

Erasmus
University
Library

University Library Erasmus University Rotterdam

Fit for the future

Annual report 2025

Erasmus University Rotterdam
Making Minds Matter



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Foreword

The year 2025 was all about preparing ourselves for the future. It started with a new five-year strategy for the University Library. This fits seamlessly with the Erasmus University Rotterdam (EUR) Vision & Strategy 2030, focusing on a culture of learning and collaboration, Open Science and social engagement.

Collaboration is our second nature

The Library has many partners, both internally and externally. EUR's Digital Competence Centre and university wellbeing services, for example, but also other universities and libraries in the Netherlands. As a coordinator, we helped set up the national Diamond Open Access Expertise Centre, which is committed to promoting community-driven publishing. The centre was awarded a grant to strengthen the country's open infrastructures for the next four years.

Our focus on Open Science paid off in 2025. EUR and Erasmus Medical Centre published 99.6 per cent of their scientific publications through Open Access. We also diversified our Open Access fund to encourage the University to go for alternative open publishing options. More Library success came with the NPULS Get Connected incentive scheme, which created support and tools for producing open textbooks via Wikiwijs and an accelerated connection to Edusources.



**Preserving Rotterdam heritage**

On the occasion of the retirement of the Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet (RLK) librarian Roman Koot, we held a mini-symposium. The theme: Rotterdam as a book city and the RLK's role in showcasing its rich diversity. In December, at the end of the Rotterdam Year of Women, we signed a covenant committing ourselves to making Rotterdam women's heritage a sustainable part of our collections.

Another of the Library's regional activities last year was joining the Rotterdam collections emergency response network. In doing so, we're participating in a collective plan to safeguard the city's heritage collections in the event of emergencies.

Going digital responsibly

We've been busy on the digital innovation front too. Our Erasmian Language Model has evolved into SHARE, a series of AI models specifically for social sciences and humanities. Library experiments with machine-generated metadata were positively received, and we've created digital information literacy workshops for students, researchers and lecturers with a focus on the use of Generative AI.

Looking back at all the events of the past year, I can certainly say that – despite the pressure of financial cutbacks and fast-moving external developments – we've maintained our positive mentality and commitment to achieving our goals. What a great team of colleagues I have! Together we are fit for the future.

Lucinda M. Jones
Director of the Erasmus University Library/ Librarian of the EUR



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**Operational
excellence
and agility**



The University Library strives to be a reliable partner and inspiring space for the Erasmus University Rotterdam community. So, we continue to invest in our own organization. 2025 began with implementation of the restructuring we'd prepared for the previous year. We then took a critical look at existing procedures, such as producing and monitoring our annual plans, and at how we can incorporate the new EUR strategy into all that we do.

1.1 New ways of working

In 2024, the Library started restructuring its organization for increased efficiency, a sharper focus on its core tasks, and enhanced services for researchers and students. The organizational structure was finalized at the beginning of 2025.

Evaluation and follow-up took place throughout the year, as we looked at the pros and cons of the new structure. Staff were asked to complete a questionnaire and to attend an interactive Mentimeter session. The general impression was positive, with no complaints about efficiency or teamwork. In fact, people indicated that access to team leaders and heads of department for decision-making had improved – one of the objectives of the changes.

There are certainly issues that need to be addressed. Staff say they aren't always aware of the work done by other departments. They're also concerned about the consequences of education cuts, as well as the double roles some colleagues have to take on.

Solving staff concerns

The findings of the 2025 evaluation have led to tangible solutions.

To improve communication within the organization, different cross-departmental meetings are now combined. A revised process for producing the Library's annual plan should ensure alignment with the annual plans of the individual departments. And the effect of the new structure – plus the team leader's role – will be a regular item on the agenda of management and team leader meetings.

The Library will continue to build on the changes of the past year, aiming to become an organization that is agile, future-proof and strong in communication.

