity to counteract this impression and present the diversity, efficiency and modernity of today's bookmobiles to a broad public.

Libraries play a key role in the democratic, social, cultural and educational landscape. They make a significant contribution to democracy building, civic participation and public involvement. In structurally weak areas, such as the outskirts and suburbs of cities, as well as in rural areas, traveling libraries provide the necessary supply of information, media and news. But how can this key role in front of bookmobiles be strengthened, and where do they need to move themselves in order to remain future-proof and not "behind the dike"?

When the doors of mobile libraries open, not only children's eyes are opened, but also a world of knowledge, encounters and entertainment for all users. The vehicles carry between 3,000 and 6,000 physical media for borrowing. In addition, mobile libraries provide access to a huge range of digital media. They also offer educational and cultural events and, last but not least, the rolling libraries are a meeting place for citizens, helping them to form their own opinions about the challenges facing our society. But what should bookmobiles do in the future in order to continue to meet the evolving demands of society? Currently, libraries teach media and information literacy and help people evaluate sources as well as secure information and news versus fake news, but what more is needed to continue to provide free information and knowledge without limits at "Free Ride"?

Look forward to an exciting discussion with moderator Dr. Dirk Wissen and his discussants Magarete von Schwarzkopf, journalist and cultural editor of the NDR, Ulrich Rode, editor-in-chief of the Cuxhavener Nachrichten and Niederelbezeitung, and Christoph Linne, editor-in-chief of the Nordseezeitung.