



Librarian Spotlight

“Don’t be so modest, because library employees have a lot of knowledge. Show it!”

An interview with Just de Leeuwe



1. Why did you become a librarian?

I was trained and graduated as an economic historian where structuring and analyzing data are important for research. After this study, I did document management as post-academic education to improve my position on the labour market. I then worked for many years at engineering firms as an information manager. The step to an academic library was not very big, but working in a library was not a preconceived plan!

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

It is a reflection of the world we live in and how science is developing. The work you do is very diverse and changes constantly. Think of far-reaching digitization, issues about ownership of scientific publications, open licences, transparency of research and so much more.

3. Tell us about your favourite book.

I don’t have a favourite book because that changes over the years. I have been a fan of Paul Auster and Paolo Giordano for many years. For dark thrillers, I never in vain appeal to the imagination of Jo Nesbo.

4. After a hard day, how do you relax?

It is wonderful to run on the beach and in the dunes with my running buddies. Afterwards, a locally brewed beer on the couch or in the clubhouse tastes wonderful.

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

Position yourself in such a way that you are a full partner in the research life cycle, work together with the scientists. Be of service and proactive.

6. Tell us about your chill out area/nook in your library (if you have one).

I sit on top of the grass roof of our cone-shaped building with a grass reed in the mouth especially in the summer.

7. What does a typical day look like for you as a librarian?

There is no typical day for me as there are different things every day. Working on policy documents, on communication, optimizing the website, negotiating with publishers, improving workflows, meetings at local, national and international level, updating conferences and much more.

8. Is there anything you would like to share with other librarians?

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9. Could you tell us the most interesting/funniest story that happened to you working as a librarian?

In order to promote our Institutional Repository, we donated for a number of years goats to families in Bangladesh through Oxfam Novib. A great deal of thought went into the decision to donate goats through this charity: goats mow the grass and fertilize it so that it grows again, and they can continue eating. Goats are a great benefit to these families: they invest in the goat and they get something in return. The slogan was: ‘You get published, they get a goat!’. With every 1,000th upload of a publication in the TU Delft Repository, the author of that publication was also handed a cuddly goat toy from the Library. These stuffed animals were super popular among scientists. Professor Jack Pronk of Biotechnology was the 16,000th person to upload his article to the TU Delft Repository. He got a stuffed goat as a gift, but as a surprise we also had a real goat for him that was grazing on the roof of the library!

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

Currently on my bedside table is *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* by Michael Chabon. It’s a masterful book about the importance of identity and wondrous twists of fate, with a lot of humour.

11. If you had to describe a library in one word (or short phrase) what would it be?

Hub of knowledge.

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