1.2 Connecting with the 2030 EUR strategy

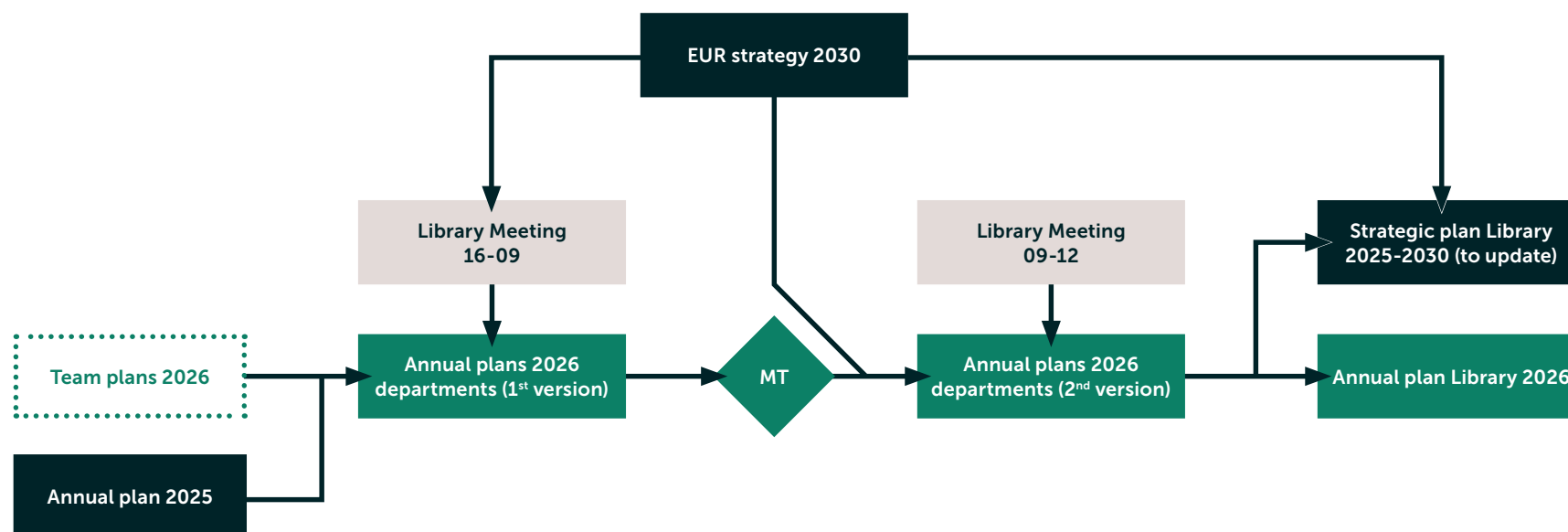
After the new EUR 2030 strategy was published in September 2025, the Library immediately got to work. During our quarterly meeting we looked at what the new strategy means for the Library and how we can put it into practice.

First, we had a general discussion about the key points, so that the strategic direction the University is taking, would be clear to us all. The next step was to start a dialogue. During an interactive session, Library staff indicated which parts of the strategy they find the most inspiring, what they consider to be the most urgent goal – or where they believe there's the most room for improvement – and what the Library's greatest contribution could be.

Plenty of ideas

At the end of the session, everyone was given the opportunity to share their thoughts on how to apply the EUR strategic goals in their working practices. That provided a whole range of ideas: from initiatives for minor improvements right up to large projects. This interactive approach made the strategy more tangible, connected it to the Library's everyday work, and encouraged staff engagement.

All our departments took the new strategy into account as they produced their annual plans. This meant connecting each of their activities and projects to the wider strategic goals of the University. We have also updated the Library's five-year plan to bring it in line with new developments.





1.3 Monitoring progress

With the Library's new, improved organizational structure, as well as the revised process for producing annual plans, we needed a transparent method for monitoring workflow. So, in 2025 we introduced the Kanban project management system, using both digital and physical boards.



Each department works with a separate Kanban board to keep a record of the activities and projects in its annual plan. This provides – at a glance – a complete picture of what needs to be done, what is in progress and what has been completed. A physical Kanban board has been placed near the reading table, so that progress is tangible in the workplace too. That enables colleagues to discuss ongoing projects in detail.

Quarterly updates

We use our quarterly Library meetings to make sure the whole organization is fully informed. All departments then have the opportunity to give updates on the activities and projects in their annual plans and to ask colleagues for any help they might need.

This combination of digital and physical monitoring, plus regular progress meetings, ensures that the Library keeps track of plan implementation, and can anticipate any necessary changes. It will also make it easier for us to produce annual plans for the coming years.

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Open and Engaged Science





In 2025, the University Library continued to work towards an open, inclusive and responsible research culture. We achieved almost complete Open Access, supported open educational resources and publishing infrastructures, improved researcher visibility with ORCID, and guided the Erasmus Data Repository's transition from Figshare to DataverseNL. With these changes, we've made knowledge easier to find, access and reuse – for Erasmus University Rotterdam researchers, lecturers and students as well as for wider society.

2.1 Open Access close to 100 per cent

In 2025, the EUR reported a major milestone in Open Access. Publication figures from 2024 showed that 99.6 per cent of scholarly publications by EUR and Erasmus University Medical Center (Erasmus MC) authors were publicly available. Almost all of the University's academic publications can now be read by anyone, anywhere – without a paywall. In 2023, just 82.9 per cent of publications were Open Access. The increase reflects many years of hard work by the Library and Erasmus MC staff involved in publication workflows.

