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The theme for this issue of SPLQ we have called “In search of a common perspective – are public and research libraries joining forces?”. In principle the two library types direct their services at two different target groups and have traditionally been living relatively separate lives.

But the electronic ‘explosion’ has over the past few years meant a readjustment of this conception and opened up for cooperation across the sectors. This development is undoubtedly an ongoing process. In Denmark a common national catalogue and online ordering facilities from the user’s own home have resulted in the interesting fact that for the first time the figure for library loans from the research libraries to the public libraries is higher than loans between the research libraries, and a recently published analysis proves that often young students are very keen users of both library types.

Norway is introducing a joint library card project, in Sweden some towns have built libraries that contain both functions and some of the Nordic countries are running joint digitisation projects. The articles in SPLQ 3 chart the landscape of the most recent developments within in area.

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Cooperation
- a way to survive for public libraries?

A public library is no library - if there is no connection to other libraries. The tradition of cooperation is well established in the library sector, but developments within the ICT sector and the application of new technology have brought a greater interdependency between the libraries. No small library can survive without being part of a larger context, regardless of whether it is a question of lending books or applying new technology. The technology also demands new national strategies for libraries.

The basis of the Swedish Library Act from 1997 is cooperation between publicly financed libraries aiming to offer borrowers good library services. The Library Act has been questioned - especially by public librarians - who feel that a firmer national approach is needed. Debates concerning the Act have lead the Government to suggest certain ways of complementing the Act when requesting local authorities to draw up library strategies and to cooperate with other libraries and library bodies. This year a new section was added to the Act: Libraries and library bodies within library services provided through public agencies should cooperate. Municipalities and counties must adopt plans for library services.

There are lots of reasons for cooperation. One is the increased mobility of the library user, who cares less about which library he or she is using, and more about the level of service provided. This is particularly relevant in the case of distant learners. Today, more than half the number of visitors to the public libraries are students at all levels. Whatever boundaries have existed between public libraries and research libraries are now becoming less relevant to the users.

Two public libraries and university libraries are integrated in the same building – Almedalsbiblioteket at Gotland and Sambiblioteket in Härnösand. Other libraries run development projects on a regional basis with a view to coordinate and improve the services to students and adult learners. One common experience from those projects is that the new and small university and research libraries are more open to cooperation than the bigger ones. It takes time to break down old walls!

A major initiative has been launched, coordinated by the state and aimed at adult education in Sweden. The background for the undertaking started with the EU publication Memorandum on lifelong learning during autumn/winter 2000. Discussions in Sweden, as can be seen from this memorandum, emphasised libraries’ educational function. From 2002 the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs has taken several initiatives to improve library services to adult learners.

New forms of collaboration are needed to support the development of adult education. Dialogue and cooperation on a national level across public authorities and organisations is needed. At present there are three major library projects going on concerned with media, information and communication flow, including all regions in Sweden. The projects share the same goal - to organise the media communication flow for its inhabitants. Without the strong traditions of cooperation between libraries, those projects would never have got off the ground.

Living in the information age means having constant access to considerable amounts of information. However, access to information is not the same as knowledge. To evaluate information requires competence. To offer everyone the same possibilities of knowledge and learning and thereby reducing ‘the second digital gap’ is a democratic issue.

‘Ask the Library’ is the Swedish digital reference service. It accepts all kinds of questions between heaven and earth. A growing network of librarians among the public libraries answer queries via chat sites and e-mail. Last year Ask the Library started a collaborative project with the Swedish university libraries’ reference service, ‘Librarian On Call’. Its purpose is to bridge services, and in the long run create a national digital reference service.

The main goals of public library cooperation are improved customer service and making the library service more efficient. Cooperation with other partners often has to do with supplementary services and services directed towards target groups. In a tight economic situation it is necessary to consider the benefits and costs of this kind of cooperation. In addition to serving the common good of municipal residents, cooperation can also function as a means of marketing the library to both decision-makers and patrons. Cooperation could be the first step to networking on a wider scale. Libraries need strong partners outside the library world in order to be considered as important resources for information and culture.

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The Swedish Library Act of 2004 states how imperative it is for libraries and those in authority to collaborate. The number of students has taken a dramatic increase partly as a consequence of an expanding higher education. Many of the students turn to their nearest public libraries searching for literature, guidance and a place to study. Users call for joint solutions among libraries. This has indirectly led to a closing of gaps between various library categories. Despite differing assignments and work methods in a number of areas where cooperation offers the prospect of added value both for users and staff, there are currently formal and informal groups networking among county libraries and municipal libraries at every university and place of higher education. Providing students with information has become a shared priority.
The past ten years have seen universities and colleges of higher education expand and decentralise. The establishment of new universities has increased. Student numbers are steadily growing, adding pressure on libraries. This onrush of students does not only affect places of higher education but also public libraries. Large numbers of students on distance tuition programmes do not have physical access to ‘their’ libraries, and as an alternative the nearest public library becomes the most likely outlet to provide them with course books, Internet services etc. giving students the means by which they can complete their studies. As is often the case, local public libraries provide familiar surroundings where students know the level of service and support the library is able to give.

A questionnaire from 2004 prepared by KULDA Sweden, which is the Swedish acronym for Consortium Procurement of Licensed Databases, and is a three year project for the development of a working model for consortium procurement and distribution of licensed databases to public and school libraries throughout Sweden managed by the Västra Götaland Regional Library, showed that 90 out of the 100 consulted libraries had queries on a daily basis from users about course books and relevant material. Whoever the responsible library authority may be is of no interest to the student, whose main goal is to find what he is looking for and obtain the necessary guidance in achieving this.

Over a long period of time public libraries have held the view that students pursuing studies within the sphere of higher education were the sole responsibility of research libraries, and they would therefore often refer students to these. But this attitude has more or less vanished as the student body is constantly growing and public libraries are just as likely to be used as research libraries. Public libraries have become an important resource in adult education both with regard to structured studies and more flexible forms of education. However, this must not disguise the fact that universities and colleges of higher education still have the formal responsibility for providing students with suitable instruction in dealing with the information flow required to enable them to complete their studies. Their mutual target group of students has induced research libraries and public libraries to interconnect in order to learn about each other’s resources and methods of work.

Networking is decisive when learning about each other’s assignments and user groups, the organising of mutual courses for further education, educational study visits and visiting other classes as a trainee, introducing Internet services and printed media supplying students with a foundation to their studies. Occasionally joint purchases of media to libraries will be considered, as will joint library cards among public libraries and university libraries. Links to each other’s web sites are standard practice today.

A research group from the Swedish School of Library and Information Science in Borås is currently examining projects financed by the Swedish National Council for Cultural Affairs concerning adult education and has so far published two reports with an analysis and commentary. There will be a final report during 2006.

Municipal cooperation
A number of adults take part in distance tuition and study from home. Relocated courses in higher education and in distance tuition can be found in several municipalities and the local authorities are eager to keep such
The communication between the different kinds of libraries enables a student's uninterrupted flow of studies

students. Most local authorities consider the opportunities given by education in general as a growth rate factor for their municipality. As a consequence several learning centres, higher education on-line etc. have been encouraged to and do offer guidance. An increase in networking takes place between public libraries and research libraries when learning centres and public libraries share premises. Personal contacts between management and staff lead to increased knowledge about each other's assignments, target groups, methods of work and what resources are available. A number of local libraries have set up positions such as studies librarian whose assignment is to function as a link between public libraries, learning centres and university libraries.

