bibliotek.dk - visit your library from home

Publiclibraries dot Finland

bibliotek.se

The National Library of Norway and the Digital Challenge
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The basic and perpetual challenge for libraries is to keep attuned to the society they serve. Accordingly the library agenda is the same in most European and other western countries at this moment: to make sure that libraries are fit for the networking society, that they actually benefit from the new opportunities and offer relevant services.

Whether you like the term hybrid library or not it seems to be the most appropriate to express the vision for the library in the networking society. The hybrid library develops an increasing number of e-services tailor-made for different target groups and purposes, and it makes it easier to benefit from the information. The ultimate vision is to integrate the access to value-adding information as much as possible in the daily lives of as many as possible.

The challenges are enormous. Here I should like to mention just three major ones which we are dealing with already. When I say 'discuss' I guess I mean that Nordic colleagues will share their ideas and doubts in articles on these pages, but I would like to take the opportunity to invite colleagues from the rest of the world too, to discuss these matters of extreme importance for the future of libraries.

The first challenge is actually to create new services. In the first place I am thinking of e-services, but obviously the physical side of the hybrid library also changes with the emerging virtuality and demands a rethink of the service profile. In my own country, Denmark, we define our union catalogue, with online search and request facilities to all libraries in the country by choice of the user, as the backbone of the hybrid library. In these years the strategy is to add value to the catalogue and link it with new services such as the e-ask-a-librarian service with chat facility which should become a 7x24 service, but at the moment closes at 10 p.m., or the Internet guide, an updated subject-based selection of websites of proved quality, or the subject gateways that have been built within the framework of Denmark’s Electronic Research Library, just to mention a few from a long list of e-services that librarians have developed in recent years.

A very important question is: How do we finance the production of these services. In Denmark the state financed part of it via money from the library project pool, run by the Danish National Library Authority, but we need a discussion on the question as to whether the exploding use of the Internet should lead to a kind of public service thinking, parallel to the broadcasted public service.

In Denmark the production of the services has mainly been organised between networking libraries. And networking is the second challenge that I want to emphasise. Particularly in countries or regions with many smaller libraries, networking will be necessary in relation to collection building, service- and competence development. If we think in terms of giving access to e-content, networking between public and academic libraries is likewise needed if you consider this access important also for the general public. But probably the greatest challenge in the networking field is to establish closer co-operation with various user groups to develop real value-adding services. Think of services to kindergartens, university teams, ethnic minorities, dyslexics just to mention a variety of target groups. For a constant development of services we have to co-operate with the end-users one way or another.

The third challenge to be underlined is competence development. The need for competence development is only too well-known in most countries, as in many libraries the majority of staff have professional roots in a pre-ICT period. Sufficient professional continuing education and distance learning are relevant and classical answers to the demand, but they can hardly solve the problem as the development is moving so fast that you must calculate with lifelong learning. It is necessary to integrate competence development within the organisational structure, that is to establish some kind of learning organisation, systematic job rotation, combined continuing educational programmes and so called ‘neighbour-learning’. Or what is more likely: a combination of these and other methods.

Here I have just mentioned a few examples of obvious challenges. I hope that this journal over the years will offer frames for discussion and knowledge-sharing in this particular field in a way that will actually be used for the benefit of future libraries and their users.

Jens Thorhauge
… such were the enticing words when the Danish National Library Authority in the spring of 2001 launched their PR campaign for the national service: bibliotek.dk which has now been on the air for about a year.

Via the Internet bibliotek.dk offers free access for all to the seven million registrations of books, CDs, videos, CD-ROMs and talking books which are available in the Danish public libraries and public research libraries. In 2001 over 300,000 requisitions were processed. Having found a title you want on the screen, all you have to do is to put in a request, indicating from which library you want to collect the material.

The new service offered to every Danish citizen is common to all public libraries, but the user experiences it as being adjusted to the possibilities and the service which his particular library is able to offer.

Right from the start, the aim of bibliotek.dk was quite simple: a common, free web-access to the Danish national joint catalogue DanBib were to be established which would make it possible for the individual user to order material, directly upon searching in the base. A discussion paper was prepared in the spring of 1999, suggesting how this aim could be put into practice, and the paper was debated at a number of open meetings with representatives from the country’s libraries during the summer. Towards the end of the year work had progressed so far that the Danish Library Centre – in charge of the common catalogue DanBib – was able to put the wheels in motion. The actual financing of the new service is set down in the Danish Act regarding library services which was passed in May 2000. Already in October 2000, bibliotek.dk made its debut on the Danish screens.

It was decided that each library would be able to participate, whatever their stage of technological advancement. This means that every library in the country can take part and loan books - as long as it has at least an e-mail address. Neither would there be any demands as to a change of the individual library’s policy, thus for each library there exists a number of parameters which ensure that a user is not promised more that the library is able to deliver.

Focus on the user
The user chooses his material and where he wants to collect it. And it is then up to the library system to decide on the most rational and economical way of carrying out the request. Where the material actually comes from is in the end immaterial to the user.

The local library is also bibliotek.dk
bibliotek.dk is a gateway to information and a route to material in all the public libraries in the country. The gateway is also where the user has to ask for any help he might need. There is no central hotline for the users – it is the local library which offers its support to bibliotek.dk
As far as the user is concerned, the possibilities of bibliotek.dk depend on his/
her library. Each library still determines its own level of service – including for example whether loan of videos is only possible for the municipality’s own citizens. Texts and functions are therefore adapted to the individual library.

Further development of bibliotek.dk

bibliotek.dk is under constant development. The Danish National Library Authority last autumn conducted a user survey and the results of this will be taken into account in the further development of the service. Some development projects already under way and some which are still on the drawing board are described below:

‘To be bought-button’

It seems obvious to offer the user the choice of either buying the material or borrowing it. A button which takes the user to a page where a number of suppliers offer a title for sale is on the cards. The user chooses his supplier and is transported into the supplier’s system where he will be able to order the title he wants immediately. This facility is being developed at the moment.

Improved search facilities

The Danish common catalogue shares the problem of other common catalogues. When bringing the libraries’ catalogues together, the difficulty is to collect all catalogues of the same edition of the same title. This has long been a thorn in the flesh for the professional users of DanBib. And public access to the base has only accentuated the problem. So quite a number of resources have been spent on doing a new match of the bibliographic records. This has been done twice and means that more than 1,2 mil. duplications have been removed.

In order to distinguish the different editions from each other, a new edition is catalogued as a completely new registration. At the moment we are working on collecting every edition of a title so that a search will not hit different editions, but just one title. The first attempt is planned for spring 2002.

Various other resources are being considered. For example to supplement the precise search on words with a search on ‘similar words’. If a search on automobile yields few or no results, the search could for example be extended with car or van.

Extended interplay with local library systems

One thing missing at the moment in bibliotek.dk is for the users to be able to know immediately whether the title they want is out on loan, and if so - how long it will be before one may be expected to get it. The solution to this problem is being looked into with a view to implementing the transfer of holdings information and requests via Z39.50.

Library-relevant resources on the Internet

bibliotek.dk is first of all a gateway to the physical materials available in Danish libraries. But an ever-increasing amount of relevant information resources are only available as internet publications and registration of such resources on the net is therefore taking place in various projects in the libraries and the Danish Library Centre registers some material as part of the national bibliography. This material has to be registered on a par with books etc. in DanBib and consequently in bibliotek.dk

New services

In the long term it is quite possible that bibliotek.dk will be extended and various services will be added, for the benefit of the individual user. One obvious possibility is to have a photocopy of an article sent directly to one’s private address, a service to be paid for by the user. This possibility will materialise when online payment of smaller amounts has become common practice, as no special bibliotek.dk payment systems are intended.

bibliotek.dk is meant to be a straightforward and simple service. The further development of bibliotek.dk will by no means abandon this principle. The vision is for better quality and more information – not for more complex functions. bibliotek.dk is for the citizen.

Better quality and more information

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During the last year bibliotek.dk has been a hot topic among the staff of Danish public libraries. The aim of this article is to take a closer look at some of the points of this discussion and to describe how we have organised and experienced the use of bibliotek.dk at one of the major Danish public libraries.

**Background**
Det nordjyske Landsbibliotek (NJL) is the county library of Northern Jutland (total population: 494,000) as well as the municipal library of Aalborg (population: 161,000).

A long-standing – but not particularly useful – argument among public and academic libraries has been which users are theirs (students?) and ours (the general public?). The users themselves tend to have a more pragmatic approach to libraries, they use both. When we did a user survey a few years ago it turned out that about 35% of the users of the main library were students at universities and other institutions of further education.

Aalborg has a university (student population around 12,000) which is situated some kilometres from the town centre (with the main library) as well as from the parts of the city where most students tend to live (with branch libraries). We also have further education colleges for teachers, kindergarten teachers, nurses, midwives, ergo- and physiotherapists etc. – even the only branch of The Royal Danish School of Library and Information Science. Most studies these days are based on a fairly small core curriculum (based on books the students are supposed to buy) and an ever increasing amount of projects based on (library and other) materials which the students are supposed to find during their own research.

Setting up the individual parts of bibliotek.dk NJL chose only to accept requests for books and sheet music which we do not possess and for articles in newspapers and periodicals. After the first six months we stopped receiving requests for articles, they were comparatively few, but engineered a lot of work which did not fit into the daily routines.

Requests for material that we do possess are automatically directed to our online catalogue.

**Year one after bibliotek.dk**

By the end of November 2001 the public libraries had received just over 295,000 requests while the academic libraries had received just over 48,000. At NJL we have received just over 8,000, but the number of ILL-requests at the reference desk is going down.

However, it is clear that we will have an increase in the number of titles borrowed from other libraries, but we do not yet know how big this will be. All requests have this far been received at the main library which gives us a good picture of who the users are and what they are requesting.

The users have to fill in their names, address, social security number and which branch of the library they want to collect the material from. Twice last year (March and September/October) we have been taking a closer look at a number of requests. The pattern of use has not changed much during the year. Just over 90% of the requests are for non-fiction. Just over half of these are requests for books in languages other than Danish, most of them English, but also Norwegian, Swedish, German and a few in other European languages. Books from all subject areas are requested, but with a preference for social sciences, literature and IT. Most of the requests seem to be on an academic level and intended for students.

That most of the users may be students is confirmed by the fact that 60% of the users are between the ages of 20 to 29 and another 20% between 30 and 40. (From the titles of the books requested it seems probable that even a
large minority of the last group are students). It seems quite clear that students are over-represented among the users of bibliotek.dk. We do sometimes think that bibliotek.dk should be financed by the Ministry of Education instead of the Ministry of Culture!

