

Information institutions

Module objective:

- to characterize and distinguish among various kinds of information institutions,
- to distinguish among individual types of libraries
- to know and be able to use specific library services
- to know what documents you may find in a particular institution
- to know how to proceed in order to find and acquire a document or its copy

Keywords:

information institution, memory institution, library, archive, museum, gallery, information department, database centre, information specialist, interlibrary loan service (ILS), document delivery service (DDS), reference services, search services, loan services

Basic terms:

Information institution - an institution which stores, processes, provides and enables access to information.

Memory institution - libraries, archives, museums, research institutes and universities, the objective of which is to protect and enable access to documents of cultural heritage.

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1. MODULE INTRODUCTION

Each institution may offer you various information, services and, above all, documents and other information sources. It is therefore recommended to go through their websites and find out what various institutions may bring you. Do not learn by heart, learn to orientate on the websites.

2. LIBRARIES

A library is a cultural, information and educational institution. Its main activity comprises compiling, processing, storing and enabling access to an **organized** collection of documents. These documents are selected in such a way that the given library stock satisfies the information needs of its target readers.

Library system in the Czech Republic

- a) Libraries established by the Ministry of Culture of the Czech Republic
- b) Specialized libraries (university, central, scientific etc.)
- c) Regional libraries
- d) Basic libraries

2. 1 LIBRARIES ESTABLISHED BY THE MINISTRY OF CULTURE OF THE CZECH REPUBLIC

- **National Library of the Czech Republic:** The largest library in the Czech Republic manages a general library stock complemented with specialized stocks; it permanently stores depository and historical stocks. <http://www.nkp.cz>
- **Library and Printing Office for the Blind,** <http://www.ktn.cz>
- **Moravian Library in Brno** A research organization doing research and experimental development, and spreading their results. It serves as the regional library for the South Moravian Region. <http://www.mzk.cz>

2. 2 SPECIALIZED LIBRARIES

Libraries focused on individual fields of knowledge - engineering, medicine, law, pedagogy, agriculture, food industry, museums etc. We distinguish among university libraries, central and scientific libraries, and other specialized types.

2. 2. 1 UNIVERSITY (ACADEMIC) LIBRARIES

Each university has its information facilities intended for study, scientific and creative work of students and teachers (and the general public as well); each library stock profile thus corresponds with the fields which are studied at the given university. Directory of university libraries: <http://platan.vc.cvut.cz/advs?todo=uvod>.

2. 2. 1. 1 Masaryk University libraries

Masaryk University has no central university library; there are 8 libraries usually containing stock according to fields studied at the individual faculties (except for Masaryk University Campus Library, which manages the stock of three faculties). Within faculties there are also individual department libraries. Union catalogue of all MU libraries. You will find a directory to MU libraries at <http://www.muni.cz/services/library/>.

2. 2. 2 CENTRAL AND SCIENTIFIC LIBRARIES

These libraries are intended for specialists and scientists, as well as for students and the general public. Examples:

- **National Pedagogical Library of J. A. Comenius in Prague**, <http://www.npkk.cz>
- **National Technical Library in Prague**, <http://www.techlib.cz>
- **National Medical Library**, <http://www.nlk.cz>
- **Agricultural and Food Library in Prague**, <http://www.knihovna.uzpi.cz>
- **Academy of Sciences Library**, <http://www.lib.cas.cz>

2. 2. 3 OTHER SPECIALIZED INSTITUTIONS

The content of a library stock results from the type of activity of the institution which established it. Among such libraries may be libraries established by government organizations or libraries within other subjects. They are intended for a narrow readership.

In this category we may mention e.g. **Parliamentary Library of the Czech Republic** (<http://www.psp.cz/kps/knih>) or **Library of Ecological Institute Veronica** (<http://www.veronica.cz/?id=19>).

Museums, galleries, archives, monasteries and castles also often have their own libraries. You may arrange to come and study their materials on-site. Off-site loans are not common.

2. 3 REGIONAL LIBRARIES

They hold and enable access to information stocks else inaccessible, such as stocks of historical and regional literature. A list of regional libraries in the Czech Republic: <http://www.knihovny.cz/kde-je-moje-knihovna/adresare>.

2. 4 BASIC LIBRARIES

Basic libraries are run by municipalities and are also called public, local or municipal libraries. They serve a wide readership (children, pensioners, students or the general public) and satisfy their cultural and educational needs. They usually contain a selection of scientific texts, fiction, and sometimes even audio media; they often have special sections for children and youth, and reading rooms.

Hint! Find out what services your nearest basic library offers.

2.5 FOREIGN LIBRARIES



Unless you find required books in the Czech Republic, you may order documents from foreign libraries within the scope of ILS (International Interlibrary Loan Service). You can use websites and catalogues of foreign libraries. The most important ones are listed below.

A list of selected foreign libraries: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_libraries.

3 ARCHIVE, MUSEUM, GALLERY, INFORMATION CENTRE

3. 1 MUSEUM, GALLERY, ARCHIVE

A **museum** is an institution which collects, documents, protects, exhibits and interprets tangible heritage and related information. A **gallery** is an institution which collects, protects and exhibits works of art. An **archive** is an institution which stores, protects, records and enables access to written resources of historical value.

3. 2 INFORMATION DEPARTMENT, INFORMATION CENTRE

An **information department** is an institution providing information services, or a service point authorized to enable access to documents issued or collected by a given organization.

An **information centre** - a section of a library or information institution providing, above all, reference, bibliographic and factual services.

4 OTHER OPTIONS WHERE TO SEARCH FOR INFORMATION

- **Database centres:** We will deal with database centres and databases in the following modules.
- **People:** *Oldtimers, specialists in given fields, information specialists etc.*
- **Internet:** Searching on the Internet will be dealt with in detail in the following modules.

MODULE SUMMARY

You have got acquainted with basic information institutions, found out what various information institutions have to offer, and therefore you know to what kind of institution to turn with your concrete request.