Regional cooperation
Cooperation also extends beyond the level of university library - local library, to include regional libraries and one or more research libraries. The form of cooperation may be adapted to circumstances within each region of higher education, such as 'Två länssbibliotek – samma högskola' (Two county libraries – same university). Other examples are 'Nya målgrupper – nya utmaningar' (New target groups - new challenges), at which competence development cooperation takes place between university library, county library and the public library in Örebro, and 'Nätverk för kunskap' (Networking for Knowledge) where the county library of Västra Götaland have initiated a network with the region's university libraries, hospital libraries and public libraries in Göteborg and Borås.

Co-libraries
The optimal form of cooperation must be that of the two co-libraries in Härnösand and Visby, in which university libraries, county libraries and local libraries share premises as well as a catalogue, media collections and generally collaborate in areas in which they share a mutual interest. An evaluation has yet to be made concerning the co-libraries in Härnösand and the Almedal library in Visby. Such an evaluation should be able to answer the question whether the necessary prerequisites exist to enable other libraries to engage in this kind of cooperative ventures among various library categories.

Different municipal solutions to cooperation
The cooperation that exists today varies throughout the country pending political decisions and structural differences. In major municipalities where higher education exists, students will often congregate in the local libraries using them as places for study, wanting guidance, instruction and resources to accommodate their areas of study. This presents an opportunity for the staff at public libraries to refer students to university libraries in the region. The communication between the different kinds of libraries enables a student's uninterrupted flow of studies. The setting up of networks in these larger municipalities between public libraries and research libraries has begun, but differences in traditions and working methods makes it difficult to find suitable forms of cooperation.

In municipalities with one university or college of higher education there is often an informal network between various library categories knowledge- able of each other's assignments, target groups and resources and therefore able to refer users to the appropriate place. Regular meetings with representatives from the libraries permit the utilization of each other's premises, media and collections wherever it is most suitable. There are further examples of municipalities where this approach has proved worthwhile and where even hospital libraries, high school libraries and for instance special libraries at museums, take part.

In municipalities with relocated higher education and with many students on distance tuition programmes, a number of learning centres have been established to meet the needs of students and offer them a sense of community.

Agreements are often drawn up with local libraries in order to provide the students with the necessary information. The cooperative initiatives can vary from learning centres purchasing the services of librarians for an agreed number of hours or a public library functioning as a library aimed at higher education, often aided by such a library in the region. Formal and informal methods of cooperation blend with one another and whether the cooperative measures are formalised or non-existent, students will use their local libraries for information, guidance and instruction.

In such a situation it is important that the students can make contact with their particular university or college using a personal password from the local library. To date this is not always
possible due to technical obstacles or firewalls rendering such communication impossible.

Future cooperation requires identification. As student numbers increase and the numbers of adults in various forms of learning reach new heights, a need has emerged for public libraries and university libraries to integrate on a regular basis to meet the needs and requirements of students. The closing of gaps between the varying library categories does not necessarily imply the effacement of a library's distinctive character. Nevertheless, it is important to identify the interfaces and develop these for future cooperation. Each is and remains a separate institution with different assignments and target groups.

Attention should be given to the following interfaces:

- Users: students, researchers and teachers are common
- Printed collections for reference work, direct loans and interlibrary loans are required by the students
- Access to Internet services in the shape of web sites, catalogues, databases, e-books and gateways are asked for by students
- Professional instruction aimed at user groups provided by the various categories of libraries albeit in different forms
- Developed technology catering to self-service when lending, returning books, information searches and reference services remain common ground
- The virtual interactive 24-hour library is required
- Query services such as Fråga biblioteket (Ask the Library) and Jourhavande bibliotekarie (Librarian On Duty) are cooperative initiatives shared by the various library categories
- Mutual competence development and further education of staff within current areas
- Method development.

Whilst public libraries have all citizens ranging from pre-school children to elderly people as their target group, research libraries will mainly have students, teachers and researchers as their users adding the assignment to provide for the level of information competence required of students to enable them to get through their studies.

Public and university libraries need not have the same printed or digital resources as assignments and user groups differ. The printed and digital resources reflect each institution's aim and direction and access to electronic periodicals and databases are more comprehensive than at most public libraries. Municipal libraries differ from libraries run by the state because the Library Act complements whoever is politically in charge. Aside from the assignment to supply information, which is common for all categories of libraries, the public libraries also have a cultural assignment and in many of Sweden's municipalities the library is the only cultural institution.

The Library Act
The practical necessity to cooperate and the will to participate in each party's method of work and experiences have led to a narrowing of what was previously a wide and deep chasm dividing public libraries and research libraries.

In December the Parliament approved an amendment made to the Library Act passed in 1996, in which libraries and those in charge of the public sphere of libraries are urged to cooperate. This expansion of the Act increases the prerequisites required for a structured future cooperation among public and research libraries and hastens the already initiated cooperation to take further developmental measures. The Act also states that municipalities and county councils are obliged to draw up plans regarding library assignments. In the politically stipulated municipal plans that have so far been presented, cooperation between various libraries active within the same municipality is an important issue and will no doubt lead to research-, public-, school-, hospital- and special libraries increasing their collaborative measures.

Future cooperation
Future cooperation needs to be established on experiences derived from projects related to the area of adult education and from the common queries identified as suitable cooperative areas. The speed at which technology develops facilitates the connection between catalogues, search services, gateways and web sites. Work on a national gateway has been initiated and involves, at present, about 40 research libraries. Discussions are currently taking place that this gateway may even
The gap, or rather abyss, that previously characterised the positioning of public and research libraries is on its way to being bridged through an increase in numbers of students finding their way to different kinds of libraries.
facilitate public libraries by connecting them with the gateway that is used for interlibrary loans and information searches at public libraries used in six southerly counties. The aim must be to supply the general public with access to such a gateway, though still requiring passwords for licensed services.

Query services
There is already a systems bridge connecting the electronic reference service such as Fråga biblioteket (Ask the Library), which is the public library sector’s service to the general public, giving them the opportunity to ask questions via e-mail and to chat with a librarian and Jourhavande bibliotekarie (Librarian On Duty), which is the equivalent service for students and employees at universities and colleges of higher education. This service is open for assisting searches and guidance beyond the library’s usual opening hours. The mutual software programme facilitates, in the long run, services gaining closer proximity to one another.

Education
Other areas in which cooperative measures between the library categories are generally lacking are within education and further education. Pedagogy and law are not part of the basic studies programme and are suitable components for future joint further educational measures. In a programme of further education a joint exchange can take place in which the public library sector gains knowledge about research libraries’ expert knowledge in specific subjects by presenting databases, Open Access and other freely available resources. And university libraries can take part in the knowledge found in public libraries, such as fiction and how this can be applied to research. Global studies and analysis is another area in which the different library categories have mutual interests in the growth rate and development in their own municipality and county.

Conclusion
The gap, or rather abyss, that previously characterised the positioning of public and research libraries is on its way to being bridged through an increase in numbers of students finding their way to different kinds of libraries for literature, counselling, Internet services and a space to study in. More libraries are becoming involved as mutually shared users among the libraries require cooperative solutions.