One of the drivers of this achievement was the implementation of an Open Access policy at Erasmus MC, which produces a large share of EUR's research output. Aligning the medical centre's workflows with the rest of the University therefore had a major effect.

Two possible routes

Another success factor was combining Open Access routes. The Library supports researchers with Open Access publishing deals, but if Open Access cannot be achieved that way, publications are made available through the University's Current Research Information System (CRIS). This route is important because it's a free service for both researchers and

readers. It also enabled the Library to make publications from 2015 to 2020 accessible which had previously been closed articles. The combination applies across many disciplines and types of publication.

For researchers, it means their work is easier to find, read and use. For students, professionals, policymakers, patients, journalists and wider society, it means that scientific knowledge is freely available. So Open Access supports the public value of research as well as the University's ambition to increase societal impact. It also improves the visibility of EUR research within the wider academic community.

What next?

Reaching 100 per cent Open Access is unlikely, as some publications cannot be opened and some authors choose to opt out. The challenge is: how to maintain a high percentage while making Open Access more sustainable?

In 2025, the Library continued to work towards this goal by supporting Green Open Access, Open Access books and fairer publishing models such as Diamond Open Access. In the coming years, the focus will be on helping faculties make publication choices that balance visibility, affordability and academic values.

2.2 Investing in publishing infrastructures

In 2025, the Library continued to support Open Access through the Erasmus Open Access Fund. The fund helps researchers in three ways: supporting Open Access books, strengthening Diamond Open Access, and contributing to open infrastructures.

Reaching readers inside and outside academia

Last year, the Open Access Book Fund made a total of €57,000 available for nine books. This support is important because books are a key form of academic publishing in many disciplines, especially social sciences and humanities. By supporting Open Access books, the Library helps authors reach readers inside and outside academia. The funding also makes long-form research available without paywalls.

Helping journals and platforms stay sustainable

The Diamond Open Access Fund provided a total amount of €20,000 for four initiatives. This funding makes publications free to read and free to publish – one of the fairest forms of Open Access. An example of the initiatives supported by the Library in 2025 is the Erasmus Journal for Philosophy and Economics.

Supporting community-driven initiatives

The Open Access Infrastructure Fund supported eight open infrastructures with a total of €15,500. These platforms, tools and services make open publishing possible and include OpenJournals.nl and Open Book Publishers.

Together, these funds show how the Library is broadening its support in this area. Its focus is not only on helping individual researchers to publish Open Access, but also on investing in the shared systems and communities that make Open Access reliable, affordable and future-proof. By doing so, the

Library contributes to a publishing landscape that is more open, fair and less dependent on commercial models.

2.3 Open Educational Resources on the agenda

'Fit for the future' is a perfect description of how the Library has approached Open Educational Resources (OER) in the past year. OER plays an increasingly important role in making education more accessible, flexible and future-proof.

The Library has done its best to put OER higher on the strategic agenda. Not only at policy level, but also by initiating discussions in places where education policymakers meet. Consistently putting OER on the agenda increases both awareness and the willingness to engage with it.

At the same time, the University Library actively sought out collaboration, both nationally and within the organization. For example, as a member of the Open and Online Education Libraries steering group and the education and research platform SURF Communities. Within the EUR, it works closely with the Community for Learning & Innovation to optimally align knowledge, initiatives and support.

More support for lecturers

The Library has increasingly offered lecturers advice and assistance for making the right OER choices.

Looking forward, the Library is making use of national incentive schemes. Its successful participation in the Npuls *Get Connected* scheme has provided a much-needed boost to further develop OER activities at EUR in 2025, namely the establishment of a publishing workflow and adoption of a supported authoring platform for creating open textbooks, Wikiwijs; and implementation by the EUR of the national OER repository for higher



education, Edusources. These two platforms constitute significant, practical additions to the Library's growing OER service portfolio, that provide ever more robust OER support and infrastructure, now and for the future.

Combining strategy, collaboration and practical support, the Library is working towards a time when OER has been fully adopted for use in education. Then we won't just be fit for the future – we'll be creating that future.

2.4 Get Connected

The national Npuls incentive scheme *Get Connected* has allowed the Library to take a considerable step towards a future-proof approach to digital (open) educational resources. This scheme provided €150,000 and

has certainly generated momentum: lecturers, the Library and support teams are now closely collaborating – creating benefits for both technology and practice.