In the spring only 10% of the users were over 40 years of age compared to 17% in the autumn, whereas the number of users under the age of 20 fell from 7% to 1.5%. That the number of young users was so low in September/October is probably due to the fact that there were no major papers to be handed in at A-level at that time of the year.

In the spring only 40% of the users were female, in September this had increased to 53%, a fact we are unable to explain.

It is clear that people prefer to pick up their books as close to their home as possible, we can see this from their address compared to that of the branch library from which they want to pick them up.

Some users order books regularly, and whereas some only order one or two, others order up to fifteen or twenty at a time. In the near future we will take a closer look at how many of these are actually collected. We do have a feeling that quite a few requests are made ‘just in case’. Sometimes the same book is ordered in several languages or several editions of the same text is ordered. It is hard to tell when this again is ‘just in case’ and when the users are actually unable to read a bibliographic description. As a rule only one of the requests will be sent on as an ILL-request, but it is often necessary to contact the user to decide which one he or she really wants.

Every now and again we get the same requests from the same person within a few days; this seems to be partly because they have forgotten what they requested two nights ago and partly because they think that something must have gone wrong if the book has not turned up within three or four days! Again it is necessary to contact the user.

Young people are resourceful, they often have access to two or more libraries and therefore request the same title from more than one library and are rather surprised when told that this may mean that they are queuing with themselves.

Not only are we experiencing an increase in the number of requests that we pass on but there is also an increase, probably around 20%, in the number of requests for printed material. It is impossible to figure out how many of these have originated as requests from end users via bibliotek.dk, but we can see that an increasing number is coming directly via bob, the part of bibliotek.dk from which libraries can send their ILL-requests. The requests seem to be for all types of books, but again books for further education and on various aspects of IT seem to be most in demand.

The other day a woman in her late thirties walked into the library with some prints from bibliotek.dk – she wanted to know what we did with her requests and said ‘This is fantastic – for the first time since I left university I’m really able to see what’s published in my area and to get at it!’ No doubt she is right, bibliotek.dk is a great step forward – even if users as well as librarians sometimes find it a bit frustrating to cope with.
Kirjastot.fi is an entity of library and information search services available to all. It is an easily accessible route to library services and a versatile user interface when searching for information.

The contents of kirjastot.fi are divided into channels and published in three languages, each with its own domain and profile:

- **Kirjastot.fi** – in Finnish, is the most comprehensive version
- **Biblioteken.fi** – is, as far as possible, equivalent to the Finnish version but particularly geared to meeting the needs of Swedish Finns and Nordic users
- **Publiclibraries.fi** (to be replaced by libraries.fi) – is an English collage and presentation of the services, also serving foreigners living in Finland.

**Contents of Kirjastot.fi**

The Libraries and Catalogues channel is a gateway to all library services: public, other and foreign libraries, catalogues and databases. Its core is the Library Register, containing contact and service information about all public libraries and their units. Libraries, collaborating networks, online-catalogues and staff lists – all can be searched according to various criteria. Additionally, libraries can be identified by the library system they have in use. Information about the branch libraries also includes data and pictures of the buildings. The channel presents new databases, catalogues and other web services. The Library Register features a trilingual user interface.
The Search Services channel aims to offer one route to various information sources, guiding the user both to information on the Web and to catalogues and databases within libraries. Vital public search services with instructions in both Finnish and Swedish are gathered here with an item containing the basics about seeking information on the Web. Our own productions are Ask a Librarian, Link Library and Meta Searches.

Ask a Librarian is a joint online reference enquiry service with a trilingual user interface. At the moment, 28 public libraries and the Parliament library are available for answering questions. Replies are given within three working days, and most are stored in a public archive. Underlying the service is a special reply application that runs on a database with a browser-based user interface. In its present form the service was started in 1999; some 3,000 answers are given each year. The possibility of linking a chat channel to this enquiry service is currently being explored. Ask a Librarian has a sister service called igs (Information Gas Station) to which questions can be sent and replies received as text messages via mobile phones.

Link Library is a database of selected, described and systematically organised web material. Libraries produce it jointly and its contents can be searched and browsed in various ways. It is classified according to the Decimal Classification System of Finnish Public Libraries and the cataloguing format follows the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set as far as possible. At the start of 2002, Link Library had about 8,000 links and dozens of active cataloguers who place links they consider useful straight into the database in accordance with joint selection and cataloguing directives. These guidelines are amended in co-operation with the cataloguers, who are not allocated specific subject areas. The editorial staff of Kirjastot.fi keeps an eye on the activities and edits the catalogue, but the main responsibility for cataloguing lies with the cataloguers. The addresses of links are checked automatically. When selecting links, the emphases are on originality, usefulness in search services, quality, reliability, and evidence that the site is actively maintained. Material intended for children is marked separately.

The Meta Searches service enables users to search several catalogue databases and other sources simultaneously. At the moment, meta searches within Kirjastot.fi are not based on the Z39.50 standard, but they will be developed in co-operation with the National Electronic Library (FinELib). The most popular meta search has been the catalogues of the Provincial Libraries. Developing user-friendly meta searches from various information sources is one of the vital areas Kirjastot.fi is focusing on from now on. The database of the Link Library and the archive of the Online Reference Enquiry Service will constitute vital parts of Meta Searches.

The Literature channel offers literary links and current information about literature. In particular it presents pages produced by libraries. For instance, it features information about the most borrowed books, reading tips, interviews with authors and a Forum for reading experiences. Part of the channel is a separate database called Modern Finnish Authors. The Finnish Library Journal participates in maintaining this channel.

The Children’s channel highlights pages that libraries have produced for children or about their literature, book lists of various topics, tips and instructions for teachers and others working with children. Soon to come on this channel is a particular interface enabling children, for instance, to look for their own links in the Link Library and to Ask a Librarian.

The Library branch channel includes professional information and service. The contents consist mainly of links. Libraries can, for instance, place their job advertisements on the Library Bulletin Board. A vital part of this channel are the mailing lists with archive. Most of the mailing lists will be transformed into Web Forums, from which messages can also be directed straight to one’s e-mail.

In addition, Kirjastot.fi contains a few services for registered users.
Producing contents

The contents of Kirjastot.fi are composed of three parts:
1. material produced by the editorial staff
2. links and presentations of services and catalogues of libraries
3. decentralised maintenance, in other words material produced by libraries (Link Library, Ask a Librarian, Library Register, Library Bulletin Board, Mailing Lists and Web Forums).

The editorial staff at the Networked Library Services Unit, located in Helsinki City Library, is responsible for editing, development and user interfaces. Database technology and programming is bought from specialist firms, and the IT unit of Helsinki City Library is responsible for the servers.

Kirjastot.fi is produced by Helsinki City Library – the Central Library for Public Libraries and it is financed mainly by the Ministry of Education. Its board of editors consists of library directors forming a steering group of networked library services. The Bulletin Board and Forums are important ways of activating libraries to participate and of collecting feedback, as are the many workshops that have been held during previous years. The foundation of Kirjastot.fi lies in national strategies documented in Towards a Finnish Information Society – National information management strategy, 1994, Cultural Information Society, 1995, in the Library Act of 1988, in the Finnish Library Policy programme 2001-2004 and in the support of the Ministry of Education.

Kirjastot.fi consists of hundreds of pages, five databases, Bulletin Board and Forums, an xml-based publication system and a meta search application. Its use is measured also by a browser-based method and, in the year 2000, the service received some 8 million page-views.

Development targets

Kirjastot.fi was founded in 1995. The current version was launched in the autumn of 2000 and the next will appear in 2002. The aim is to offer users a route via the Internet to library services, to increase the accessibility of libraries, catalogues and library professional know-how and to produce search services. For libraries the aim is to create virtual co-operation that transcends regional and organisational borders, to collect know-how from libraries nationally, to offer a channel for marketing library services and to be a tool for rational networking. One of the most important targets is to improve the competitive edge of libraries on the Web by marketing them as one united service via the Kirjastot.fi domain and portal.

In 2002 the user interface and graphics of Kirjastot.fi will be renewed and its usability and technical efficiency will be improved. Another example of aspects that are under development is highlighting the music services and know-how within libraries. Co-operation with research libraries is also being strengthened. It will be particularly important to ensure that user-friendly, advanced and intelligent search services are developed together with the National Library (especially with FinELib) and the Provincial Libraries, drawing together the entire spectrum of information sources and library know-how. The goal is to make use of shared technology, sharing also the contents of databases, ensuring that they can be locally adapted. In 2003, Kirjastot.fi will probably be produced for new distribution channels, such as for wireless connections and digi-TV.

Matti Sarmela
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Translated by Britt and Philip Gaut
Anyone who has access to the Internet can carry out simultaneous searches in the catalogues of both the public and research libraries in Sweden. A service which went public in the autumn of 2001. bibliotek.se is a co-ordinated project by The Royal Library (KB) / LIBRIS and Bibliotekstjänst AB (BTJ). The service is free and a web resource for simultaneous web searches in Swedish public, government funded libraries and their holdings of books, maps, records, printed music, videocassettes, cassette books, Braille, newspapers, magazines etc.

Objective
The aim of bibliotek.se is to present a clear and intelligible outline of what Sweden's libraries have at their disposal in the way of books and other media. There are two major databases in Sweden that register library holdings: LIBRIS caters mainly to the research libraries, while the public libraries on the whole catalogue their holdings in BURK, a database maintained by BTJ.

In the Swedish statutes of Acts, the State-owned, municipal and county council libraries are perceived as a uniform and integrated resource. Emphasis is placed on the importance for libraries to recommend their users and libraries in general the possibility of co-ordinated and user friendly search modes. The Royal Library and LIBRIS were bestowed by the Government in 1997 the task of achieving this. Following an intense period of development, where technical, financial, political and copyright aspects were exhaustively investigated, it was finally determined that the most efficient approach could only emanate from a collaborative endeavour consisting of KB/LIBRIS and BTJ/BURK.

Two databases - one interface
The contents of bibliotek.se stem from two databases: LIBRIS contains more than four million titles, mainly from the collections of research and special libraries. BURK contains barely two million titles from the holdings of, to a large extent, the Swedish public libraries. Both databases accommodate Swedish and foreign material in more than 140 languages.

Searches are conducted through a joint interface. This entails searches in both databases with results presented in a joint hitlist. bibliotek.se uses two search forms, quick search and advanced search. The hitlist can either be categorised alphabetically or in reverse chronology. It can also be limited to a region or a particular place.

Book loans
bibliotek.se does not have a reader’s service. A search will inform the user where in the country the book is located, but if the user wants to read the book they must contact their nearest library.

Cataloguing and classification
LIBRIS and BURK catalogue according to the KRS (cataloguing rules for Swedish libraries, translated and adapted from the AACR) and classify in accordance with the SAB system (Swedish classification system). There are cataloguing libraries in LIBRIS who also use the Universal Decimal Classification and Dewey Decimal Classification.