Expanded cooperation will offer beneficent effects, not only for students of all kinds, but also for increasing competence among the staff as well as their sense of well-being. If such a cooperation also leads to the development and strengthening of the libraries’ role it will certainly benefit society as a whole.

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Danish public libraries have always considered support to students one of their most essential tasks. In cooperation with the research libraries and other libraries of higher education it has been a highly regarded task to create an information infrastructure for anyone seeking a formalised education or for anyone seeking information and knowledge of their own accord. It has been mentioned in Danish library legislation as an important part of the purpose of the public libraries since the 1920s. It is underlined in the international library association's (IFLA) policies, and it is a main substance in the Danish National Library Authority's tasks in the years to come. All examinations of library patrons' behavioural pattern in terms of usage, point to the fact that the public libraries hold a very important position, which is further confirmed in a new survey where about 60% of all users indicate that they use their public libraries as education libraries.

Historical background
Despite these facts, this very major task has not been discussed in any substantial and constructive context over the past 25 years. Rather, the discussion has tended to concentrate on which library types were in fact responsible for the service in question, and has been used primarily to promote an extension of the libraries that cater for middle-range higher education, as well as to a certain extent to agitate in favour of the state spending more resources on an expansion of the public libraries' service to university students. At the same time, the public libraries have spent a great deal of time developing the cultural and social aspect of their activities, while the numerically heavy part of the activities, support for students in higher education, has been allowed to dwell in comparative obscurity.

During the latter part of the 1990s, technology changed this situation. At a stroke, virtual access to both the public and research libraries' catalogues and the possibility of reserving and ordering material brought about a much-increased traffic of interlibrary loans between the individual libraries. Many libraries began to see themselves as a kind of 'postal service' for materials to borrowers from other libraries, and transport arrangements came under severe pressure and represented a cost increase in the overall service. The users accepted the new possibilities with great enthusiasm which threatened to topple the popular digital services, until the government approved a national transport scheme between the larger libraries, thereby ensuring a viable logistic and economic level.

At the same time the Danish research libraries - in a hitherto unprecedented collaboration - developed a major reorganisation of their services from physical products to digital services. Within the umbrella organisation 'Denmark's Electronic Research Library' (DEFF) license terms were negotiated with a speed and to such an extent that Danish research libraries' digital services to students and professors seriously multiplied in just a few years. In the first instance it was research libraries within the fields of natural science, commerce and health that exploited digitisation, but libraries within the humanities, social sciences and art soon followed suit. So much so that today the most advanced research libraries offer 70-80% of their information as digital downloads.

It is not difficult right now to predict a development which means that within just a few years Danish research libraries will have completed a difficult
readjustment with the result that the material they provide for their users will to an overwhelming extent be digital and there will be very few physical products from established collections. This has the effect that even more material than before will be produced in English/American, that material in French/German/Spanish will be very limited and that material in Danish and the other Nordic languages will be almost non-existent. But there are obviously very great logistic advantages in the reorganisation, and it has meant that research libraries and education libraries are at the absolute forefront as far as service to students is concerned.

Students, Google and libraries
This situation is clearly reflected in the study of the entire area that the Danish National Library Authority instigated and which researchers at the Royal School of Library and Information Science have conducted during spring 2005. The study included about 1,700 students chosen at random, and it charts their library usage as well as how they use the Internet for searches. The result is presented in the report Students, Google and Libraries (Reports from the Danish National Library Authority, 4, Copenhagen 2005) by professor Niels Ole Pors, Royal School of Library and Information Science and is also available at the Authority’s homepage at www.bs.dk.

The main results show a number of students using the digital services of the research and education libraries, and they express great satisfaction with the quality of assistance and guidance these libraries have provided. They see libraries as much more open than was the case before, both physically in so far as the digital offer is always available, but also that libraries thanks to changes in the physical exterior are able to offer proper work stations and places for studying. And thanks to a massive centralized effort they enjoy the benefit of licenses in great numbers; licenses can be obtained at fairly reasonable costs because they are ‘campus licenses’, limited to a group of users defined as students or staff at an educational institution.

The examination of the public libraries as support libraries to some extent shows similar results. For example, almost 60% of all the respondees say that they use their local public library as a (supplementary) education library, i.e. to a very limited extent the only education library and in the rest of the cases the public library as supplement to an actual education library. It is particularly students from shorter or medium-length types of higher education who indicate this. Of students from long-cycle higher education it is especially the students from the humanities who say that they use a public library. As a curiosity this in fact means that it is mostly female students who use the public libraries, which in my opinion should not encourage anyone to think that women – as opposed to men – are slower in accepting and using a new service. But only that the number of women students from the humanities and doing medium-length higher education courses is considerably higher than the number of men.

Up till now, the public libraries have taken it for granted that their service was superior to that of the research libraries. Service is here taken to mean the contact with the users and the readiness (and possibility of) answering the users’ questions. This part of our self-image we shall have to change. In general the students in the survey express greater satisfaction with the service in the research libraries. This may in part be due to the fact that the research libraries’ collections, both physical and virtual, are better equipped than the corresponding public library collections, but the conclusion of the survey is in fact that both question and answer have concerned the actual service.
There is some indication that ‘normal questions’ at the reference counter are considered not quite sufficient by the students, and that what they are really after are more lengthy and thorough consultations. Something like a consultancy service that can be booked in advance and will last a bit longer than the 3-5 minutes normally allocated at a reference counter. At the same time the survey poses a number of questions in relation to the public libraries’ materials. These are still very much characterized by products in physical form, and very soon we shall have to be able to offer as varied and extensive a number of licenses as the research libraries. The immediate stumbling block here is that a public library cannot just be defined as an educational institution, but also as a local authority with all its inhabitants as potential users. This makes it hard for the license suppliers to fix the price at a reasonable level. So here is another problem that needs working on.

Another aspect of the public libraries’ self-image is likewise hitting the dust. This has to do with opening hours and physical framework that have always been considered more generous than those of the research libraries. There has been a considerable upgrading of the research libraries’ physical frames, and opening hours on the physical premises have also been considerably extended, and it has become possible to book appointments for consultancy. Generally speaking, therefore, research libraries appear more modern and more open than the public libraries, and the shift of technology contributes to that.

Public libraries as education libraries

One important question, which the survey does not deal with, remains: Are the public libraries ready to take on the assignment of being education libraries? Will the local authority financed and local authority regulated public libraries take on the task of being a supplement to the state-financed and state-regulated courses and research and education libraries? The future municipal reform in Denmark will mean that nearly all forms of education from upper secondary school at one end to higher education at the other will be subordinate to the state. A more stringent distribution of tasks between the sectors than we have known so far is on the cards. And one can easily imagine local authorities who, when asked, would reject the task in favour of a more softly formulated ‘public-enlightenment’ task that in itself does not require a major shift of technology.

The question is also whether the students would accept this answer and the consequences such an objective would have for the building-up of materials and service. In the ‘education-heavy’ parts of the country there is little indication of that. Here the students have ‘voted with their feet’ by also using the public libraries’ digital service to a great extent – however inadequate it may have been. And this is where the public libraries are extremely dependent upon the students’ use of them for study purposes to help define the library task and put together materials and service. This is also where the need for a substantial development of digital service areas (licenses) is most noticeable.