The Library and EUR's Education & Student Affairs service applied for funding under two of the scheme's pillars: pillar 3 *Control over your learning path* and pillar 2 *Sharing and reusing open educational materials*. With this financial support, the Library launched two projects under pillar 2. The first project was Erasmus Gets Connected with SURF Edusources, in collaboration with the Erasmus School of Social and Behavioural Sciences and the ShareStats team. That aimed to link EUR educational materials with Edusources.

The second project was Open Textbooks. This involved a new workflow with support materials and a partnership with lecturers at the Rotterdam School of Management. The result was a publication on the Wikiwijs education platform.

Need for capacity and continuity

Both projects have built infrastructures where lecturers can store, find and reuse educational materials. They've also increased awareness of the platforms. Npuls evaluation of the projects' implementation was positive but did reflect the challenges of capacity and continuity. Building something fit for the future is certainly a learning curve.

The next step is to use communication and training to further build teacher communities that collaborate on Open Educational Resources, support lecturers and increase visibility. That will ensure that the results of this initiative become an essential part of how education is given.

2.5 Successful ORCID pilot

An ORCID iD is a unique, persistent identifier, provided free of charge by the global community-built Open Researcher and Contributor ID (ORCID) organization. Researchers can use this iD when they submit articles, apply for funding or participate in peer review. That helps researchers distinguish themselves from others with similar names and reduces administrative burden. The Library ORCID team supports researchers in creating and using their ORCID iD and ORCID record.

All research outputs, affiliations, professional activities and peer review work can be added to an ORCID record. Researchers at EUR can also connect the university's research information system Pure to their ORCID record. All affiliation information and publications added to Pure are then automatically transferred. This saves researchers time and also adds trust markers to their ORCID record. This verified data helps journal editors and other stakeholders during research integrity checks, making it easier to validate a researcher's identity and their scholarly output.

More connections to PURE

In 2025, EUR took part in ORCID's *Connecting Researchers to ORCID Member Integrations* pilot. Researchers with a verified EUR email address who had not yet connected Pure to their ORCID record received a notification from ORCID. This included a link to the EUR ORCID LibGuide, which explains the benefits of making the connection and provides step-by-step instructions. During the five-month pilot, more than 500 researchers connected Pure to their ORCID record – an increase of almost 50 per cent. ORCID has since made this 'Researcher Connect' function available to all its member organizations.

2.6 EUR repository moves from Figshare to DataverseNL

In 2025, the Library's Repository & Data Curation Team replaced the Figshare data repository platform with EUR DataverseNL. The repository allows researchers to publish research data and link their data to a publication.

The team finalized its project implementation document in early spring, which started the process of setting up a DataverseNL institutional repository. The contract was signed at the end of May. From that point onward, the team spent a large part of their time creating the environment and migrating the data from the old to the new repository system. This work, plus preservation of the original dataset object identifiers, was completed by the end of October.

Data curation ongoing

When the EUR DataverseNL was up and running, the datasets came back online and curation software could be developed, based on the DataverseNL programming interface. The new software will enable the data curator to develop better metadata entries – in line with FAIR principles – and keep curation records. It also provides reports on the number of datasets submitted for publication versus the number of draft datasets.

Multidisciplinary team

The Repository & Data Curation Team is part of the Data Management Output Capability Team. Its task is to improve services for EUR researchers while identifying any gaps. In 2025, the team finalized its management and structure, produced the first version of a service catalogue, and began work on identifying gaps.



2.7 The new Digital Competence Centre

The EUR Digital Competence Centre (DCC) is a collaboration between Engagement and Research Services, the Library and Erasmus Data Intelligence Service. Its purpose is to strengthen digital research support across four domains: dataset management, output management, research production and infrastructure.

The EUR DCC was set up because high quality research requires robust digital support. By making expertise and tools more accessible, the DCC will improve the alignment between researcher needs and the available services, while increasing efficiency and ensuring compliance with data, privacy and Open Science requirements. It will also enable EUR to respond effectively to developments in big data and research software engineering.

The EUR DCC is part of a national DCC network that is connected to organizations such as the SURF education and research platform, the DANS centre of research data expertise, and the ODISSEI research infrastructure for social sciences. The network enables coordinated development of services and infrastructure.

Expert teams

In 2025, following evaluation of a pilot phase, the collaboration's expert teams were finalized and processes were harmonized. External funding gave the teams an opportunity to design new services. This included the SURF Research Cloud, which allows tailored virtual research environments to be created for specific use cases and security levels. Another project aims to create a coherent training programme on research software and data interoperability.