Facts
The Royal Library (KB) is Sweden’s national library. Its objective is to collect, describe, preserve and provide for all printed matter published in Sweden and publications about Sweden published abroad. KB is an extensive humanistic research library with considerable collections in the fields of history, literary sciences and the arts. KB is also the library authority in charge of planning and developing Sweden’s research and special library organisation. It is also responsible for the national union catalogue, LIBRIS.

BTJ develops, refines and supplies information services and media products to libraries, booksellers, publishers, companies and institutions. BTJ’s mission is to actively contribute to a process of learning and reading in society, by way of helping the users to achieve experiences and knowledge, regardless of media or form and independent of time and place.

BTJ’s owners are Svensk Biblioteksförening (The Swedish Library Association) and KF Media.
Introducing Dorte Skot-Hansen, SPLQ’s regular columnist in 2002

Head of Centre for Cultural Policy Studies at the Royal School of Library and Information Science, Dorte Skot-Hansen is SPLQ’s regular columnist for the four issues to be published in 2002. Her column will be focusing on the library and the challenges the library faces from the world around it.

Dorte Skot-Hansen obtained her MA in Cultural Sociology in 1974 and has since then been employed at the Royal School of Library and Information Science within the subject area Cultural Communication and Library Sociology. Since 1998 she has been Head of Centre for Cultural Policy Studies at the School. From 1995-1998 Dorte Skot-Hansen was also teaching Cultural Policy at Odense University’s postgraduate programme Culture and Communication. Amongst other honorary offices, Dorte is a member of the FoU-group of the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs and a member of the board of representatives for The Danish Institute of Culture.

Dorte Skot-Hansen is the author of a considerable number of works, including *Det lokale bibliotek – afvikling eller udvikling* (The Local Library – its Profile and Anchorage) from 1994. The book still represents an essential analysis of the public library’s local profile and anchorage and is an important contribution to the ensuing debate on the subject. Recently, Dorte has been in charge of the process evaluation of eight county library projects involving children’s culture co-ordinators. These projects have all received financial support from the Danish National Library Authority.

The public library is undoubtedly the cultural institution with which most representatives of ethnic minorities are in touch. The libraries have catered for immigrants and refugees through special services, and the public libraries play an important role in the integration process in the Northern countries as a whole. The report *Fritum til integration* (2001) substantiates the fact that the libraries play a very decisive role in relation to minorities and that their services encourage the integration process by strengthening the individual’s educational and linguistic competencies. Something to be proud of indeed. If one compares the achievements of the public libraries with those of other cultural institutions, the report *Kulturinstitutionernes bidrag til det kulturelt mangfoldige Danmark* (2001) shows that the libraries can be seen as innovators, able to inspire other cultural institutions.

Even so, I would like to pose the question: Should the libraries function exclusively as ‘quiet integrators’ – as an extension of political and social integration policies of varying governments? Or should they also act as creative spaces for diversity and exchange of culture? This is not just a question of a non-committal cultural meeting between different, distinct cultures, as when the libraries act as hosts for an ethnic evening with exotic food and belly-dancing between the book shelves. This strategy for multiculturalism very easily comes to represent something static which is only interested in underlining differences and creating barriers. Or, to put it in another way: While practising respect and tolerance, we still run the risk of trapping people in a rigid system of categories – and being trapped ourselves. We might encounter here a kind of ‘apartheid of consciousness’ with the grave risk of ending up with our backs turned on each other, each in his/her liberated isolation. And when multiculturalism in its more extreme form is used as an excuse for ‘anything goes’ and nothing is open for discussion, one might perhaps be allowed to join the American political scientist, Benjamin R. Barber, in describing ‘multiculturalism as diversity run amok’.

To question multiculturalism as strategy does not mean a desire to return to an Eurocentric enlightenment tradition, neither does it mean that we ought to place the national culture in the centre. We do not need a preoccupation with ‘the national’ or a celebration of our own eminent qualities. Cultural policy must be ahead, not behind, the development of society in recognition of the fact that we are part of the global society. It is therefore a question of paving the way for a true cosmopolitanism which allows us not only to view...
and cultural diversity

others as ‘exotic’, but which also encourages us to examine ourselves – so that we discover that we ourselves are ‘others’ amongst others.

Other peoples’ art and cultural expression is a language which we must learn to decode. We must try to translate, but at the same time realise that it happens through dialogue, and that the translation will never be complete. We must try to put ourselves in the other person’s place. Art and culture are important in bringing this about. A cultural policy which believes in cultural diversity is therefore not a question of categorising, refining and labelling them and us, but rather the realisation that we can all of us contribute and all of us learn in a cultural space which is being redefined. We must accept the existence of a new hybridity where nothing is ‘pure’ or ‘true’ any more. The idea of the cultural meeting in the sense of well-defined cultures with tradition and geographic anchorage facing each other, is outdated. And here I find that the concept ‘cultural diversity’ better than multiculturalism reflects these new hybrid cultures which do not only cut across boundaries and traditional cultures, but which dissolve them into new forms across genres and cultural patterns.

How to carry out this strategy in practice? There is no cut and dried solution, but it is very important to concentrate more on choice of materials and a policy for activities and events so that fusions in literature, music, the visual media and not least youth culture become visible in the library’s mediation practice. A good example is the Danish group Outlandish with their multi-ethnic hiphop performed by three young second generation immigrants originating from Pakistan, Honduras and Morocco, who after their stay in the Middle East have developed a new rap style inspired by American music. Or the many post-colonial authors such as for example Rushdie, Kureshi and Naipaul – or their Nordic counterparts where new hybrid identities are created. As far as the library’s possible events and activities go, here would be the chance to present more performers with an ethnic background who express themselves in new ways instead of a more pure ethnic revival based on tradition and ethnicity.

The real challenge will be to find a balance which will not allow integration, social work and enlightenment to smother the development of cultural and artistic diversity in the library space. A diversity-based cultural policy is to just as great a degree a cultural policy for the ethnic Scandinavians as for all other ethnic groups. We are all part of a new, global society.
By reason of the statutory requirements for the legal deposit of all publicly available documents and publications, the National Library of Norway (NLN) is obliged to deal not only with all types of analogue media but also with digital documents. The NLN is therefore very active in this area, covering the conversion of all types of analogue media to digital form, internet-based services, multimedia databases and the legal deposit of digital documents.

Forwardlooking ideas concerning the digital library have given rise to many new possibilities, including that of co-operation with other sections of society. The NLN foresees a future of completely new and improved library services available directly to the user at home.

The National Library of Norway was first established in 1989 with the opening of a department in Rana in the north of the country. Even at that early stage the accessibility offered by information and communication technology (ICT) was used as an argument for siting this first unit 1000 km (625 miles) from the capital. At about the same time revised legislation was introduced stipulating the requirements for legal deposit, legislation which had the foresight also to include ‘EDP documents’. These factors have influenced the work of the National Library from its earliest days. The NLN has been later extended to include a department in Oslo and the office of the National Librarian.

More difficult to predict than a general rapid development in technology, however, was the introduction of the World Wide Web (WWW), a technological base which has led to a veritable explosion in the number of documents now widely accessible. Nor were there many who could foresee that the Internet would become common property in the course of a few years. It was reasonable to expect that in the long term all publishing would be digital, but the development of such methods has come about far more quickly than most people had anticipated.

The NLN has followed these developments extremely closely and has kept pace reasonably well with regard to its own infrastructure and expertise. Activities connected with internet-based access to information have been many and varied, keeping the library in the forefront of international library development in the successful utilisation of relevant ICT. In support of this claim we can point out that the NLN was one of the first to offer large-scale access to digital photography via WWW, that we are among the leaders in building up a digital sound archive and that as far as the legal deposit of digital documents is concerned, we are as far advanced as any other comparable institution.

As a library, the NLN is in a special situation with regard to the integration of all types of information and expertise. Today we deal with information ranging from written text to multimedia and with carriers ranging from old manuscripts to digital material. In spite of a relatively short period in which to build up the organisation, we have succeeded in gathering together a skilled staff with expertise in all these areas.

In addition to the National Library’s more traditional activities, we have for example established specialised departments to deal with audio-visual material. The library’s ICT staff now represents 40 man-years with a significant application of resources to the development of software and services.

Development of the NLN Digital Library

Many people wonder how libraries will look in the future, what role they will play and indeed whether or not they will exist at all. Will there be libraries without librarians? Will they still need to be in a building? Will just one library perhaps be enough for the whole of Norway? Who knows? So far as the NLN can see into the future, the following would appear pretty certain.

- We shall continue to deal with paper-based information far into the foreseeable future
- Copying information from the analogue to the digital domain demands so much time and use of resources that we must regard it as a never-ending task
- Human resources determine the lines along which we work and also gua-
rantee that library services maintain the quality required by users.
- Libraries as a physical meeting place will not only continue to exist but will play an even greater role.
- We believe that the combination of people and technology is unbeatable.

Therefore libraries will carry on much the same as before, but with digital services as an extra leg to stand on they will have a greater role to play in the community. Local and immediate access to knowledge will become of vital importance.

It is fair to say that the NLN has taken the first, lengthy strides in fulfilling its role as an active player in the digital domain. Purposeful measures over many years have been aimed at establishing an architecture for the NLN’s digital library. In recent years these efforts have been first and foremost directed towards the creation of the library’s Long-Term Preservation Repository (LTPR). This is by far the library’s greatest project so far in the field of ICT, both with regard to investment and to personnel. Based on an overall powerful physical infrastructure, a fundamental functionality has been established capable of dealing with large collections of digital documents. LTPR will serve as the foundation for the majority of the library’s important future ICT-related projects.

In principle LTPR will provide the NLN’s physical infrastructure for long-term preservation of information in a digital form. The main characteristics of the LTPR can briefly be summarised as follows:

- Large, expandable capacity
- General infrastructure for the storage of the NLN’s digital objects
- Infrastructure for the long-term preservation of digital information
- Services to provide digital objects to the user
- Systems for copyright management
- Formal requirements for identification and metadata
- Formal requirements governing format and quality
- Great emphasis on security and access control.

One example from LTPR is the identification service based on Uniform Resource Name (URN). The NLN has developed one of the first services in the world using URN to identify digital objects. The URN system allots identifiers according to need and also offers a resolution service in order to find the physical position of any digital object with a given URN.

For many years the NLN has also worked with broadband technology and today we operate a technological platform for the Internet which is at the forefront of what is available. The combination of LTPR, powerful search systems, an excellent infrastructure and a high level of expertise has resulted in a number of interesting projects and services, such as photo databases, a digital radio archive, newspaper collections of historical interest, a web archive and multimedia exhibitions.

