

Survive: The libraries

Not only are 21st century libraries straddling the frontier between the e-book revolution and the romance of print, they are also morphing into art galleries, studios, experimental spaces and, cool places to hang out! And, some of the world's most cutting edge libraries are a stone's throw from you.



Library, TU Delft

In 2012, the library was voted among the 7 coolest libraries in the world by CNN. But it's not just incredible architecture and thousands of books that make the library cool; it is also the epicentre of some very interesting innovations. Besides the heritage collection and initiatives such as the Unidentified Heritage Object, they also make an effort to introduce students to art through exhibitions. The session was conceptualised and executed by a TU student. "In many ways, art stimulates technology and the library can be a great space to encourage students to think out of the box," said Marion Vredeling, Library Program Manager. The library hosts the popular Meet the Rector project and also pioneered the Human Library concept, a discussion with two human books. "We

want students to see the library as their space. If they have an idea that we feel will appeal to a larger audience and help students grow, we can provide rooms, computers, projectors, whatever they may need. Eventually, we would like students to think of the library as ‘the place to be’ on campus,” she added.

www.library.tudelft.nl

Bibliotheek Den Haag

The Bibliotheek Den Haag is among the best reasons to get out of Delft. This five-storey library, set in the City Hall, is ideal for a day of browsing and research. Hop on to Tram 1 and hop off at the Spui. There’s free Wifi here, a stocked café, and an entire lounging floor, complete with sofas, study tables and even recliners. This floor even has sound proof rooms for musicians with finicky neighbours, a stage for live performances and a recording studio. “We also host a number of events in English such as talks by writers, lectures on current affairs, writing workshops, courses in art and have an English Reading Circle among other things,” explained Reinier Horjus. The Bibliotheek has a large collection of books in English and section of books to help you learn Dutch. The library also has an extensive collection of e-books for the digitally converted. “We want people to see the Bibliotheek as a living room for the neighbourhood. We want to promote education, culture, information and meeting among citizens,” he added.

Basic annual membership fee: €31.50 (€10.00 for students)

www.bibliotheekdenhaag.nl

DOK

In 2008, the Shifted Librarian called Delft’s DOK “a library of the future”. The DOK calls itself a Library Concept Centre and, according to its website, “is on a mission to become the world’s most modern library”. Before the new library space opened in 2007, designers consulted with consumers to determine what people want from such a public space. The result was this sun-lit library with movable bookshelves, play areas and not only a central seating area, but nooks and corners where you can settle down with your laptop or book and feel at home. There are music chairs, giant screens, Playstations, Wiis, and even some funky iPod sofas that keep the teenage clientele coming back. Besides an art

gallery on the premises which promotes new artists, the library also hosts exhibitions in its foyer. They have an art-to-borrow membership, which allows people to change their office/home decor from time to time. Though the English language books and CDs collection is considerably smaller than in the Hague, you'll still find enough classics or popular fiction to keep you busy between exams. Did we mention, there's free wifi?

Budget annual membership fee: €39

www.dok.info