3

**Learning and
collaborating**



The University Library aims to provide an inspiring study environment that facilitates learning, research and collaboration for all. But it's just as important that all our users and visitors feel at home and are able to relax. In 2025, working in partnership with other university teams, we once again introduced some useful support services and organized interesting programmes and activities.

3.1 Student wellbeing in 2025

In 2025, the University Library further strengthened its commitment to student wellbeing. The semi-annual Student Wellbeing Week has become a familiar part of the Library calendar, offering students a place to relax and step away from daily academic pressures.

In 2025, creative students could make paper flowers, while others enjoyed games such as snooker, Mikado and various board games. The ever-popular colouring sheets, puzzles, LEGO and card games were again available.

Relieving exam stress

Because the need for relaxation extends beyond Wellbeing Weeks, these materials remain accessible during busy exam periods. To encourage leisure reading, a book display, curated by the Wellbeing Coordinator and the Collections department, is placed next to the information desk with alternating themes.

We make sure there's a really nice, welcoming atmosphere in the Library during special occasions and holidays. During Halloween, for example, students could stop by a spookily decorated information desk for a treat, and the book display featured a matching themed collection.

Student wellbeing in the ISS Library

The Library of the International Institute of Social Studies (ISS) also paid attention to student wellbeing in 2025. A dedicated, quiet study zone was created where students can study in a relaxed atmosphere. Games and puzzles are also permanently available, giving students the opportunity to take a break and unwind during shorter moments of relaxation.

The informal coffee and tea moments in the ISS Library also proved very popular. Several times a year, the Library offers free coffee and tea. Students are happy to make use of these moments to take a break and have a chat with Library staff.

A particularly memorable initiative was a 'cat cuddling session'. A colleague brought two cats to the Library, giving students the opportunity to unwind and de-stress in a fun and relaxed setting. The initiative proved so popular that it was later repeated at the Library in Rotterdam.

3.2 Libby: the leisure reading app

“Before you sleep, read something
that is exquisite and worth remembering.”

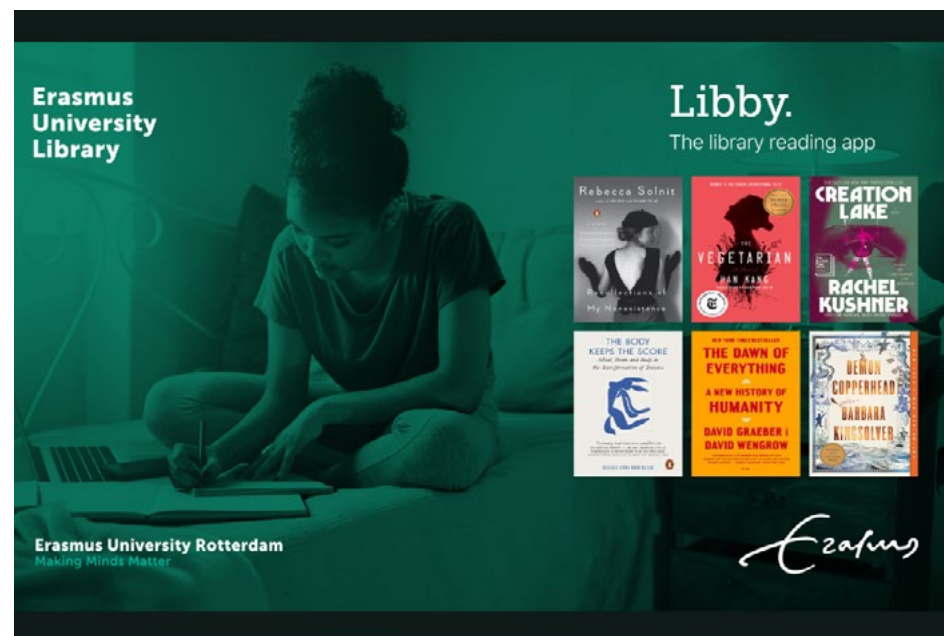
– Desiderius Erasmus

In 2025, the Library launched a new app for digital leisure reading. With the Libby app, students and university staff have direct access to a wide range of fiction and non-fiction e-books and audiobooks on their favourite devices. This enriches their reading experience and contributes to their wellbeing. Each month, we launch a new collection with a specific theme, such as student wellbeing, campus life, or books that have been banned or censored.

Erasmus University Rotterdam is the first university in the Netherlands to offer the Libby app, which seamlessly connects to our existing collection. There has already been a great deal of interest in the new service, with 339 unique users and 1,174 checkouts in 2025. Audiobooks seem to be the most popular so far. The Library has deliberately chosen anonymous access for its users. With easy access via SURFconext, no personally identifiable information is traceable. We continuously strive to provide a safe space for our students – in all our services.