The way ahead
- an age of possibilities

Utilising new technology opens up new possibilities. Libraries can be not only more but also better than in the past. We see this first and foremost in the collections, in the services offered and in the collaboration with other sectors in the community.

The collections

A library’s own collections have traditionally been looked upon as relatively isolated units, existing to all intents and purposes independent of time and space. A great deal of work has been devoted to making the collections as complete as possible. With new technology it is much easier to integrate different collections and to give the user access to new, virtual collections. The individual library’s service to the user is less dependent upon having everything in stock itself, since now the user can search through many libraries. These virtual collections will appear more complete to the user and therefore also seem better in quality. In the task of integrating with other collections Z39.50 and Open Archives Initiative (OAI) are central elements in the NLN’s development. A further advantage is that by digitising valuable and delicate collecti-
ons, it is possible to make them accessible without any risk of wear and tear, damage or theft.

The services
For the National Library it is important to focus on the needs of library users. ICT makes it possible to create new services and to improve the traditional ones. Even more important is perhaps the fact that geographical barriers are reduced. Services can be made available at the time and place most suitable to the user.

New technology also creates the conditions for user-directed services, specially designed for a particular type of user in a given context. It is easy to appreciate that a historian would require a different interface with a photographic collection on the Internet than would a school pupil. Similarly a radio archive should have a different appearance to a radio journalist than to a senior citizen looking for the recording of an old broadcast. The NLN already has the first specialised services of this type in place in its digital radio archive.

We believe that relatively soon we can expect to see interface solutions where the user to a considerable degree creates his or her own library. Completely new search and navigation tools will become available with an emphasis on accessibility related to context. Users will find that what today is experienced as ‘noise’ will soon completely disappear.

When working with historical collections the library faces a considerable challenge in attaching good descriptions to objects. A variety of personnel resources exist in the community capable of making a positive contribution to improved metadata by participating in the library’s work. For many years now the NLN has studied user input in connection with the library’s photo database Galleri NOR. Experience shows that this type of interaction can be particularly valuable with regard to quality control of services and collections.

Co-operation
Society in general is subject to changes which are partly determined by technology. These changes offer the possibility of new forms of co-operation, for instance between producers of material and libraries. Already we can see that the nucleus of expertise built up around our digital library is regarded as a positive resource by many external bodies. One example of this is our co-operation with the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation (NRK) in the development and running of the digital radio archive. So far more than 40,000 radio programmes of historical interest have been digitised, both sound and catalogue being available to selected users on the Internet.

Legal deposit and long-term preservation
In 2001 the NLN initiated PARADIGMA, a project designed to continue for several years and with a focus on the legal deposit of digital documents. The aim of the project is to find the technology, methods and organisation required in order to meet the challenges posed by legal deposit in the digital domain. These efforts will to a great extent be based on the work already being carried out within the NLN’s general digital library. By the end of the project we hope to have developed an operational process for the legal deposit of digital documents, also for what we refer to as internet documents.

The large-scale handling of legal deposit material submitted in digital form brings a further huge challenge with regard to long-term preservation. As
might well be anticipated, the library’s aim is to use LTPR as the basic tool in this connection.

At the moment we regard migration as the only feasible method of preserving individual digital objects over long periods of time and we are working on establishing migration support in LTPR.

New roles
In the digital domain the stream of information can assume forms and volume to which we are not accustomed. Procedures in the case of radio broadcasting, for example, include the logging onto tape by the broadcaster, the sending of the tape by post to the NLN and the final handling and storage of the tape by the library.

With a view to replacing this process, we are now working on internet-based legal deposit. As a result we have found it both necessary and advantageous to enter into close co-operation with the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation in order to agree upon common standards with regard to metadata, format and quality. Furthermore, the library has been able to act as adviser in special areas of expertise. We can justifiably claim that this work has had international consequences, as much in the library and archive sectors as in the area of broadcasting. It is inevitable that the NLN must accept entering into unfamiliar situations which will make new demands on both the organisation and the individual member of staff. Clearly this applies equally in our relations with other producers of material, such as publishers and newspapers.

Research and development
A library is an institution built upon paper-based information and on its knowledge of this collected information. In the reality now surrounding us it is therefore imperative to acquire new knowledge and to develop new practices. We must ensure that the necessary conditions exist in order to navigate successfully into the future and to offer the community at all times the best library possible. Unfortunately these conditions do not occur of themselves. They must be created. In addition to the need for technological expertise, completely new demands will also be made on organisational insight. In line with society as a whole, the library sector must also develop these skills. A strategic emphasis on research and development is therefore of vital importance for the National Library. For many years now the library has taken part in research projects financed by the European Union. These not only represent a source of new knowledge but also offer considerable possibilities for pursuing our own initiatives. We shall naturally continue to seek participation in such projects in the years ahead.

The Nordic region represents a natural environment for co-operation. The similarities of cultures and history, the linguistic reality which makes for easy communication and the many other characteristics we share in common; these all serve to ensure that co-operation across our borders gives speedy and satisfactory results. NORDINFO and Nordunet are excellent tools in making such projects possible and the NLN has had and continues to have a large portfolio of projects based on Nordic co-operation.

In a national context the NLN has established formal research co-operation with industry, research institutes and the educational sector.

The National Library has also taken the initiative with a view to setting up an extensive, national programme to carry out research on digital libraries. This report, partly financed by the Norwegian Research Council, concludes that there is a need for such a programme and that it will require an annual grant of about 20 MNOK over a period of five years. The report is available from the National Library and has been officially submitted to both the Norwegian Ministry of Cultural and Scientific Affairs and the Norwegian Research Council.
Despite inexorable cuts in funding, libraries faced growing demand for their services.

Less than ten years ago, when library people spoke of networks they meant mainly the service network: either the main library with its branches, mobile library and various lending stations, or the national library network in its physical form. While the word gained new meanings, as in the global network context, libraries began shaping their activities in a new way in relation to their surroundings. As collections and information searches extended far beyond the physical limits of a building, people started talking about libraries without walls. From the idea of a wall-less library, it was but a small step to a more worrying thought – maybe libraries would become obsolete in the era of electronic networks.

Radical change
The late 1990s brought profound change. Developments in information technology radically altered the libraries’ working environment, their tools and their views of what their work was all about. The coincident economic recession led to drastic measures to cut municipal costs. The physical library network shrank; branches were closed and book mobiles taken off the road. In 1990 Finland had 1,151 libraries, in 2000 there were just 936. In the same period, mobile library numbers fell from 232 to 202. Simultaneously, library usage soared and visitor numbers rose by 31% over the decade. Lending and the frequency of library visits have always been high in Finland; the average Finn now visits a library 12 times, and borrows 20 items, every year.

So, despite inexorable cuts in funding, libraries faced growing demand for their services. They were still working out how best to use their resources to resolve this dilemma when along came the great computer breakthrough. And that brought with it so much more than automation of lending routines. Though at first marketed as an aid to rationalisation and getting by with less staff – and certainly a better means of handling the library’s collections too – it proved to be a gateway to totally new opportunities for information seeking, communication, connections and service. It also brought with it new tasks and routines, and the need for a new approach to the operation as a whole.

Expertise and collaboration
The technical infrastructure for network connections in Finnish public libraries was created with state funding during the latter part of the 1990s. The project called House of Knowledge – now publiclibraries.fi – developed, coordinated and handled the follow-up on a national level and established a trilingual website for the public libraries, as well as a bulletin board for library staff and other interested parties. Provincial libraries were able to employ experts on networks to advise and train staff within the region. All libraries got internet connections, as well as further training in the use of these new tools and ways of communication. The bulletin board and the growth of e-mail made it easy to spread information, to keep in touch and to co-operate.

Today more than half of all Finnish libraries belong to a regional network.

Usually this involves sharing a home page, with catalogues available over the Internet, joint library cards and common internal lending rules. A management group comprising the heads of the participating libraries is responsible for developing the network. On top of labour and cost savings, regular exchange of know-how and experience, bigger collections and better service for the users, this arrangement offers mutual support for the heads of individual libraries for planning and developing both local and regional library activities. Each library pays a proportion of the costs.

On a municipal level this co-operation so far has mostly concerned the mobile library service. The new Library Act stipulates that a municipality must provide these services independently, or totally or partially in co-operation with other municipalities, or in any other way. Today some municipalities are planning to share the services of a chief librarian, while others have already established a joint administration.

Developments on the web
Since 2000, libraries have been able to apply for public money to produce contents for the web and to develop user-friendly services, though many libraries have no doubt produced contents long before that word got new meaning in the new context. In addition to library information and catalogue metadata, people have worked to create link libraries, regional directories of authors, reference databases of articles in local newspapers, pages for chil-
dren and youngsters, and literary pages. The projects have now grown bigger.

Provincial libraries in Ostrobothnia are building regional portals with a varied content of knowledge and culture, and are offering web-space to other regional producers of contents within these fields. The regional library networks are jointly applying for project money to develop their service for specific age groups, for developing user-friendliness, for making special collections more accessible and for joint projects with, for instance, municipal authorities, schools and other educational institutions, museums, local archives and music schools.

Many libraries participate in the work by producing links for the link library on the joint website publiclibraries.fi, and a great number of libraries contribute to the Ask-a-Librarian service introduced by publiclibraries.fi. A library’s size or location matters less now than it used to. What is important in this electronic era is having an innovative outlook and shared interests and needs.

Through their network connections libraries have also acquired new roles; activities now include a certain amount of production, and the Internet makes quality evaluation ever more important. Whatever libraries produce for the web is publicly available, and can be accessed from one’s home computer. From home it is also possible to reserve a book that is currently out on loan to someone else, and eventually get a message on one’s mobile phone saying that it can now be picked up from the library. The book, the physical object, is transported, collected, carried home. In Finland, books constitute 91% of the collections of public libraries, 80% of acquisitions and 76% of lending. For research libraries books make up 50% of acquisitions.

Merging new and old
Public libraries are developing collections and services in electronic format, but also have responsibility for providing fiction, cultural heritage, popular non-fiction, literature for children and youngsters and picture books. The merging of new and traditional roles is perhaps most visible on libraries’ fiction pages on the web. Libraries are cultural meeting places, on the web as well as in the cityscape or village. One such meeting place is MCL, the multicultural library on the web.

The public and research libraries are working together around new meeting places and creating networks on many different levels. The physical space can be shared, as it is in Kokkola, where the Polytechnic Library and the City/Provincial Library are situated in the same new building. (The library in Kokkola in described in the recently published book Nordic Public Libraries. The Nordic cultural sphere and its public libraries). Another good example of shared physical facilities is one of the branches of Helsinki City Library joining forces with Helsinki University in creating Viikki Information Centre.