The education-heavy areas are naturally related to the concentration of universities and institutions of higher education. The metropolitan area, including Roskilde, is the largest centre, the Århus area comes next, followed by Odense, Aalborg and Esbjerg. And one might perhaps divide the country into one or two more areas. Here the local councils might experience the most severe pressure, and in my opinion they cannot refuse to service students, partly because the concentration of educational institutions is a great bonus for the local area, and partly because it would mean a downgrading of the public libraries in the area in the longer term. It is very probable that the question will not be raised politically, one must assume that the tradition of supporting higher education and being a supplement to the state libraries, will in itself be strong and viable enough.

A programme for action

If this should be the case the public libraries will be very busy – especially
in the education-heavy areas. A technological change is imperative – and it has to happen soon – which will provide the users with a suitable digital service on a par with that of the research libraries in the area. In concrete terms it is a question of successful negotiations with the license suppliers on conditions that make it possible to offer a qualitative selection of licenses at a reasonable price. The negotiations going on at the moment within the framework of DEFF might well serve as an example and much useful experience is available there for the asking.

At the same time the task must be given higher prioritisation internally in the relevant public libraries. It is essential that pedagogical competencies are developed locally, and that a change is introduced in the level and intensity of service. More emphasis must be placed on long-cycle services, which much not, however, develop into a situation of ‘doing the job’ for the student, but rather a question of guidance in relevant searching in primarily digital materials. This cannot but influence the ‘normal’ level of service which must to an even greater degree than up till now be adapted so that it can be handled by other groups of staff or by the user himself.

The collaboration and coordination of the service between the public libraries on the one hand and the research libraries on the other must be further developed, so that the user experiences a ‘seamless’ library service whichever library he/she approaches. This includes collaboration with medium-length higher education libraries on the acquisition of physical collections.

Finally, it is important to outline a common marketing strategy for digital service to students. The survey revealed a very rudimentary knowledge by the students of the libraries’ (both public and research libraries) digital services. Many described it as something of an arbitrary event if they happened to come across one of the major electronic library services, like library.dk or the DEFF portal, and it is quite obvious that digital services that are not available as physical realities need regular marketing in a new way. This also means that one must establish close contacts to the educational institutions and draw the attention of the teachers to the libraries’ digital services as an important source of information and knowledge in an educational context.

The latter part is extremely relevant to the whole library sector which, apart from the above-mentioned problems for the public libraries, on the whole is facing the ‘googlification’ of information searching. By this I mean that a number of students have up until now used, and via the survey indicated, that their information searches might well just consist of using one of the major search engines on the Internet, first and foremost Google. In this way Google appears – on the face of it – as a direct rival to the library sector.

The survey does not support this supposition. It is true that many students indicate that they use Google and consider it a useful search tool. But apparently the use of Google encourages using the library, both physically and digitally. The students who say that they use Google are also the students who are the most diligent users of the library services, and there are in fact very few students who rely entirely on information taken from Google, while many students supplement with the qualitatively more reliable searches that are available through the libraries.

Summary

Service to students in higher education is thus a very pragmatic reality in Danish research and public libraries. Nearly 60% of Danish students state that they use the public library as a supplementary education library. The task is no doubt thoroughly rooted in the Danish library world. But the public libraries are lagging behind, first and foremost because their digital services are not sufficiently complete and of the standard required. Particularly for public libraries in 5-6 education-heavy areas it is therefore of the utmost importance to concentrate on the further development of their digital services. And it is also a matter of urgency to establish collaboration with research and education libraries in the area about marketing of the services available. So that the users can experience the library as a seamless service whether they approach a public or a research library.

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There exists a stereotyped image of the librarian, her finger to her lips, hushing at any suggestion of talk above a whisper. However, anyone who has visited a library recently will know that there is in fact considerable tolerance for normal conversation and noisy children.

I have no wish to bring back the disapproving librarians of a previous age but dramatic things are happening to our libraries. The politicians are closing down one branch library after another. Local libraries, which once introduced each new generation to the pleasures of reading and provided a meeting place where people of all social classes had free access to literature, are in the process of disappearing. Even where branch libraries are still hanging on, they are hardly ever open.

William Godwin, a 19th century anarchist and writer, once declared that anyone who holds a feast in a well-assorted library has access to countless dishes, all well worth tasting. However, in 2005, when little Lisa Simpson in the satirical cartoon series The Simpsons visits the Springfield local library, she discovers that it contains a couple of price lists, a few video versions of children’s picture books and not much else.

“Where are all the books?” Lisa asks. “Books?” answers the librarian. “Books are for squares. This is now a multi-media centre for children of all ages, but mainly for the homeless.”

The outlook for libraries is indeed gloomy. In the 1980s Oslo had sixteen branch libraries. The latest proposal is for four local libraries, one posh main library and a few lending centres. Helsinki, which is about the same size as Oslo, has apparently no less than thirty-five library units, while Gothenburg has twenty-six full-service libraries.

Closing down branch libraries in Norway means more than just that. There is the associated reduction of social meeting places and the loss of one of the most important public services for language minorities. And this is happening all over the country. One of the finest features of a welfare state is being slowly dismantled. Once closed, a library will never be re-
opened. Now is the time to protest, but nobody takes to the streets any longer. Where are the librarians, those who lose their jobs and see their workplaces disintegrate from within? Are they on the barricades waving banners and shouting at the closure-happy politicians? No, librarians are a disciplined and sophisticated race. They might just conceivably complain to each other, quietly and over a cup of green tea.

In 2003 it was decided to close down my childhood library in Nordtvet, a satellite town 20 minutes by suburban train from the centre of Oslo. An active support group of library users was formed and I recruited four local literary celebrities (who all unfortunately have now moved away). We campaigned in a national newspaper and it helped, but only for a while. The librarians murmured their disagreement with the decision and returned to their teacups.

Smooth politicians possess some of the talents of a good writer, the difference being that politicians are clever with the spoken word, authors with the written. While a writer can make you believe that a frail, old lady is a mass-murderer, politicians can convince you that it makes good sense to close down a branch library, or even twelve for that matter. We are both in the same business of turning logic on its head and taking our opposite number by surprise. A weak argument can be inflated into importance, while a sound counter-argument can be stifled by empty talk or made to appear critical of something most people agree about.

So what have tea-drinking librarians to do with all this? Let me tell you. We need some strict, angry ladies to point the finger of indignation at these politicians, obsessed as they are with their false economies, and to hiss a disapproving shush. The very cliché of a librarian is what we need. Those who can look people straight in the eye, unafraid, and tell them how important libraries are for our well-being, for the pleasure of reading and for the local community. Those who can explain to the world around that one of the finest things we possess is being taken from us. Remember that the librarian of yesterday had a secret weapon – the whisper. I have learned from a previous generation of librarians how to use this weapon, particularly when visiting a school as a writer I happen to find myself faced with an unruly class. At the first sign of unrest I lower my voice to a whisper. What's he talking about? Shush! He's saying something important! Suddenly everybody's listening.

Where shall we find these librarians to brush away the opposition? I hereby propose the introduction of a new discipline in the training syllabus to be known as Respecting Librarians. Once the course is completed, these young people can be employed in libraries threatened with closure, where they can take up the fight against the local powers-that-be. Nobody is better qualified for this battle than librarians themselves. As a writer, I would gladly make myself available and could doubtless obtain the help of some local patriots and regular library users. Above all, however, I would like to see that finger of disapproval pointed accusingly by young, angry librarians who dare to speak their minds in low, disciplined tones.