More book options

Libby is part of the Library’s Literary & Cultural Programme. This programme offers students not only a place to study but also a place to relax. The Library has launched several initiatives that promote student wellbeing. With our literary programme, we aim to address the sometimes stressful



and overwhelming moments in student life – by offering a space to dream, escape from studying and daily worries, and explore ideas that are relevant beyond academic life.

The programme also includes our podcast *Bookmarks & Dog Ears*, which celebrates the love of reading, as well as book clubs and an annual book market. Additionally, the Library holds an extensive physical collection of fiction.

4

Societal engagement and knowledge exchange

The University Library actively promotes public engagement and knowledge sharing. We work closely with internal and external partners and position ourselves as a strong advocate for Open Access. We also prioritize broad access to knowledge through digitization and open infrastructures. In addition, we offer an inspiring literary and cultural programme, including a collaboration with the Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet. In doing so, we enhance our impact and contribute to an inclusive, learning and engaged academic community.

4.1 New librarian for the Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet

In 2025, the Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet (RLK) and the University Library welcomed Suzie Hermán as new RLK librarian and Special Collections curator. She's the successor to Roman Koot, who contributed to the visibility and development of this special collection for many years.

At Erasmus University Rotterdam, the RLK connects academic knowledge with literature and the city itself. Although the RLK is nearly two centuries old, its collection, activities and services are far from static. It's a dynamic collection that reflects today's society. The RLK brings students, researchers, members and the people of Rotterdam together for books, ideas and debate.

Bridge between university and city

The Library's 2025 literary programme was all about building bridges. Talks, book clubs and joint cultural events covered current issues such as identity and inclusion, democracy and social change. Former Mayor of Rotterdam Ahmed Aboutaleb, Professor Saskia Pieterse, theologian Janneke Stegeman, and contemporary writers such as Abdelkader Benali showed how literature and heritage contribute to dialogue and knowledge sharing.

Partnerships with cultural institutions and locations like Poetry International, Rotterdam bookshops, the Kunsthal, the Mauritshuis and Museum Rotterdam increase the visibility and societal impact of the RLK collections. Through loans for exhibitions and public events, parts of the Library's Special Collections reach diverse audiences beyond the walls of the Library.

Together with the RLK team, Suzie will continue to strengthen the ties between university and city, make hidden stories accessible, and bring together literature and knowledge. It's what RLK has done so well since 1859: collecting books *and* connecting people.



Suzie Hermán



4.2 Making stories visible

A library shares knowledge but also determines which stories are told. The EUR Library's ambition is to create a collection and programme that give a voice to different perspectives and histories.

In 2025, this led to an extra focus on Rotterdam stories and the visibility of women in science, literature and the city itself. By signing the Rotterdam Women's Heritage Covenant last year, EUR underlined its commitment to increasing the visibility of women's cultural heritage. The Library's role: collection, storage, research and presentation.

Women's contribution to knowledge creation

An example of this is the focus on representation within the EUR itself. The Library is partnering with the university's IDEA (Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Access) Center and Academic Historical Cabinet to showcase female professors who created knowledge and are now role models. Representation matters: it contributes to recognition, inspiration and a more inclusive academic climate. The Library's Special Collections include female authors, thinkers and creators. In doing so, it incorporates voices that have historically been marginalized, contributing to a richer and more complete account of literary and cultural history.

Local heritage

The Rotterdam focus connects the University with society at large. Collections about the city's writers and artists, plus social and urban developments, are a starting point for education, research and open discussion.

By making these stories visible, the Library brings knowledge back to the city while bringing the city into the university. This not only stores this cultural heritage – it also uses it to actively contribute to public engagement and new perspectives.

4.3 Emergency planning for collections

In 2025, we joined the Rotterdam collections emergency response network. Several large and small museums in the city participate in this network, as well as the Central Library and the Rotterdam City Archive. Emergency planning enables efficient and effective action during situations in which a collection may be at risk.

By joining forces in this network with other organizations that manage collections, we can support and improve each other's procedures. Meetings are held to share information and practices, and we also visit each other's locations. This collaboration helps us to safeguard the city's valuable collections. At the same time, we would benefit from each other's assistance and expertise in the event of an emergency.

Possible future risks

Besides the details of emergency planning, we also discuss the bigger issues within the network. What is the effect of climate change on each of our locations? How can we be alert now to possible future risks? The network members aim to have joint consultations with experts in the field and regional safety authorities.