In Swedish-speaking Ekenäs the City Library has responsibility for the library and information function of a regional polytechnic. Many of the regional library networks collaborate with polytechnics and universities in their area, via joint virtual libraries and websites. Sukkula’s virtual library includes museums, archives and dozens of public and research libraries in western Finland; Eastinfo is an equivalent big network in eastern Finland. The Finnish National Electronic Library, FinElib, negotiates certain licenses also for public libraries.

What of the future?
The process continues. The local physical networks with main library and branches, mobile library and lending stations have shrunk, the regional virtual networks are growing and developing and new virtual libraries are being created. On the national level, plans concern big networks and co-operation across boundaries. The Finnish Library Policy Programme published in the spring of 2001 includes a vision for the development of library and information services that focuses on collaboration and a clearer division of labour between the big three – Central Library for Public Libraries, National Repository Library and National Library. The first discussions about possible future co-operation have already taken place, but where will they lead? Only time will tell.

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Denmark’s Electronic Research Library (DEF) was launched in 1998 as a five-year development project in a co-operation between the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Education and the Ministry for IT and Research with a budget of 200 mil. DKK. To begin with the project was intended to include the major research libraries only, but in time it has come to be extended to all types of libraries, the public libraries too. This is why the DEF portal is called www.deff.dk = The electronic public and research library.

DEF’s aim is to ensure that researchers, students, trade and industry and other users of the research libraries gain quicker, easier and more effective access to topical and relevant research results of high quality via the virtual library, independent of time, place and where the information resources may actually be placed. The DEF vision is based on the following principles:

- a single point of access
- unified login (including one user ID)
- one common user interface, i.e. one presentation structure
- one uniform, user-friendly retrieval system
- direct access to electronic media and a unified request service.

The Danish solution is unique in its ambition to create one common, electronic, national, coherent, electronic research library which in time will include every single research library in Denmark. DEF does therefore not only underline the financial, but also the cooperative and organisational frames for DEF as a network organisation for the project’s players, the participating research libraries which are each of them responsible for IT upgrading and implementation locally.
At the moment 31 research libraries are taking part in the work on deff.dk – the DEF portal. 122 research libraries have already had or are in the process of getting their library systems upgraded via DEF, 96 libraries (sites) covering a further 194 institutes/institutions/hospitals participate in the license work, 14 research libraries are co-operating on the retro-conversion of catalogue cards. Apart from this, 35 research libraries are participating in the 20 DEF development projects which i.a. include user training, competence development, user surveys/satisfaction, digitisation, technology-supported teaching and web archiving. The public libraries have one representative in the DEF Steering Committee as well and in the DEF license group and also participate in the DEF co-operation in two of the 20 DEF development projects.

The vision

The DEF-vision is based on the idea of a common platform which gives the individual library the possibility of offering access to an extended mass of information resources, primarily electronic periodicals and databases through the signing of national licence agreements which are financially advantageous to the libraries. And – as we have seen – the chance to provide the users with access to a wider selection of information resources.

The vision also includes new services, based on individual user profiles and the development of intelligent agents and software which might for example be able to analyse user behaviour patterns on the basis of user profiles and similar parameters. A very important action line indeed, seen in the light of the change of paradigm in the role of the libraries; because of the increased volume of information made available to the individual user, the role of the libraries as mediators of knowledge takes on an increasing significance.

The establishment of DEF has in practice been based on four main action lines:

• National infrastructure – building a common portal as single point access to the electronic resources, catalogues and subject gateways and to Danish research information as well as consensus on the use of standards, user administration etc.
• Library infrastructure – upgrading of IT systems as well as standardisation of library systems, co-ordination and co-operation
• Digital resources – licence agreements at national level, digitisation of collections and retro-conversion of catalogue cards
• User facilities – development projects, i.a. including user training, competence development, user surveys and user satisfaction, digitisation and technology-supported learning (e-learning), e-publishing.

The portal

The first version of the portal for Denmark’s Electronic Research Library ‘deff.dk’ went on the air in autumn 2001. Up until the end of the project period in 2002, ‘deff.dk’ will be currently developed with new functions, services and adjustments. At this moment the portal offers online access to:

• About 400 electronic net resources (catalogues and information databases)
• An overview of 7,000 journal titles and searches on titles in broad subject categories
• Cross searches in the participating research libraries’ catalogues and webpages
• Ordering from the public and the research libraries’ catalogues via library.dk
• Five subject portals (within music, clinical information, energy, foodstuffs and nutrition, business economics)
• Searching within 26 subject areas with links to Danish and foreign webpages, portals, databases etc.
• A guided tour of the portal.

As a joint entrance to Denmark’s Electronic Research Library, deff.dk offers access to a number of information resources selected on the basis of demands for quality and relevance. deff.dk sorts through knowledge and gives the user access to quality resources across the libraries, whatever the physical location of the collections. Denmark’s Electronic Research Library is an ‘open’ development project and the portal is constantly being developed and extended. In the spring of 2002 ‘the key’ will be implemented and the vision of the electronic research library will have been optimised with a 24-hour access to quality-assured information with up-to-date support facilities and tools.

Future perspectives

In January 2002 the DEF project entered its final phase, and plans for the future organisation of ‘DEF after DEF’ are still on the drawing board.

The vision of Denmark’s Electronic
Research Library is, however, already now a fact and has brought influence to bear on each and every research library in Denmark, on the service profile in relation to the users’ altered needs and demands, co-operative relations both within and across the library and research sector and not least on publishing structure, registration and marketing of research results.

Denmark’s Electronic Research Library helps to focus the attention on the number of changes of paradigm which take place in the digital library, the most important of these being related to the purchase of licenses for electronic information.

**Acquisition of journals – a change of paradigm in practice**
One of the DEF project’s most important action lines has to do with national license agreements for electronic journals. DEF co-operation on licenses is an example of a model for how Danish research libraries – in co-operation with public libraries and other institutions – handle the change of paradigm from traditional collection building to online access to resources in relation to journals.

Development of the information technology has been all-important, not only as regards the contents of the libraries’ collections, but also in terms of the actual building up of these. The considerable expansion of the Internet has now made it necessary for the libraries to change internal routines and work processes. One primary objective of Denmark’s Electronic Research Library has thus been to be instrumental in highlighting and developing the change which is going on in the libraries’ acquisition policy, economy and procedures in connection with this transition.

**Traditional collection building**
Over the years the libraries have spent many resources on choosing and making available printed journals. Suggestions for the purchase of various titles would as a rule come from researchers, users and research librarians, a sample copy might then be ordered and subsequently the decision was made. Price, subject area and estimated use would all be factors to be taken into consideration. Following a purchase, the journals would be catalogued, single copies registered in cardex, paid for, claimed etc. At regular intervals they would go through their collections to identify the journals which were not being used and then possibly cancel them. Articles from journals which were not held by the library in question, could be acquired via interlibrary loan/document delivery.

**The journals crisis**
At the beginning of the 90s the price of journals, especially foreign journals, absolutely exploded. Annual price increases were close to 20% per year. In order to keep within their budgets, the libraries had to cancel a large number of their journals. And apart from this currencies fluctuated. From 1990-1995, 40% of the libraries had to cancel their journals subscriptions. Within the same period, the number of scientific journals rose considerably, and researchers’ demands for access to scientific literature did in no way subside.

**Reorganisation**
The need for a reorganisation of the libraries was imminent, and when at this point the first journals started to appear in online versions, the way was paved for electronic information. To begin with electronic access was free, if the library subscribed to the printed version. This meant that the libraries did not immediately gain access to new material (i.e. other than they already had access to).

The forming of consortia slowly began to take shape in order to provide access to more journals. The first consortium for licensing journals evolved in 1997/98 in the very early stages of the DEF project. The first agreement was on Chemical Abstracts and the second was with Academic Press. This initial consortium consisted of the State and University Library, Aalborg University Library, the Technical Knowledge Centre of Denmark and Lund University Library in Sweden. The participating libraries gained access to all journals (175) published by Academic Press, and the price for this access was calculated on the basis of what each library possessed in the way of printed editions in the year of acquisition. You not only gained electronic access to the library’s printed editions, but also to journals which has been cancelled during the early 1990s. The participants also gained access to a number of journals which they would never themselves have bought.

The electronic journals were catalogued, and sometimes individual copies were registered in cardex. The libraries worked out alphabetical lists on the web pages which would point the users in the direction of the journal’s homepage. At first both the printed and the electronic version was made available to the end users, but eventually the libra-
Access to electronic information will in future become an expressive demand from the user

The libraries have found it necessary to cut down on expenses, choosing to cancel the printed edition and making only the electronic version available. Many questions did of course present themselves prior to such cancellations – when to give up the printed edition – questions which are still being debated at the moment for example in relation to when the electronic edition would be available (before/after or at the same time as the printed version), whether the content was the same, whether you could be sure that the journal was always available, whether the library would be allowed to say no to access to titles which it was not interested in and how the library could make the end users aware of the fact that the journal was available in electronic form?

The transition of a library service from printed to electronic information is a lengthy process. It is not enough to get access to the electronic information, it also has to be made available to the end users and in a way which is satisfactory to everyone. The Technical Knowledge Centre of Denmark, with financial support from Denmark’s Electronic Research Library, developed an interface which could be used for searching in journals, across titles and across publishers. At the same time, the publishers also realised the necessity of creating interfaces, and by degrees the market has experienced a vast number of gateways which are very different in content as well as principle of operation.

Consortia

The libraries are not alone in seeing the transition as a lengthy process, the same applies to the publishers. To begin with it was the big journals publishers – Academic Press, Elsevier, Kluwer – who brought forward the consortia models. Smaller publishers were to follow and gradually societies have joined in. The critical mass has been reached, but there is still a large number of journals only available in printed form.

The consortia models have from the word go been a package deal. If enough libraries wanted to join, everyone gained access. The accession policy disappeared from the libraries and day-to-day work in the library consequently changed. There is no registration of journal issues with electronic access anymore, on the other hand staff for teaching and marketing of these new resources is in great demand.

Electronic journals have also altered the way in which to search on the net. Today researchers use a much greater variety of journals than before, because of the opportunities open to them – and the number of journals published is forever increasing. Last, but not least, the form of publishing is changing. The number of scientific journals is still rising, but researchers are aware of the new possibilities of publishing which the net offers, so more changes are in the offing.

Conclusion

The change of paradigm from collecting building to online access has meant that libraries are still facing many unanswered questions. Questions which they must find the answers to in cooperation with DEF. As to access, one can nevertheless say that electronic information is available 365 days a year, round the clock, and from the researcher’s own writing desk as well. It is also up the user her/himself which journals they want to apply their searches to.