Afterwards we could all get together, drink green tea and feel very pleased with ourselves.

Translated by Eric Deverill
The ELEF project of Eastern Finland
A pioneer in library cooperation

"Finland’s library network comprises university libraries, public libraries, polytechnic libraries and specialized libraries." Thus begins the presentation of the library network, which is commonly divided into Finland’s different sectors. However, are the boundaries between the different library sectors becoming obscure? Library patrons go with ease to different libraries, obtaining the services and materials from the library where they can be best found. It may be time to begin adopting solutions for serving patrons as well as for structures which provide library services, for payment policy and for administration.

New material, new opportunities
Digital material allows for a new, different type of acquisition and distribution channel, in which material is conveyed electronically. On the national level, we have begun to create solutions in which the boundaries between the library sectors for acquiring, distributing and retrieving electronic material are made less distinct. The national electronic library, FinELib, provides licensed electronic material to all library sectors and the ‘Nelli’ portal collects all of the libraries’ material into one, shared portal for retrieval by library users. The national digital programme produces digitised material for all libraries to use. Preparations for the expansion of the national library’s field of activity have increased dialogue between the different library sectors, and the National Repository Library is being developed into a national remote service centre, also for digital material.

National digitisation programme
Cooperation between libraries has also begun in national digitisation work, organised by the National Library of Finland and its Centre for Microfilming and Conservation in Mikkeli in Eastern Finland. The digitisation policy was published in a report on cultural heritage in an information society. The task of the work group, who compiled the report, was to advance the digitisation of cultural heritage material, to make the digitised material accessible via the information network and to create a content production which uses this material. Efforts in digitisation are seen specifically as cooperation between libraries, because digitising material requires the cooperation of the establishments which record the material and the realization of work distribution. Matters which need to be jointly carried out include plans for cataloguing, prioritisation of material and the development and implementation of common standards, key wording and compatible programs.

A questionnaire was distributed to libraries which surveyed the cultural heritage digitisation needs of the various libraries. Prioritising included the consideration of the need for use of the collections and copyright limitations. By 2010, the important cultural heritage existing in museums, archives and libraries will be digitised according to the prioritisation plan, and this material will be accessible to everyone via information networks. Cultural heritage material forms a significant resource for research, education and content production.

ELEF - Eastern Finland’s digital library
ELEF - Electronic Library of Eastern Finland - was a pioneer project implemented with EU funding during 2000-
2003 in which practical application of cooperation between different library sectors was carried out. All provincial libraries, university libraries and polytechnic libraries in the provinces of the EU Objective 1 Programme participated in the ELEF project. Public libraries in the region were included through the provincial libraries. The ELEF project formed a broad project organisation, both regionally and according to the number of participants, in which provincial subprojects operated under the same organization.

The libraries were engaged in cooperation right from the planning phase of the project. A common-interest goal, the benefit to the area, carried the project planning forward, even though the backgrounds and working cultures of the organisations participating in the project were extremely different. When arrangements for the project funding and implementation began, libraries cooperated to form plans concerning the implementation of the project plans. Networking and distribution of professional skill guaranteed the possibility for the implementation of the project right from the beginning.

Libraries work together to increase the level of professional skill
The ELEF project arranged training for the staff of the participating libraries which would not have been possible otherwise. A survey of professional skill revealed a lack in the level of knowledge in different fields. These needs were met by arranging training in various areas of skill, such as information society skills, e-publication, e-learning and virtual libraries. In addition to raising the professional skill level of library staff, a result of the project was a functioning network of professional experts, in which each participant had his or her own area of expertise and in which the expertise of each participant became common knowledge and available for use by other network participants.

Another significant perspective in raising the professional skill level was also to raise the skill level of the interest groups and patrons of the libraries. Establishing computer classrooms, preparing Internet learning material for users of different skill levels and arranging public educational events advanced the skill level of library users. Computer classrooms were established in the Joensuu and Mikkeli libraries, and the Joensuu university library microcomputer rooms were improved. Equipment was upgraded in all units. The existence of separate facilities has enabled library premises to serve as a venue for courses designed for improving basic information society skills and which are directed towards target groups. Training and learning were also supported by producing network learning material for the Internet, designed for users of different skill levels. The web-pages contain study material for users and user groups of different ages and with different educational backgrounds. The material can be used for the purpose of teaching independent study. The material is also suitable for library-held information retrieval classes.

The renewal of equipment, computer classrooms and Internet learning material, which were included in the framework of the ELEF project, are permanent endeavours; they remained even after the project finished and have been developed further. Professional skill, which was utilised after the end of the project, was acquired in order to make the Internet teaching material; the material has been developed further to meet new needs.

Regional information and improving its ‘findability’
The organisation of digital information and the subsequent development of information retrieval systems are only in their initial phase. National, centralised services are developed to serve this purpose. In addition to national services there is a need for regional and local recorders of information with knowledge of regional needs, and regional information experts, capable of
The digitisation of cultural heritage material, to make the digitised material accessible via the information network and to create an end product that meets the user’s need require a substantial and coordinated effort.

task, gathering, recording and transmitting the information for their own regions. Therefore, a natural continuum for this work was Koivikko, Kuoma, Caiania and the South Savo databases. Work on the regional database began within the ELEF project and is now continuing as recording work and guidance for library patrons.

‘Koivikko’ is North Karelia’s regional database, where information from the library’s materials database can be retrieved. The Koivikko regional database includes the provincial collection material from Joensuu’s city library: books, periodicals, maps, AV material, periodical clippings and links to network material dealing with the area. Koivikko also includes the North Karelian collection, the ‘Käkönen’ article database, which had been completed earlier. In addition to material about North Karelia, Käkönen contains references, to some extent, about the Lake Ladoga area of Karelia and Karelian culture. Articles contained in Käkönen have been published in newspapers and magazines. The database amasses about 1,000 references per year, and today there are over 20,000 references. (http://www.jns.fi/palvelut/kirjasto/"Koivikko"/tieto.htm)

‘Kuoma’ is North Savo’s regional database. Kuoma includes reference information for periodical articles and different digital materials relating to North Savo. The basis used for the database was Kuopio’s city library – the periodical clipping collection of North Savo’s provincial library and back volumes of North Savo’s newspapers and magazines. References to the material, which is continuously being published, are recorded in Kuoma, but material is also recorded retroactively. In addition to Kuopio’s city library, many North Savo regional community libraries and university and polytechnic library units have been involved in the follow-up and recording work. (http://kirjasto.kuopio.fi/kuoma/)

The regional database in Kainuu was given the name ‘Caiania’. The essential references from the local database were transferred to the new database, and they are constantly being complemented with the most recent Kainuu-related articles. Currently, Caiania has article references primarily ranging from the beginning of the 1990s up to the present, but older articles are recorded retroactively. The database also includes Kajaani’s city library – the provincial collection material of Kainuu’s provincial library. Within the frames of ELEF, a small, but interesting project, the ‘Kianto’ project, was also implemented in Kainuu. The books, cards, periodical articles, manuscripts, poems, speeches, lectures and dissertations of the important Kianto archives preserved in the library were recorded in the Suomussalmi library database. The Kianto collection is growing constantly by way of donations, so the recording work also continues. (http://kirjasto.kajaani.fi:8001/)

South Savo’s regional database is a portal for South Savo local information. South Savo’s regional database also began as an article reference database, for which the material is limited. The region’s libraries partake in recording the article reference database, so the basis for the recording of South Savo’s article reference database is also a jointly agreed selection policy. Later on, the article reference database expanded into an ambitious project, beyond administrative borders, and...
Regional information collected in ‘Nelli’ Nelli is the National Electronic Library Interface, where information searches can be directed to many different databases. The Nelli portal collects materials from all libraries in one portal for patron information searches. The Nelli portal forms a common interface for the use of material which is owned by the libraries and subject to license. Each province has its own Nelli portal, but Nelli can also comprise larger regions. Nelli organises material, searches many databases and personalises itself both according to the province and the user.