We are taking precautions in several ways to improve the safety and security of our collections. An effective local network is a vital part of this action.

4.4 Symposia in 2025

When there is a milestone to mark, the Library does so with appropriate care. Two special gatherings were held in 2025 to show its appreciation to long-standing contributions.

Medals for a curator

On 19 March, there was a festive symposium in the university's Senate Hall and Erasmus Gallery to say farewell to Herman Gerritsen, curator of the Nederlands Economisch Penningkabinet (NEPK). He had worked there on a voluntary basis for over eighteen years. The NEPK is a unique collection of medals that is part of the EUR's academic heritage and is managed by the Library.

In honour of his significant contribution to this collection, Mr Gerritsen was awarded the prestigious Rotterdam municipal council's Erasmus medal, which was presented to him by Said Kasmi, executive member responsible

for Education, Culture and Events. EUR also honoured him with its own Centenary Medal.

Rotterdam's literary past

On 16 October, the Erasmus Pavilion Theatre hosted the mini symposium *Rotterdam Book City: The hidden history of the book in Rotterdam*.

Abdelkader Benali moderated at the event, which was also held to bid farewell to Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet (RLK) librarian Roman Koot.

Guest speakers told inspiring stories: Alex Alsemgeest (curator of the Rijksmuseum Library Collections), John Tholen (curator of the Rotterdam Central Library's Heritage Collection) and Leo van de Wetering (director of Rotterdam's largest bookstore Donner). The poet Anne Vegter read from her own work. And there was the annual presentation of a special Library and RLK publication, produced by Pieter Kers with text by Abdelkader Benali and illustrations by Tja Ling Hu.





4.5 Patient experience stories for research

In 2025, Library Research Support collaborated with Prof. Hester van de Bovenkamp from the Erasmus School of Health Policy & Management on an innovative project. It involved the analysis of a unique collection of over 6,500 published patient experience stories, the largest of its kind in the Netherlands.

Patient stories are a valuable source of information. Knowing how people experience their illness, care and recovery provides insights that aren't usually found in conventional medical or policy data. The size of the collection, however, makes it difficult to identify long-term patterns and developments with manual analysis methods. Therefore, a research methodology was developed to address this challenge while allowing the researcher to remain in control of the process.

Tool adds quality to quantity

The SUMMA tool used for the project combines computational analysis techniques with qualitative methods to facilitate exploratory data analysis. That enables researchers to systematically explore large amounts of text but to interpret the results themselves.

This approach brings together different research disciplines. Quantitative methods reveal key issues and trends, while qualitative analysis provides context, nuance and an understanding of individual experience. The combination means that new research questions can be formulated, and patient perspectives studied, at a scale that wasn't previously feasible.

Collaborations like these demonstrate how the Library can assist with innovative and socially relevant research. Its expertise in digital research methods, data analysis and research infrastructures can help pave the way for better insights for researchers, healthcare professionals and policymakers.

5

Digital innovation and AI



Generative AI is rapidly transforming both education and research. The University Library wants to continue to work independently while managing any risk, so we're looking at AI from all sides and sharing the knowledge we acquire. Our focus is threefold: efficient internal processes, advisory courses and guidelines, and hands-on research support. This should protect our democratic values as we help students and researchers navigate safely through this new landscape.

5.1 From the Erasmian Language Model to SHARE

The challenges of large AI models are high energy use and potential privacy issues. By developing responsible alternatives, the Library wants to make a positive contribution to reducing the risks involved.

Our first pilot project was the Erasmian Language Model (ELM). This has just 900 million parameters and was exclusively trained on EUR data (i.e. academic publications and student theses). Although much smaller than commercial models, its performance within this context is excellent, offering a privacy-friendly and cost-effective alternative to commercial software such as ChatGPT.

Tailored to social sciences and humanities

In 2025, the follow-up to this initiative was SHARE: the first language model to be completely (and exclusively) trained for social sciences and humanities. Context-specific training has made SHARE perform at the same level as models that are trained on a hundred times larger dataset. MIRROR is a unique user interface that is linked to SHARE and checks texts without generating any itself. So, it has no impact on critical thinking and academic integrity is maintained.

The Library had a pivotal role in project development. The Future Library Lab (FLL) collected data to train the models. FLL also provided support during technical implementation. All of this has greatly contributed to the Library's digital maturity. We're now sharing our acquired knowledge and expertise with the wider EUR community. It is also being put to good use in other projects and for enhancing general research support, so the whole academic community can benefit from this technological innovation.

5.2 Machine-generated metadata

Generative AI offers increasing opportunities to make library processes smarter and more efficient. In 2025, we began to explore this technology for application in our workflows.