The libraries worry about the rapidly changing situation and about how they are going to solve the problems which crop up. In order to secure the information for their users, they will therefore continue to build consortia. They try to solve the problems of accession and archiving and are looking out for new opportunities.

The role of the libraries has changed, but there is no doubt that they are still playing a decisive role in the dissemination of knowledge and the development/building up of Danish knowledge infrastructure and research.

Conclusion

Denmark’s Electronic Research Library helps to highlight the dimensions and consequences which the expansion of the Internet has meant to the new behaviour pattern of the user and the application of electronic information. Access to electronic information will in future become an expressive demand from the user with the result that publishers and information agents, like the libraries, will have to develop their electronic services and mediation in a way which will continue to contribute towards the free and democratic access to information, wherever it is to be found all over the world or whichever server it might be available on. The virtual library consortia will remove or dissolve borders on many levels – also those between public and research libraries.

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Translated by Vibeke Cranfield
In the county of Sogn and Fjordane on the Norwegian west coast the Sogndal library is breaking new ground in the field of local history. In collaboration with the county archives and the Heiberg Collections – Regional Folkmuseum of Sogn the library has created a local history information and enquiry website.

Instead of having to contact three different institutions during their restricted opening hours, the public can now sit at home and click on to http://sporejevev.sffarkiv.no or send their queries on local history by E-mail. This also serves to lower the threshold of accessibility, since not everybody would know initially which of the three institutions to approach for an answer. Although the queries must in some way bear a relation to the region of Sogn and Fjordane, people from all parts of the country, indeed from all corners of the world, can make use of the website.

The service is free of charge and an answer is guaranteed within a week. The professional staff at the three institutions share the responsibility of dealing with queries and can suggest suitable sources which the enquirer can approach for further information. The county archives, the museum and the public library may have different points of departure, but in this project they work together towards a common goal of making local history material more accessible to the public and presenting it in an inspiring manner. The project brings the library, the archives and the museum closer together, creating in each individual institution a greater awareness of what the others have to offer. There have been no signs of professional rivalry.

“Far from competing, we actually complement each other,” claims Gerd Vik, leader of the project and member of staff at the Sogndal library. “As professionals in our own particular fields, the project has brought us closer together. Nevertheless, in order to make the best use of the resources and expertise at each of the institutions, it is still necessary to define areas of responsibility in the way we co-operate.”

A variety of questions
The local history information website came into being in June 2000 and has so far dealt with a total of some 60 questions. The site is visited by 11-12 different users each day. Enquiries at the start were few and far between, but as gradually more and more people have become aware of the service, the range of questions has widened. The limited interest so far is mainly due to the fact that no active marketing of the website has been carried out. The long-term aim is to create an interactive service where users can be drawn more directly into the development of the site.

All the questions so far dealt with, together with the answers, can be accessed on the Internet for the benefit and inspiration of users. The most recently answered questions are presented on the first page and there is also a subject-based search function.

Questions vary greatly but many users require help in obtaining information about individual persons or on specific historical events which have taken place in Sogn and Fjordane, a county with a present-day population of about 100,000.

The website has dealt with questions ranging from local incidents during the war to long-life light bulbs, school closures, textile factories and bailiffs removed from office.

“When were Ragna and Edvin Nore married? Are there any photographs available?” is a typical type of question. The enquirer is given an answer and reference is made to a photograph from the wedding which exists in the county archives and which can be accessed on the Internet. A click on this reference number brings up the photograph directly, together with all relevant information.

We learn that the wedding concerned took place in 1935 at the Norane farm and there is a list giving the names of
From Fylkesarkivet in Sogn and Fjordane
those people in the photograph who have been identified. It is possible to click on the name of each individual person and if they are registered elsewhere in the photo archive, there will be further links also to these. The website has not the capacity to deal with purely genealogical questions, but the service tries to inform the user about relevant sources.

Another enquirer seeks information on children’s games and toys in the old days and is given details on books and manuals where this theme can be studied. An offer is also made to send some of this material home to the enquirer. Another query comes from a person who has been given the task of writing about a particular hotel. He needs advice on possible sources of information.

50% of the questions received come from people living in Sogn and Fjordane, the other half from all over Norway. Those making use of the service are mainly men and one in four of all enquirers wishes to remain anonymous.

The web pages also offer links to various databases which can assist people researching their family genealogy and who are interested in local history. Although this information is made available through a new medium, the service is still based on traditional library methods.

“This is normal everyday library reference work,” explains Gerd Vik. “The difference here is that it becomes more visible. Since our replies are available to the general public, it may well be that we put a little extra effort into our work. As librarians we are accustomed first and foremost to referring to printed sources, but this co-operation with historians and archivists has taught us to take also other types of sources into consideration. The threshold for making contact with the other professions involved has been considerably lowered.”

Interdisciplinary co-operation

In addition to making local history material available in an interesting way, a further aim of the project is to try out new modes of co-operation between archives, libraries and museums. In Parliamentary Report no. 22 (1999-2000) Sources of knowledge and experience, emphasis is laid on the public having easy access to their cultural heritage and on the need for closer co-operation between archives, libraries and museums.

The Sogn and Fjordane county archives are glad of the opportunity to participate in the project together with the library and the museum. “This is clearly a win-win situation for the archives,” claims archivist Snorre Dag Øverbo. “Everybody is familiar with the activities of a library or a museum, but an archive is a more diffuse...
concept for most people. We look upon the museum and the library as big sisters and this type of co-operation here in Sogn will help to give us a public profile. All of us provide documentation about the past and now we can come together on the Internet. This is a step towards the future and new, exciting projects should result from our co-operation.”

The county of Sogn and Fjordane is ahead of most in the use of information and communication technology in the cultural sector. Already in the 1980s a number of projects were set in motion to register church records, census results and place names in databases. 10,000 photographs of historical interest have been scanned in and made available on the Internet. For a long time now the public library in Sogndal has collaborated with the Sogn and Fjordane College of Education with regard to literature of local historical interest. Primary schools and the Sogndal secondary school also work closely with the public library in the field of information and communication technology. The library was therefore well equipped to initiate a project such as the Local History Enquiry Website.

Modern methods
Norwegians are considerably interested in local history and family research. Many public libraries have important collections of local historical material and have acquired wide expertise in this area. In order to reach out to a wider and younger public, many libraries have started to disseminate this material through new channels such as the Internet. The Sogndal library’s Local History Information Website has also been part of a nation-wide project, Screen contact with local history, www.bibtils.no, which was initiated by the Norwegian Directorate for Public Libraries in 1999 and completed in 2001. The seven participating local projects throughout the country have had different aims, themes and forms but have shared the common purpose of presenting local history through the use of the Internet. In several of the projects children and young people have been an important target group.

Seminars have been arranged where the local project leaders have met the central project management in order to discuss relevant problems. These meetings have rotated so that most of the municipalities involved have hosted one seminar during the course of the project period. Experts on a variety of subjects relevant to the projects have been invited to lecture at these meetings.

Cataloguing and indexing
The Sogn and Fjordane website project also includes other measures to improve the public’s access to local history literature. Work is well advanced in preparing a joint catalogue for the library, the archives and the museum. The books and periodicals held in the museum and in the county archives are being converted to the same cataloguing system as that used by the public library. In this way the three institutions will be integrated into a joint database – the Sogndal base. This will also mean financial savings for all involved. Local school libraries are already incorporated in the system and the literature will also be made accessible through the Norwegian National Library’s Union Catalogue.

This joint catalogue will provide access to a rich collection of local historical literature from Sogn and Fjordane. Books and writings from the Heiberg collections – Regional Folkmuseum of Sogn the library and the Sogn County Archives, previously not catalogued and therefore inaccessible to a wider public, will be given a new lease of life.

One third of this local historical project is devoted to the indexing of relevant literature for the municipalities in Sogn. All articles of local historical interest appearing in periodicals and county yearbooks will be analysed, registered and made accessible to search. This work is being carried out through the so-called Fjognedok project which was initiated by the Sogn and Fjordane county library and where the Sogndal public library is one of the cooperating participants. This project takes its name from the dialect word ‘fjogning’, meaning a person from Sogn and Fjordane.

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Jorid Mathiassen, journalist
Translated by Eric Deverill
Swedish public libraries have been able to benefit from the government literature subsidy system since 1999. All municipalities and nearly 100 selected booksellers receive a copy of every book title that has been awarded literature subsidy. In total this amounts to an additional 700 – 800 titles a year.

The following is an interim follow-up report on the Swedish distribution subsidy system.

Swedish publishers have been able to apply for state subsidy for their publications since 1975. At that time, a grants system was established whereby a publisher could receive a printing subsidy based on the number of printed sheets used to produce a copy of the title in question. These subsidies were originally intended for new Swedish adult fiction, adult fiction translated into Swedish, children and young people’s fiction, non-fiction for adults and literary classics. In the years that followed, several adjustments and additions were made to the system: in 1977 subsidies were introduced for fiction written in immigrant and minority languages; in 1978 the ordinance was redrafted and made permanent; in 1981 a subsidy was introduced for children and young people’s literature in immigrant languages; in 1985 subsidies started for children’s comic strips; in 1993 the ordinance was once again redrafted and subsidies for picture books and illustrated works were introduced. Despite all these modifications, the basic principles of the subsidy system have remained largely unchanged. The idea has been to provide a production subsidy to enable a publisher to produce a broad range of titles with a high level of quality.

The literature subsidy was a product of the 1968 government survey on literature, the main conclusions of which were published in 1974 under the title Boken (The book). The 1997 official government report on books, Boken i tiden (The book in our age), proposed an extension of the subsidy so that it would cover not only production but also distribution. The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs received the task of providing municipal libraries and a selection of booksellers with subsidised books. The first deliveries were made during the first six months of 1999. According to the distribution subsidy, publishers receive a grant equivalent to half of the usual net price (i.e. the price at which the book is sold to the retailer) for 385 copies of the title that has been awarded a subsidy on the grounds of its literary excellence. It is then the responsibility of the publishers to send these copies (intended for the 289 municipalities and almost 100 booksellers plus a few supplementary copies) to a distribution company, with which the Council for Cultural Affairs has a contract, who then arranges distribution to the recipients.

In order to examine the effects of the distribution subsidy, the Council for Cultural Affairs has commissioned an inventory of selected libraries’ stocks and borrowing rates of those titles receiving the literary subsidy. First of all, research was carried out regarding the availability of and demand for those titles that received the literature subsidy between 1997 and 1998; the first two years immediately before the distribution subsidy came into effect.

