



## Librarian Spotlight

“Being able to participate in making knowledge available to everyone and through that make the world a little bit better”

### An interview with Louise Otting



#### 1. What made you decide to become a librarian?

I've always loved to read books; I cannot remember a time where I wasn't reading one. During my quest to find a job that I enjoyed and would make use of my skills, the idea of being a librarian sneaked up on me. I worked with a lot of libraries when I worked for a company organizing writing courses and when it was time to find something else, I started at a public library.

#### 2. What's the best thing about being a librarian?

Being able to participate in making knowledge available to everyone and through that (hopefully) make the world a little bit better. There are so many challenges that we face, and I think it is remarkable to be able to work in a place that does not charge people for being there and tries to help them find the knowledge to meet these challenges in some way.

#### 3. Tell us about your favourite book?

This is a horrible question for a bookworm like me, it's like asking to pick a favourite child. I'll give you my top 3 favourite writers, Neil Gaiman, Terry Pratchett, and Steven Erikson. All three in their own way use imaginary worlds to give sharp observations on our society. They show both the horrible things we do as humans and how we might redeem ourselves if we use kindness and compassion as our guides. They truly write books where I've laughed, cried, and felt uplifted, sometimes all three within one chapter.

#### 4. After a hard day, what do you do to relax?

Cuddle with my husband and kids, curl up on the sofa with a cup of tea and a book, or watch something on the TV. If it is a particularly hard day, blankets may be involved and all three might be combined.

#### 5. In your opinion, what are the most important skills to have when working as a librarian?

Juggling 20 things at the same time, not being discouraged when you have to prove you are relevant (again), and still being able to kindly help people to find what they are looking for.

#### 6. What's your favourite place in your library?

The coffee corner from which you have an excellent view of the Library hall and the iconic book wall and, of course, the very good hot drinks help as well.

#### 7. In your opinion, what is the importance of the library?

It is one of the few places left where you are allowed to be without having to spend money and where people are happy to help you find the knowledge you seek. It is a safe place.

#### 8. Tell us about your chill-out area/library nook in your library (if you have one)?

We have two, one is a coffee place within the library, where you can find drinks and snacks and chat or work at the tables. The other one is a corner where we have two massage chairs, a power nap pod, and a mindfulness cabin. Especially during exam periods, these are used a lot, and we schedule extra relaxing events as well, like cuddling with a dog or yoga classes.

#### 9. What is your favourite part of the day at work?

Brainstorm sessions with my colleagues, where we find new ideas to collaborate and show how important the library is.

#### 10. Could you give us one book recommendation that everyone should read?

*Humankind: A Hopeful History* by Rutger Bregman

#### 11. If you had to describe a library in one word, what would it be?

Sanctuary.

Thanks to Louise Otting, Collection Manager at TU Delft Library, Netherlands, and member of IOP Publishing's Library Advisory Board, for agreeing to take part in our Librarian Spotlight.