Nelli has a national and a regional dimension. On a national level, there is coordination, maintenance, updating, planning and development. Regionally, the tasks are setting up the material for use, connecting the local material for retrieval and local customisation to suit the users. As far as connection of the regional material produced in the ELEF project is concerned, a Nelli search enables the retrieval of material from different regions from one interface. For example, material concerning Kainuu and material found in that region was retrieved via ‘Pohjanportti’, an information retrieval portal shared between the provincial, university and polytechnic libraries of the Oulu and Lapland administrative districts. Implemented in this way, Nelli enables the use of the information on regional databases and retrieval of information from all the region’s libraries from a mutual search engine.

ELEF ended – products kept going
The main ELEF project ended when it and its funding ended. After the project ended, a survey was carried out, distributed to the participants of the project, in which they were asked in what way and in what areas did the project succeed, what were the greatest problems and how is the cooperation being continued. The participants considered one indisputable achievement to be that a functional and active network of experts between libraries and other participants was created for Eastern Finland. The project made it possible for the region to obtain the kind of expertise that would not otherwise have been available without the project. Products, or new library and information services, were produced, which continued after the project and which are still being developed. Also significant, was the creation and deepening of dialogue between the different library sectors. The barrier to working together has diminished.

Objective of cooperation
The final report for the ELEF project stated that during the development of the library network and cooperation, an essential question that arose was the distribution of work and resources. Small units are ineffective and their competitiveness is weak. The report also stated that it appears as if traditional administrative boundaries, for example, between national and municipal participants, are breaking down further. The analysis of needs and service production is becoming essential and, with this, the forming of the necessary, sensible unions is also becoming essential. It seems as if library patrons have already found the products and services they need beyond the borders of the library sectors. A model for cooperation for the production of the products and services is still needed; one which will bring synergic advantages to libraries and library patrons. This was also pointed out in the provincial administrative boards’ basic services evaluation, which concerned the supply and use of public libraries’ digital material and cooperation between municipalities in acquisition of digital material. Libraries can also work together across the sector borders in the selection and acquisition of digital material and in arranging instruction and information for users.
In recent years a great deal has been written and said about the seamless library in Norway. Is there in fact any reality behind these words?

The seamless library
In Norway the vision of the seamless library was first introduced in the Parliamentary Policy Report No. 22 (1999-2000): "(...) The ideal objective is to offer library services which are as seamless as possible, so that members of the public can make use of any type of library regardless of the nature of their requirements. (....)" (Norway 2000, page 11)

This was later followed by Policy Report No. 48 (2002-2003): "A central aim for development in the library sector during the coming years will be the creation of seamless library services. In practice this will mean that optimal user access based on nation-wide co-ordination of information resources shall be a cardinal principle underlying development across institutional and other administrative boundaries." (Norway 2003, page 174)

The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority was established as of 1 January 2003, its primary objective being to create improved seamless cooperation between these three sectors and between different types of libraries.

Two counties, Østfold and Oppland, developed large projects based on the vision of a seamless library.

The Østfold Library Project has its origins in the work carried out in connection with an earlier library plan for the county (BRODD Foundation 2000). This plan established the terms for the Østfold Library Project as "(....) a virtual and coordinating organisation across administrative boundaries and regardless of ownership".

One of its strategies was: "A universal library card for the whole county of Østfold (...). Members of the public shall be able to borrow media using the same card no matter where in the county they happen to be and regardless of the type of library in question."

Yet again, one of the aims is "to work towards a joint library card".

The main project ‘A seamless library - the Oppland region’ has received funding from the Archive, Library and Museum Authority for 2003, 2004 and 2005. The project covers college education, libraries in secondary schools and public libraries. The programme of cooperation includes the development of collections, specialisation, arrangements and transport services.

In 2002 the Norwegian Directorate for Public Libraries and the National Office for Research Documentation, Academic and Special Libraries gave the Oppland County Library the task of organising a pilot project for ‘A seamless library - the Oppland region’. The report on the pilot project (Oppland County Library 2002) identified the aims of the project as follows: “A seamless library - the Oppland region” shall involve providing the inhabitants of the Oppland region with a comprehensive library service across administrative boundaries and independent of sector affiliation. Services shall be adapted to the requirements of the individual in a modern ICT society. Patrons shall have no need to consider which library or which municipality they approach when seeking library services.”

In 2005 Oppland will establish a portal offering joint search access to library catalogues and other information resources. A manual will also be produced, providing information on the services and special areas of each individual library.
Joint Library Card
Since 1999 a cooperative forum has existed in Norway for suppliers of library systems. This forum focuses particular attention on problems requiring joint decisions and coordination.

In 2002 the suppliers of library systems registered a growing demand for support for seamless library services. They agreed that a joint national register of library patrons would be a necessary prerequisite for services of this nature and therefore set up a working group to examine the situation.

In the spring of 2003 the working group presented a report which recommended the establishment of a national register of library patrons as a first step towards introducing a Joint Library Card system. On the basis of this report an application for project funding was submitted to the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority and in the late autumn of the year financial support was granted through the Norwegian Digital Library programme.

The main aim of the project was defined as follows:

The project shall develop a joint library card for library patrons in Norway. In order to achieve this goal a joint register of patrons shall be established. A joint library card linked to a patron register offers obvious advantages for both libraries and their users.

• First and foremost, patrons will appreciate the greater seamless quality of services on offer. It should be possible in the long term to borrow from all public libraries in Norway on the basis of one single library card. Information concerning the address of borrowers will need to be provided only once and the same will apply to any subsequent change of address. Members of the public will be able to regard themselves as users of an entire library network rather than of just one individual library.

• Libraries will be able to cooperate on the registration and updating of information on user addresses, thus helping to improve efficiency and the accuracy of the information stored.

Internationally it is difficult to identify any comparable joint library card solution. In the USA, Great Britain, Sweden and Finland there are a few regional solutions, usually based upon a common library system. In Denmark the National Health Insurance card is widely used as a library card. The difference, however, is that since the Danish card is not a dedicated library card, the personal information is stored only on the card’s magnetic strip and not in a joint database accessible by the library systems. Any change of address or other information therefore requires borrowers to obtain a new insurance card.

Main strategies
A central feature of the Joint Library Card is to ensure that each holder is provided with a unique, individual number. Card numbers are allotted by means of a web site. In addition, every patron has an individual identifier, which can be date of birth or one of the special codes assigned to immigrants and asylum seekers or to foreign nationals liable for taxation in Norway. These identity numbers are further encrypted to guard against misuse.