Every year the Council for Cultural Affairs provides support for the publication of almost 800 titles. The additional acquisition of so many books per year varies greatly in significance from one municipal library to the next. In one of Sweden’s smallest municipalities, Nordmaling, one year’s supply of subsidised titles corresponds to almost 40 per cent of the libraries’ normal annual acquisitions, whereas in Västerås, one of the country’s larger municipalities, it is equivalent to only 4 per cent of annual acquisitions. With an estimated average price per copy of SEK 175, receiving an additional 775 copies amounts to in the region of SEK 130,000, which in Nordmaling is equivalent to almost 35
per cent of the libraries’ media costs, but in Västerås amounts to no more than 3.5 per cent of the equivalent costs.

Purchases of subsidised titles appeared to be unequally distributed, both among different municipalities and among different support categories. Densely populated municipalities had purchased a larger proportion of subsidised titles between 1997 and 1998 than those municipalities with a low population density. Children and young people’s literature was the support category where the highest number of purchases had been made in all municipalities. The median was about 85 per cent in both the two years prior to the introduction of the distribution subsidy. This figure rose to 95 per cent in 1999. As regards adult fiction translated into Swedish, the level of purchasing was just below 50 per cent in 1997 and 1998, whereas in 1999, stocks had risen to 85 per cent. As regards the three support categories – new Swedish adult fiction, comic strips for children and adult non-fiction – median stocks were approximately 33 per cent during 1997 and 1998, rising to median levels of 83 per cent, 61 per cent and 77 per cent for each of these categories respectively in 1999. It is clear from these figures that the distribution subsidy has had the desired effect. — more titles receiving literature subsidy are available for loan at those libraries included in the survey.

It may appear strange that stocks of subsidised titles do not amount to 100 per cent in all the categories. There are at least two possible explanations for this. First of all, not all subsidised titles were included in the first year of distribution, due to the fact that several of the subsidy applications which were dealt with at the beginning of 1999 were titles which had been published at the end of 1998. The other reason is that not all the libraries in the survey had given priority to all the subsidised titles. Certain libraries choose from among their titles and register the most popular ones in their catalogue immediately, leaving the others to be registered when time allows.

In order to analyse the extent to which subsidised titles are borrowed, one particular support category has been examined in more detail: new Swedish adult fiction. Both encouraging and disappointing results come to light. Due to the increase in stocks of subsidised titles, the number of loans of such titles has also risen at all the libraries in the survey. For the same reason — the increase in stocks — the proportion of titles that are never borrowed has also increased. At two of the libraries, (both belonging to the smallest municipalities in the country), as many as 40

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and 44 per cent of the catalogued titles in the new adult literature category, which had received literature subsidy in 1999, had not been borrowed on one single occasion when the survey was carried out in autumn 2000. Both these municipalities are nevertheless those with the lowest number of 1999 subsidised titles in their stocks. The total number of loans of all copies of subsidised titles has increased between 1998 and 1999 at all the libraries except one, however the number of loans per copy has decreased at all of them during the same period.

231 titles received a subsidy within the category of new adult fiction in 1999. Of these 231 titles, 38 were excluded from the distribution subsidy at the beginning of the year. Of the remaining 193 titles included in the distribution subsidy, 37 had either not been borrowed at all or at most three times at the 10 libraries in the survey. No less than 28 of these 37 were poetry anthologies, four titles belonged to some other kind of fiction category (short stories, diaries/causeries) and the five remaining titles were different biographies in the fields of art, music and literary history.

The implementation of the distribution subsidy has once again brought the issue of the role of public libraries to a head: do they have an educational role and should they be actively recommending titles to library visitors, or should they simply satisfy the requests of their customers and not waste valuable shelf space on titles which are not being borrowed? Naturally the two alternatives are not mutually exclusive, and no one is suggesting that all municipalities should have the same policy as regards their libraries. Nevertheless, when it comes to how the distribution subsidy is to be designed in the future, it is important that these issues are dealt with in future evaluations. During 2001, data on the titles available and the borrowing rates of subsidised titles will be collected. In addition these facts and figures will be complemented by interviews with the staff at the libraries in the survey in order to ascertain what needs and wishes there are. The final report should be ready in the autumn of 2002.
A library in balance

Two structurally different systems having been brought together, and the rules are very different.

In the new Almedal Library on Gotland, public library and university library are being brought together on equal terms. Sometimes you are reminded that libraries can be very much a reflection of our society and the times in which we live. With the newly opened integrated Almedal Library, and all the commotion that preceded its opening, you are tempted to produce your crystal ball - for this combined public and university library is probably a library for the future, but it is also a picture of a society in the process of change.

The visitor coming to the library for the first time is met by a new, modern library – with no hint of conflict. The big glass entrance hall with its characteristic Gotland limestone is beautiful, open and light, although it gives perhaps a rather sparse impression – something which will certainly improve when the café opens shortly. In the entrance hall there is also a section with newspapers – and poetry. It is an unexpected and attractive combination, but the explanation for it is more prosaic than might have been expected.

- It was partly a question of giving prominence to what might be termed 'minority literature', says the head of the library, Sten Anttila. But one reason is probably also that poetry is less desirable to steal.

Half a floor up and you are into the library itself, with the children's library just on your left. It is a large and lovely library, with stairs you can sit on, intended for acting and reading out loud. Beyond the children's library are literature and periodicals, and one floor up is the whole of the reference library.

The Almedal Library is an integrated library to the extent that integration has been taken as far as possible without in any way cutting down on services. All the book stocks, except course literature which is kept separately, have been merged. There is no special university department, and all specialist literature is placed together on the first floor.

The computers are arranged in three categories – those for catalogue access (where it is not possible to sit and study), those for study purposes, and those for surfing. In theory all are available to all users, but the idea is that the right person will be steered towards the right kind of computer.

But how does the integrated library work organizationally? Is there a limit to how far one can go as far as integration is concerned?

At Almedal Library it is still very much a case of virgin ground. Sten Anttila stresses again and again that they are playing it by ear all the time. It is not possible to apply the same model as the one in Härnösand.

- I had a temporary post at Härnösand when the merger of libraries was being planned there, but you can never copy a model straight off. What I learned was how to handle a model psychologically. For instance, in Härnösand we were terribly tired and a bit depressed immediately after the opening, and it is that phase we find ourselves in just now.

The main difference between Härnösand and the Almedal Library is that in Härnösand there are three library heads, while Sten Anttila in Visby is the single head of both the public library and the research library. He thus has two employers and two responsible authorities - the state and the local authority. When asked what that is like, the answer comes quickly: - It is tough. Extremely difficult. Anyone who has done it will understand that. It is awkward both organizationally and legally. It is not a question of two structurally different systems having been brought together, but that the rules are very different. It takes a great deal of communication between bosses at different levels. The advantage of Gotland is that it is so small that you can get an overview more easily.

The concept of integration is not an 'either/or' one, says Sten Anttila. What comes closest to integration is total merger, and the idea that is furthest...
away from it is just sharing the same premises. - Somewhere in between comes the concept of coordinating - you are in the same building but you respect each other’s work. It is important to remember that integration is not the same thing as a merger. There are clear limits to how far you can integrate, says Sten Anttila. They have to do with the legislation, labour law and economics. For obvious reasons the budgets must be kept quite separate. - But certain budget entries cannot be kept apart and in those cases you have to decide on standard formulae.

Where labour law is concerned, there are still some questions to be resolved. Any member of staff at Almedal comes either under the state or under the local authority (all except Sten Anttila, who is employed by both). The rules vary to a certain extent, for example, when it comes to allowances for unsociable hours and hours of work.

- Adapting contracts is the hardest nut to crack. The conditions are so different, and university staff usually have better conditions of employment than local authority employees. They are difficult to harmonize, and it is this sort of thing that can create schisms. But the will to find solutions is there at all levels - the responsible authorities, the unions and the staff.

Sten Anttila still has an optimistic view of the chances of solving the problems. Both his authorities have shown a good deal of generosity, he says. He also stresses that there have been considerably fewer internal conflicts than he expected. Under Sten Anttila there is a library council with representatives of the two authorities. Moreover, the staff are divided into two teams of librarians and assistants from both the public library and the university library side. Each team has a group leader and their main jobs, among others, are to develop the library environment, “Creating a library environment is a kind of science” as is working out the rota. The idea is for people in the two groups to teach each other about the areas of work and methods in the respective types of library. For the time being, however, the specialist functions of the public library and the university library respectively, will be maintained. Where acquisitions are concerned, the routines are still not quite decided.

- It is a matter of two different cultures. On the public library side there is the aspiration to know the contents of the books, to be able to talk about them with the users. For the research library side the content is less interesting, to put it rather bluntly. You rely more on the lecturers and requests. An interlibrary loan turns into a suggestion for purchase. The staff have joint authority to sign - there are two signatures on every purchase, one from the public library side and one from the university library side. They discuss who will buy what and how the cost is to be divided, and in this way they avoid duplicates being bought. The user sees no difference since the books are all kept together.

- But the fact that the borderlines have been rubbed out between the public library and the university library does not mean that either type of library has exhausted its role. When recently recruiting two people Almedal Library stressed the importance of experience of a university library or university-influenced library. Sten Anttila thinks it is easier for a new person who is well acquainted with libraries’ role in education to feel secure in the work of integration. Besides, among the staff there are still fewer people and they have less work experience on the university library side than on the public library side.

- For integration to work it is important to understand who is your boss. Then the borderlines are easier to distinguish, and you are more secure in the work of integration. When the plans to bring together the university library and the public library were agreed upon, a furious debate broke out on Gotland - a debate which went on for a long time and involved several
different levels. It was town against country - old public library tradition of popular enlightenment against a utilitarian ‘education society’. Differences in class and social structures came to light.

The row produced a book and a master’s thesis. But why did the merger provoke such strong feelings?

- There were several factors. One is to do with social structure and the gulf between town and country on Gotland, which became a catalyst for political aggravation. But perhaps the most important factor was the site. From the point of view of cultural milieu the library is well placed today, but from the business point of view it is rather a long way from the centre of town. That is a fact. We have tried buses, but the journey takes time. My hope is that when people do make the journey they will be staying longer. For an outsider the problem is a little difficult to understand - after all no distances are that long in Visby, and the library is so beautifully situated, with the often very deep blue sea right outside. However, many people, not least older people, find the road to the library a bit too steep, and many visitors and staff say that the bus service is still far from being frequent enough.

However, some of the criticisms have been about the integration itself. Many feared that the university side would ‘eat up’ the public library side and stifle the local authority objectives.
- But how far the local authority succeeds in its objectives is a matter of finance. Matters would have been worse if one side had been better off financially than the other, but in this case the financial situation of both is fairly bad. Both sides have to have a ‘crisis awareness’. Today the conflict has subsided considerably, and Sten Anttila says that he has learned a lot from it.
- I learned what is important here. If this debate had not taken place I would not, for instance, put so much energy into the bus service. And I am more conscious of the risk of one of my bosses steamrolling the other. Now we have to look forward and bring together two ways of working which are still quite different.