Faster and higher quality cataloguing

For creating and managing bibliographic descriptions of publications in MARC21 format – the international standard for library metadata – we've built a ChatGPT tool. Staff can now easily create new records, edit existing records, and check records for errors. This allows our cataloguers to focus on the quality of the description itself.

Improved consistency and findability

Using Microsoft PowerApps and AI Builder, we've developed a tool that accelerates the metadata process and allows staff to search for subject terms across a number of vocabularies. These terms and their unique digital identifiers can be copied directly into the relevant records.

Better access to valuable heritage material

We have experimented with Google AI Studio for describing digitized items from the Special Collections. This tool automatically extracts metadata such as author names, places and dates. In addition, we've created document transcriptions and translations, making valuable heritage material more accessible.

**Linked Open Data**

Another ChatGPT tool we've created allows cataloguers to gather information from various archives using deep research. Information on, for example, individuals and organizations, is then converted into Wikidata records with links to the sources. This increases the global visibility of our heritage.

The human eye remains at the heart of all our applications. Generative AI supports our staff but does not replace their expertise, and internal guidelines for responsible use will safeguard the quality and reliability of our collection data.

5.3 GenAI guidance

The Library supports students, PhD candidates and lecturers with a range of e-modules focused on responsible and effective use of Generative AI (GenAI). These provide tailored guidance for different use cases and user groups. Topics include appropriate and inappropriate use, common challenges and ethical concerns, effective prompting techniques, and the role GenAI can play in research and academic writing. The modules are regularly updated to reflect new developments in this rapidly evolving field.

Practical workshops

Researchers can attend workshops on GenAI use during the research cycle. These provide more in-depth explanations of AI technology – what it can and cannot do, and why it may not be suitable for every research context. Practical examples help participants better understand the strengths and limitations. The Library will continue to offer these workshops, alongside a graduate course provided through the Erasmus Graduate School for Social Sciences and Humanities.



Knowledge-sharing taskforce

The Library has set up a Generative AI taskforce to prepare for the technology's impact within the Library and across the University. This includes representatives from each Library department and aims to strengthen internal knowledge sharing about developments at EUR, while also monitoring how GenAI is being used within the Library and identifying future opportunities for its application.

The taskforce has already completed an audit of current Library use of GenAI, including related services for students, lecturers and researchers. In addition, it is developing a vision and policy framework to guide the Library's future GenAI approach for both internal operations and external services.

5.4 Support for tech-enabled research practices

The library is actively engaged in several research projects and grant proposal activities that aim to explore and advance the use of machine learning (ML) and artificial intelligence (AI) in academic research.

Our role is to bridge the gap between emerging technological opportunities and researchers' needs. That involves translating research questions, ideas and challenges into feasible plans, approaches and implementation strategies. Working closely with the researcher, we help identify where ML and AI can add value throughout the process – from data collection to knowledge generation.

The support we can provide extends across every stage of the research lifecycle. This support includes proposal preparation for grant applications, project implementation, data analysis, and research outputs for publication.

Our flexible and tailored approach

We provide dedicated one-to-one collaboration with individual researchers, as well as support for interdisciplinary research teams and larger collaborative initiatives. By combining ML and AI expertise with an understanding of academic research practices, we can help researchers towards responsible and effective applications within their disciplines.

In 2025, we collaborated on a diverse portfolio of research projects across a number of EUR faculties. This ranged from participating in a research consortium *ROOTS 1000: Research on Opportunities for Optimal Thriving and Scalability in the First 1000 Days* for, multiple sprints for the research project on patient stories, and a research project on conspiracy theories and history – where ML and AI-enabled approaches were explored and applied.

All Library contributions aim to strengthen the integration of ML and AI into academic research, while supporting researchers in developing innovative and impactful practices.

6

The Library in numbers

Collection size

Physical collection

**875.576**

Physical books

**176**

Physical magazines

**25.016**

Physical book collection in meters

E-collection

**1.485.894**

E-books

**146.025**

E-magazines



Libby app

215

Purchased e-books

97

Purchased audiobooks

Collection use **18.446**

Physical collection

**10.117.196**

E-collection *

**339**Unique users
Libby App

* E-magazines + e-books + Pure Portal

Support

Opening hours
University Library

Week days:

08:00 – 23:00

Weekends:

09:00 – 23:00



Wellbeing



3.484

Played meditations
MindfulnessBusiness operations UL ISS RLK

* Excl. collection budget RLK

UL = University LibraryISS = International Institute of Social StudiesRLK = Rotterdamsch Leeskabinet

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