The project considered compiling a register of library patrons using data already held by the various libraries. It was found, however, that these generally lacked reliable and consistent quality, and they didn’t possess any unique key information, such as date of birth. The Norwegian National Register has very strict rules regarding the provision of personal data and is expensive to use. At the same time it has considerable weaknesses with regard to temporary addresses. The project therefore decided that the register for the Joint Library Card should be compiled from the ground up.

It quickly became clear that student cards at colleges and universities would have to stay valid as library cards, since these patrons could not be confronted with a choice between connection to their own institution or connection to the Joint Library Card.
It was therefore decided to arrange for information on student addresses to be exported from the student administrative systems to the Joint Library Card Register. The central register will not contain information concerning organisations, reminders, fines, blacklisting, etc. Individual library systems communicate with the Joint Library Card Register by means of Internet web services.

Project organisation
The project team contains representatives from five library systems and the Norwegian National Library. The project’s steering group consists of three members appointed by the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority.

The project has a reference group representing 11 libraries in the counties of Oppland and Østfold, together with the respective county libraries. Colleges of Education in the town of Gjøvik and the county of Østfold are also represented in the reference group. The libraries in the reference group have also tested the technical solution arrived at by the project.

The library card
The project team has proposed a design for a joint library card. This design is used by the reference group during the test period, but it is also possible to give the Joint Library Card a local design. The reverse side of the card, however, must in all cases conform to the following rules:

- The card shall contain the owner's personal number in the form of a Code 39 barcode positioned at the bottom of the card. This decision was taken in order to minimise problems of compatibility between different barcode scanners and lending systems.
- The barcode represents the lowest common multiple for all Joint Library Cards, but individual libraries are free to add a microchip or magnetic strip. There is also nothing to prevent the use of a 'smart' card.
- The card must show where it has been issued and must provide a space for the owner’s signature.
- The card must display the logo of the Norwegian Digital Library in order to confirm its identity as a Joint Library Card.

Issue and use of the card
The functional features of the Joint Library Card have been developed as an integral part of the lending processes of the various library systems. In the case of one particular system a separate web-based registration module has been created.

All new patrons will normally be issued with a new Joint Library Card or continue to use their existing card. Patrons have the right not to declare their personal identity number and to forbid the storage of personal information in the joint register. In such an event they may be issued with a local library card.

All libraries making use of the Joint Library Card Register will have a copy of the data stored in the central register concerning their own local patrons. If there is a change in this information at the local level, the central register will be immediately updated. Any changes made by other libraries will usually be imported every night.

Personal privacy and protection
A brochure describing the Joint Library Card initiative will be handed out every time a new card is issued. The brochure contains information on how personal information is stored and administered. The Norwegian Data Inspectorate has verified that the brochure fulfils all legal requirements with regard to personal protection and privacy. The Personal Data Act also gives citizens the right to know what personal details are kept on record. The project has therefore constructed a web site where library borrowers can check on the information stored by quoting their library card number and personal identity number.

Use of the personal identity number, which lies encrypted in the database, ensures correct identification in the Joint Library Card Register. The original number cannot be recreated, but it is possible to compare encrypted key codes to see if they relate to the same number.

Libraries connecting to the register will have their authenticity confirmed by means of a national library number.
and a password. Library staff themselves will be authorised by the local library system and will need no further log-in procedure.

Communication between clients in the library systems and the Joint Library Card Register utilises the Secure Sockets Layer Protocol (SSL). This protocol takes care of encryption and the authentication of the network server.

Preliminary conclusions
The Joint Library Card system has been tested in 11 reference libraries from February to May 2005. During the test period 1500 joint library cards were issued and 13% of these were connected to more than one library. The idea of using student cards as joint library cards proved difficult to test, since student cards are only issued at the start of term. In this area the project was therefore only able to carry out some random sampling.

An assessment of the test period shows that all project participants have met all the main specification demands and there have been hardly any problems with ‘down time’ in the register. Test evaluation also reveals that the administrative and training demands arising from the introduction of the Joint Library Card are greater than the purely technical problems. The Joint Library Card also increases the need for regional and national coordination of library issuing rules and regulations.

The Joint Library Card is viewed as a strong symbol of the seamless approach both by librarians and by library patrons. The card often brings with it expectations of obtaining a collective overview of all lending in all libraries, together with the possibility of distance lending on the Internet from any library and of being able to deliver to each and every library. The most probable of these developments would seem to be the use of the Joint Library Card Register in connection with user-initiated interlibrary loan. The register could offer both authentication and authorisation while at the same time providing the user with reliable details of addresses. The library system suppliers have already received a request from the Østfold County Library for a follow-up project to examine a development along these lines.

Another area of possible interest is the use of the Joint Library Card register in connection with library portals. The register could provide authentication and authorisation and portals could also access information on borrowers in order to create personal user profiles. The Oppland County Library wishes to make use of the Joint Library Card register in connection with a search portal for its project, ‘A seamless library – the Oppland region’.

There is a definite reality behind the vision of a seamless library system in Norway, even though considerable time may pass before the goal is reached. Østfold and Oppland are showing the way and the library system suppliers in Norway have added a new tool to the toolbox.

The Personal Data Act also gives citizens the right to know what personal details are kept on record ...
Nordbok’s funding of Nordic library and literature projects

Project funding 2005
At Nordbok’s meeting 30.-31. May funds were distributed to support projects planned for 2005. Consideration was given to 29 applications, representing an overall total of NOK 3.7 million. Funds at Nordbok’s disposal amounted to NOK 1.5 million and were finally distributed among 17 applicants. All the five Nordic countries were represented among those receiving project support. Funding was also granted towards projects and arrangements in the autonomous regions of the Faeroe Islands, Greenland and Åland, also in Lithuania and Estonia.

Library projects
Many of the projects granted financial support were connected with the library sector. Iceland’s Association of School Librarians will be arranging a Nordic conference entitled ‘In the world of the sagas’ in order to consider how best to use this literary heritage, together with fairy-tales and folklore, in the schools of today. Two Danish libraries are cooperating with one Swedish and one Norwegian in a project called ‘At floor level – children in the library’. These four libraries will be trying out new ways for children to experience a library through games, new types of furniture, a different approach to book presentation and a better dialogue between media and picture books. The results will be presented in a seminar at the Book and Library Fair in Gothenburg in the autumn of 2006. The County Library of Västerbotten in Sweden has carried out an EU-project, ‘Young Writers in the Barents Region’, which included a literature camp for writers. Now the library will be given the resources to publish an anthology of the works written by these youngsters from Sweden, Finland, Norway and Russia.

The Helsinki City Library has received funding for a Nordic conference on ‘Library net-based information services’, while six public libraries from Norway, Sweden, Denmark and the Faeroe Islands are working together on a report entitled Digital Exchange of Nordic Literature. Their intention is to examine the possibilities and limitations with regard to interlibrary lending across national borders of digital literature, including audio books. Technological possibilities often come into conflict with legal obstacles. The project ‘Nordic Comics – a comic strip portal’ is a joint project for comic strip libraries in all the five Nordic countries.

‘Nordic Library Week’ is an annual arrangement involving public libraries throughout the Nordic region. This approach receives regular support from Nordbok, independently of project funding. In addition to normal funding, the Federation of Nordic Societies has this year been granted extra financial support in order to organise special arrangements in all the Nordic capitals. This year the theme of Nordic Library Week will be ‘Travelling in the Nordic Region’ with Selma Lagerlöf’s classic book about Nils Holgersen as an appropriate starting point.