- Many routines are still new to all of us, but all the new questions that come up are interesting and exciting, says Kerstin Danielsson, a librarian from the public library side who is ‘very happy’ there. Change takes time, but the prognosis looks good.

Both sides have to have a ‘crisis awareness’

Postscript

The Almedal Library was opened on 1 September 2001, and is an integrated public and university library. It comes under two authorities - the state and the local authority. In this interview the head of the library, Sten Anttila, says that he is optimistic about getting them to work together. He did, however, choose to leave his post on 31 January 2002. Today the library operates with a temporary solution, with two heads, but the hope is that in due course there will be one head of the library and one responsible authority.

The Härnösand Library which is mentioned in the article was opened in February 2000 and is three libraries in one – public, county and university library have been brought together under one roof, but keep their three respective heads.

The article was first published in Biblioteksbladet 2001:10

Annina Rabe, journalist
Translation Eve Johansson
Reduced prices on books and magazines in Sweden

A previously record-breaking sales tax of 25% on books and magazines was in January 2002 downscaled to the customary EU level of 6%. The reduction came about after an enduring debate. Book publishers and booksellers had pursued an intense, and at times rancorous, campaign pressuring the political parties to reach a decision concerning a tax reduction.

The Minister of Culture, Marita Ulvskog remains sceptical as to the proffered positive effects of a tax reduction. Her opinion is that nowhere in the world has a reduction of the VAT for books been fully beneficial to the customer. And that the best means to increase reading awareness is to conduct selective ventures aimed at the reading habits of children and young people. The Government has made it a priority to improve reading conditions and during 2001 it funded 240,000,000 SEK towards book publishing, libraries and other beneficial reading endeavours.

The Swedish booktrade have collectively staked their claim that reduction of the VAT will primarily benefit the customer. For the purpose of scrutinising the effects of such a tax reduction the Government has appointed a book-price commission. The commission’s assignment will be to observe developments in price patterns, analyse possible consequences related to sales of books and magazines and to report to the Government on causes rendered on reading patterns in the process.

There will also be a series of investigations into price patterns running parallel to the work of the Book Commission. Such an investigation regarding book prices was conducted in 2001 by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs and will be followed up later in 2002.

Libraries, as all publicly funded sectors, are exempt from VAT on books and magazines. Consequently, there are apprehensions being voiced from the library sector as to whether the publishing business will use this as an opportunity to increase prices, the aftermath of which could be detrimental to the purchasing power of libraries.

Birgitta Modigh
Head of Department of Literature, Libraries and Arts Periodicals
Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs
Translated by Jonathan Pearman

Nordic co-operation is moving into a new era where focus has shifted from traditional cultural and educational co-operation and on to a Nordic cultural co-operation based on the technological development and the convergence between the media-, Tele- and IT-sector.

New agenda in Nordic Council of Ministers and Nordic Council

In 2000 a panel of specialists appointed by the Nordic co-operation ministers, published their thoughts on content and direction in future forms of co-operation, in the report Öppet för värlbens vindar. Nordic Council and Nordic Council of Ministers subsequently published a New Nordic Agenda on 24 October. The report maintains that the new overall strategic goals for Nordic Council are technological development, welfare, the interior market in the North, environment and co-operation between neighbouring countries and regions. This is a breakaway from the two previous strategy reports from 1992 and 1995 which prioritised cultural ‘genuine’ Scandinavian interest with about 50% of the resources together with research and education. As opposed to the changes in the strategy of Nordic Council of Ministers, culture
has gained a more prominent place in Nordic Council’s new organisation, having got an independent committee together with education.

Library co-operation – new possibilities
Cultural co-operation under the auspices of Nordic Council of Ministers will in future be placed under the headline Technological development with special emphasis on i.a. the problems posed in the information society. Basically the information society is more a question of content, language and culture, rather than technology and in this connection digital content production, copyright and multimedia issues will be prioritised, as well as active citizenship, competence development and the role of volunteers.

From the libraries’ point of view this angle on cultural co-operation and the overall prioritisation of the information society, supports the role of the libraries in a modern Nordic society. A role that encompasses amongst other things being the supplier of public service, public information systems, civic service, information producer and developer of democracy. Libraries can contribute – not only with mediation of information – but also with interpretation by qualifying the information on the net and lending it a human face via the personal contact in the library. Libraries ought to help bridging the information gap between those who can and those who cannot handle the whirlpool of undigested information – a major problem of the information society all along.

Nordic Council of Ministers’ committee for literature and libraries, Nordbok, is prepared to pick up the gauntlet and provide the ministers of culture with food for a discussion on a new public service concept. How will media convergence affect the libraries’ opportunities? Where will the libraries be able to assume new public service obligations? How best to support the public on the net? What kind of content should be made available in digital form and how can we support the individual citizen by integrating library services in his everyday life.

Inger Frydendahl
Danish National Library Authority
Translated by Vibeke Cranfield

Download
Project Download is a joint effort between Copenhagen and Århus Municipal Libraries, the Danish Library Centre and the publishers Gyldendal. The aim of the project is to offer the users the opportunity via Internet to download e-books. Initially the project has been focusing on books and articles, but as soon as safeguarding against copying has improved, music, films and games will also be incorporated in the system. The overall purpose is to ensure equal and democratic access to all material whatever the media. Project Download has received financial support for project maturing from the Danish National Library Authority’s Superstructure Pool and the report can be seen on www.downlaan.dk (in Danish).

Netborn music via the libraries
A project group with participants from Århus Municipal Libraries and the State and University Library, and with financial support from the Development Pool, has prepared a study into how and on which conditions netborn music resources may in future be mediated via the libraries.

The report contains an extensive user investigation, listening tests of music stored in various formats, a review of similar initiatives in other countries and other contexts, as well as an exposition of copyright aspects in connection with copyright protected works mediated via the net. Finally the report offers some suggestions as to future initiatives within the area, including testing of payment models. The report can be seen on www.aakb.dk/graphics/pub/musik.pdf (in Danish).
The 20th century was a great period for the Finnish public libraries. Even if one should be mistrustful of institutional success stories, it is difficult to interpret the facts otherwise: public libraries in this northern corner of Europe have risen from somewhat modest origins onto a level of excellence virtually unparalleled in the world. Libraries are generally good and they are intensively used; people visit the library as naturally as they go into their own living rooms. It has not always been like that. When comparing the Finnish public libraries with those of their Nordic neighbours in 1956, a British observer, Lionel MacColvin, reported that “in the remaining Scandinavian country, Finland, there was still much to be done”. Today he would be pleasantly surprised by the libraries of “this immense lonely country”. Finnish Public Libraries in the 20th Century endeavours to give answers, why and how this phenomenal development took place.

Finnish Public Libraries in the 20th Century
Edited by Ilkka Mäkinen, Lecturer, Reader in Library History, Dr.Soc.Sci. Department of Information Studies, University of Tampere
Tampere University Press 2001

The book gives an introduction to Nordic public library service with the main emphasis on topical portraits of libraries which may seem very different, but which nevertheless reflect a tradition and a certain way of thinking. The initiative for this publication was taken by the Nordic public library authorities who are also joint editors of Scandinavian Public Library Quarterly. It contains five national chapters and portraits of 13 public libraries in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway, Sweden and the autonomous areas: Aland Islands, The Faroe Islands and Greenland. Published by the Danish National Library Authority. The book is richly illustrated and costs DKK 250,-.

Nordic Public Libraries. The Nordic cultural sphere and its public libraries
Editor: Jens Thorhauge in co-operation with Birgitta Modigh, Ahsjorn Langeland, Þóra Óskarsdóttir, Barbro Wigell-Ryynänen

Norwegian Public Library Buildings 1990-2000
During the period 1990-1999 no less than 194 Norwegian public libraries moved into new premises. This number includes both main libraries and branch libraries. Only 11 of Norway's 435 municipalities have more than 50,000 inhabitants, which means that the vast majority of Norwegian public libraries are small and that many are housed in buildings primarily constructed for other purposes. Therefore in only a very few cases can one talk of a specific library architecture.

In a publication from the Norwegian Directorate for Public Libraries a selection of new public libraries from the last decade is the subject of a well-informed and thorough essay by Mari Lending, research scholar at the Oslo School of Architecture. The text is accompanied by the excellent photographs of Jiri Havran. In her review of modern Norwegian public libraries from Karasjok in the far north to Arendal in the south, the author begins by placing the institution of the library in a historical and social setting. What is a library and how should it physically present itself to the public? She concludes, “With the coming of the 20th century and architectural modernism the specific, individually character of buildings has become partly blurred and partly reinterpreted... Central public institutions, traditionally treated as monuments, are now subject to a new stylistic interpretation.”

Two of the libraries mentioned represent a significant contribution to contemporary Norwegian architecture. Architects Lunde and Løvseth have given Tonsberg a library which, while reflecting past local history, is still totally modern.

Stein Halvorsen and Christian Sundby have created a spectacular, beautiful building to house the Sami Parliament and the Sami special library. Mari Lending maintains that “these examples illustrate the rewards to be gained from bold and innovative architecture. In addition to providing the books, the public and the library staff with an environment of supreme aesthetic and functional quality, the area or the town...”
Norway

A taste for reading is not expensive, lack of language may well be

A young, maladjusted person, placed in a residential institution, costs society NKR 200,000 a month. A constructive reading project for an entire local authority costs 4-600,000 a year. Norway’s single municipal reading project, Øvre Eiker municipality, has shown great foresight in its focus on systematic training of school children in reading and writing and has been rewarded with some remarkable results.

Bibliotek Forum, 9/2001

Translated by Eric Deverill

Sweden

Nordic cultural policy undergoes a change

A recent research report confirms that there are considerable similarities in the Nordic cultural political model. Development in the Nordic countries seems to run along parallel lines and the objectives of their cultural policies are equally rather similar.

In connection with the question of convergence/divergence in the development in each individual Nordic country, the report examines at a great variety of cultural political problems. The project has received financial support from i.a. the Nordic Cultural Foundation.

Kultur & politik, 8/2001

Translated by Vibeke Cranfield

Denmark

Promotion of music via Internet – copyright issues

by Harald von Hiemcrone, Statsbiblioteket

The libraries are poised and ready to mediate music via the Internet. The price for 1,000 music minutes, the equivalent of 15-16 CDs is DKK 181,000,- all told. If copyright owners wish to exploit the PR value which the libraries’ promotion of music offers, they will have to adjust the price level.

Reference, 5/2001

A library for all

Today almost 40% of all Swedish public libraries have been integrated with a school library. The Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs has therefore published an ‘inspiration’ catalogue for politicians and public servants, which discusses advantages and disadvantages of this integration.

Statens Kulturråd 6/2001
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