

Building a living library Wiel Arets & Bas Savenije

In september 2004 the new library building of Utrecht University was opened. It houses the former Central Library and the library facilities for a number of faculties. Its main functions are reading rooms (with 12 km of books and magazines and 550 workplaces), depots (with 65 km of documents), and staff offices (160 persons).

The building is in the center of the campus De Uithof and also functions as a meeting place for the university's staff and students. The building, therefore, also houses an auditorium, a cafeteria and several shops.

Flexibility is an important aspect of the functionality, which is, among others, realised by an open structure of the building.

The construction of the building is remarkable: the huge depots are hanging in the air like clouds. The reading rooms are attached to them, which gives the library a spectacular atmosphere.

In the presentation the architect and the patron (the library director) will explain the library's functionality, the architecture and the relation between them. They will also go into the 9 year process that has led to this remarkable result.

Bas Savenije (1947) graduated in philosophy in 1977. Since then, he has held a range of positions at Utrecht University, among which director of Strategic Planning and director Budgeting and Control.

Since 1994 he is university librarian of Utrecht University, managing the comprehensive university library. He has initiated a pervasive innovation program for the library aimed at implementing and continuously improving electronic services. One of the results is a program for electronic publishing and archiving services at the university library of Utrecht.

Recently, he has been leading a complex reorganisation process of the library in which the traditional decentralised structure of the library was replaced by a more efficient structure based on the concept of shared services.

Bas is President of the NVB (the Netherlands Association for Library, Information and Knowledge Professionals), a member of the Board of FOBID (the Dutch Federation of Organisations in the Field of Libraries, Information and Documentation) and also a member of the Executive Committee of EBLIDA (the European Bureau of Library, Information and Documentation Associations).

Futhermore, he is a member of the steering committee of the worldwide SPARC organisation (the Scholarly Publishing and Academic Resources Coalition) and chairman of the board of SPARC Europe.

Bas has written publications about (among others) university management, library innovation, library management, academic publishing and open access for scientific information.

See also <http://www.library.uu.nl/staff/savenije>