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Advancing Digital Empowerment  
of Libraries in Europe

# Case study: From Third Place to Third Space

## PR2



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Advancing Digital Empowerment  
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## Introduction

This document provides the template for the development of the Case Studies on digital transformation in libraries.

The ADELE project aims to contribute to the internationalisation of organisations that choose a path of digital transformation. Through the network they can connect, collaborate, compare, and exchange ideas with organisations across Europe and beyond.

The 100 case studies are aimed at initiating the digital transformation of libraries and inspiring libraries that want to improve their performance on certain areas of the tool.

The areas of the ADELE tool cover the use of digital technologies in libraries from different perspectives: management, infrastructure and equipment but also lifelong learning, users training opportunities and community and stakeholders involvement.

The case studies may be linked to an activity, a service, a new professional profile, an initiative, a place or a library infrastructure in line with the areas and the statements of the ADELE tool. We aim to create a database of good practices to foster innovation and the adoption of digital practices in the library.



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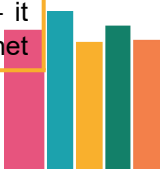
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<p>Library presenting the case study</p> <p>(Name, city, website and contact details)</p>	<p>Bibliotheek Lek en IJssel Website: <a href="https://www.bibliotheeklekijsel.nl/">https://www.bibliotheeklekijsel.nl/</a> Contact email: <a href="mailto:gertstaal@bibliotheeklekijsel.nl">gertstaal@bibliotheeklekijsel.nl</a></p> <p>Lenna Lammertink The Alignment House <a href="mailto:l.lammertink@alignmenthouse.nl">l.lammertink@alignmenthouse.nl</a></p>
<p>Title of the case study</p>	<p>From third place to third space</p>
<p>Area of ADELE tool illustrated by the case study</p> <p><i>Please underline the selected area</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Management</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Infrastructure, Equipment and Support</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Continuing Professional Development</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Self-reflection on digital competences</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Learning opportunities on digital competences for users</li> <li><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Collaboration, Networking, and Community</li> </ul>
<p>Description of the experience: aim, methods and outcomes</p>	<p>Since 2020, eight libraries across the Netherlands have been working together with The Alignment House on a project to redefine library services within the digital transformation. ‘From Third Place to Third Space’ aims to increase the reach of public libraries and their interaction with residents. Each library involved has different reasons to participate in this project – from encouraging unexpected encounters, to helping young people without qualifications develop further and contribute to strengthening the mental well-being of young adults.</p> <p>The Alignment House reached out to different public libraries to join this project. The public/private collaboration between public libraries and Alignment House is also experimental, and having a private organisation helps to take ‘quicker steps’ and advance in the project.</p> <p>The project is being developed through a participatory design and human-centred design process, where co-creating with the community is the focus. These approaches are constantly being evaluated throughout the duration of the project.</p> <p>After completing Phase 1 (research at hybrid level), the project is currently in Phase 2 where libraries are developing prototypes which will be implemented in the library. So far, the project has delivered 6 prototypes and other projects including: G’imme a break button (creating unexpected encounters between students in libraries), Manga experience (engaging communities through hybrid and interactive services), Biebbadges for 21<sup>st</sup> century (helping young people get skills and competences for the job market and show them through an open badge), Hybrid bulletin board (young people can connect people who have questions with those who have answers), Bullet journaling &amp; hybrid study groups (young people learn how to study and share inspiration), and VR experience to find a job (simulating job experiences).</p> <p>Another outcome of this project is the Lerend network: a network of</p>



	<p>libraries learning together. Every month, local project leaders gather together to share failures, successes and lessons learned. The directors of the public libraries also get together to discuss the goal and strategy of the project.</p> <p>When the project is complete, an online toolkit will be produced to share the methodology and learning experiences of this process.</p>
<p>Resources needed to implement the idea</p> <p>Please, provide any link and/or send them in attachment</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library directors willing to join an experimental and innovative project. It is sometimes a challenge for directors to explain to staff why they participated in this project where the outcome was not determined.</li> <li>• Find people who really get time to engage with participatory design – it is a process that needs constant nurturing and time (not everyone working in public libraries has the time to take part in this participatory process.)</li> <li>• Funding is crucial. The project applied for a grant from the start</li> <li>• Create a social media or website in order to connect and meet other people working in the same field.</li> <li>• Libraries willing to organising local events, inviting other libraries to spread the word about the project.</li> <li>• An open source web platform</li> <li>• The Third Space website includes a space (an online toolkit) where anyone interested in the project can join, learn about insights, knowledge and information gained, as well as share their ideas!</li> </ul>
<p>Target groups</p>	<p>This evolved with the different phases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Library professionals</li> <li>• Young people and teens (15-24)</li> <li>• Young students</li> </ul>
<p>Elements of innovation</p>	<p>Public libraries in the Netherlands are transitioning from a place to simply borrow books, to a place where you can grow, develop skills, meet people. Their goal is not to create a digital version of the physical services – but rather to build a hybrid library model. The development of The Third Space was accelerated by Covid-19.</p> <p>Rather than building a new platform, The Third Space is focusing on what kind of digital infrastructure is needed for a library to be hybrid and to have more engagement and participation. The scope of the project seeks to define what ‘hybrid’ is, as something more than the sum of online and offline – it suggests a kind of fluidity between the two, going from online seamlessly into offline and the other way around.</p> <p>This project invites residents to contribute and participate in the design and development of The Third Space through a participatory approach. The Third Space way of working leads to more interaction (between community’s and between community’s and librarians), co-ownership and an increase in reach. Participatory design has resulted in more structural and durable cooperation. The project centres around social learning in addition to informal learning – it seeks to help people develop through access to books and internet</p>



	<p>but also through each other via ‘unexpected encounters in the library’.</p>
<p>Tips to other library staff using this idea</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have the right mindset! Working on experimental projects with the community, where you don’t know the end result requires a cultural shift for the public library.</li> <li>• Celebrating failure! You learn more from the things that don’t work.</li> <li>• Have a good team and good communication! It’s important that the people within the organisations know what they’re doing and how the project is going.</li> <li>• The power of the methodology is to use its structure without losing creativity and genuine connections. The theoretical aspect helps you figure out where to start, and what next steps to take in the participatory design. The strength of the participatory design process is that it offers structure, without losing creativity and genuine connections.</li> <li>• Innovate rather than speaking of innovation.</li> <li>• Integrate existing innovations into your project.</li> <li>• Have a look at the project’s training materials, methodology and toolkit once they are available.</li> <li>• Have someone on the team who is not afraid to go up to people and talk with them, who can connect (e.g. community librarians).</li> <li>• The public/private collaboration can help move things along quicker.</li> <li>• To consider an approach which may be successful in one library may not be successful in another – each library has different audiences and user demographics (near a school, in a small town, bigger city).</li> </ul>
<p>Keywords</p>	<p>#participatorydesign #hybridlibrary #sociallearning</p>
<p>References</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-third-space-nl/">https://www.linkedin.com/company/the-third-space-nl/</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://3rdspace.nl/">https://3rdspace.nl/</a> (the website will be renewed into an online toolkit and open source platform with all information about the project and its methodology).</li> </ul>