Literary projects
In addition to special library projects, resources have also been made available to various literary projects. These include a writers’ school for young people to be arranged by a Danish municipality, ‘Baltic Sea Crime Fiction Days’ in Vilnius and a conference in Tallinn to discuss contemporary Nordic and Estonian literature. Nordic House in the Faeroe Islands will be holding a conference to consider how best to market the literature of minority languages. For the first time ever and with Nordbok’s support, a Sami book fair will be arranged this autumn. Nordbok will also occupy a prominent place at this year’s book fair in Gothenburg.

Support for writers visiting public libraries
In addition to project funding Nordbok also offers financial support for arrangements involving visits to public libraries by authors. There exists no particular deadline in such cases and applications are dealt with as they come. During the last two years most applications have come from Norwegian libraries and relatively few from libraries in the other Nordic countries. Further information about Nordbok’s financial support for projects and other arrangements can be found at www.nordbok.org

Asbjørn Langeland, director, Nordbok

Translated by Eric Deverill
The global in the local - integration and libraries

The public libraries contribute actively and successfully to integration of ethnic minorities into Danish society.

This is documented in a publication that derives from a campaign hosted by the Danish National Library Authority (DNLA) and the State and University Library. The publication also builds on the experiences gained in a three-year library development project from 2002 to 2005. The project was supported by governmental development pools for public libraries administered by DNLA, and as a result many activities in public libraries were intensified and new and innovative projects took off.

The publication highlights the wide range of activities as well as pointing out the potentials for improvement. There are examples of activities that are in the process of developing from specialized into mainstream services. At the same time the classic library services concentrating on acquisition and dissemination of information are performed in new ways and include new media. Consequently, the role of the librarian is also changing. The experiences of librarians who have worked for a shorter or longer period with refugees and immigrants point towards a more outgoing role – a role that will be dependent on cooperation with other libraries and external integration partners.

In addition the publication includes a number of overall reflections, perspectives and tendencies within library services to ethnic minorities. These are provided among others by librarians, a local politician, an integration adviser and a senior lecturer in pedagogical philosophy.

The voices from outside all indicate that the libraries hold the key to Danish society and thus have great opportunities for strengthening the development of an active citizenship.

The publication is aimed at politicians and potential cooperation partners in local administrations, volunteer organisations and education centres – and in libraries.

Ann Poulsen
Danish National Library Authority

BibTeach - the teacher’s electronic toolbox

Most libraries – large or small – hold training sessions for end users on how to use the library, how to use the library catalogue, the international databases and the Internet. Many librarians spend quite a lot of time developing training material and training manuals, and are very good at it, but they do not necessarily possess the educational skills. This is where BibTeach comes in.

BibTeach is a toolbox – a digital guide for end-user training – based on experiences from a number of libraries and developed along the lines of the Bjarne Herskin pedagogical method. All materials have been thoroughly tested before making them available in the toolbox which is ‘open’ for all libraries to use.

BibTeach is a very successful project. Many libraries wanted to participate and 79 different training materials and manuals were submitted during the course of the project by 36 different libraries. Today more than 10 tested and qualified training manuals and materials are available and many libraries are using BibTeach. New material is now being developed for the next 10 training sessions.

The BibTeach project is financed by The Danish National Library Authority’s Development Pool for Public and School Libraries and is carried out jointly by Herning County Library and The Regional Library of Northern Jutland.

Hanne Marie Kværndrup
Danish National Library Authority
DENMARK

DEFF and Ministry of Education cooperate again

The demands levelled at today's library service to researchers, teachers and students at all types of educational institutions have changed dramatically, and the library changes from being a static place into something dynamic, from being a collection of books into being a pedagogic function in support of teaching as well as learning processes. With the Ministry of Education's decision to rejoin the DEF partnership, Danmarks Elektroniske Forskningsbibliotek (DEF) became Danmarks Elektroniske Fag- og Forskningsbibliotek – DEFF.

New strategy for the knowledge society - why?

Continued growth and further development of the welfare society in a global context presupposes that Denmark strengthens each citizen's creative ability to find and develop the unknown, new and unexpected. And it requires a new national strategy for the knowledge society - where a modern public enlightenment initiative must emerge with the library as a central, local tool, says Leif Lørring, director of the Royal School of Library and Information Science. New technologies

IFLA

SPLQ was represented at this year's IFLA in Oslo where we were kindly invited to share ABM-utvikling's premises at the exhibition. Lots of free copies of the latest issue were distributed and quite a few very encouraging comments came our way. It was certainly obvious that interest in SPLQ is by no means waning.
build on previous technologies that often live on in the new. We still go sailing and ride our bicycles, even though cars, trains and planes have arrived on the scene. But the world became more connected; we have become more dependent on other societies, while at the same time there must be a shift of balance from manual work or machinery to the immaterial ‘intellectual productions’ of the knowledge society. We must realise that society’s essential capital is to be found inside the heads of its citizens rather than in soil and production plants.

Danmarks Biblioteker, 4/2005

NORWAY

Knowledge or culture
Norway has a cultural policy, but needs a knowledge policy, writes Tord Høivik, Oslo University College. The public libraries’ position in relation to the concepts of knowledge and culture is a political and strategic question – a choice of perspective.

In Norway there is a long-range and very positive focus on the natural sciences which i.a. is reflected in annual research days. These are open to all subject areas, but the public libraries do not have any great impact on the mediation strategy vis-à-vis the Norwegian Research Council - however, the museums do! All over the country a net of knowledge centres are being built up - with the emphasis on the interactive consumer who is invited to find out how exciting scientific work can be.

Up till now the public libraries have created a profile for themselves as cultural institutions and have been perceived by users and politicians as providers of culture - and as a result this has been reflected in their funding. A profile as knowledge institution is going to change this image, but the public libraries would be well advised to strengthen their competences in natural science and mediation of research.

Bibliotekforum, 5/2005

SWEDEN

The Swedish Library Act
The Swedish Library Act is heavily criticized from many quarters: It is too feeble, it does not put any obligations on neither municipalities nor libraries as far as quality is concerned, some people feel that the act is completely superfluous. Spokesman for the cultural committee of the Swedish parliament, Lennart Kollmats, would quite simply tear it up if there were to be a change of political power at the next election!

Several critics blame the strong municipal autonomy for the fact that the law is not functioning properly as it prevents cooperation across municipal borders.

Biblioteksbladet, 5/2005

Berlin Declaration on Open Access
The Association of Swedish Higher Education, the Swedish Research Council and the Swedish Library Association have all now signed the Berlin Declaration. In a controversial article in Sydsvenska Dagbladet, Britta Lejon, Swedish Library Association and Bengt Vesterberg, Swedish Research Council, write about the need for free access to scientific information on the Internet. Not even the most affluent libraries have today the chance to give the research community access to published research to the desired extent. The basic principle about free exchange of information and maximum spreading of research results must prevail.

Biblioteksbladet, 5/2005

Keep up with developments in the Nordic public libraries in Scandinavian Public Library Quarterly

Scandinavian Public Library Quarterly
Volume 38, no. 3, 2005
SPLQ
Danish National Library Authority
Nyhavn 31 E
DK-1051 Copenhagen K
www.splq.info

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Lay-out: Stehr Reklame & Marketing
Photos: Nils Lund Pedersen
Print: C.S.Grafisk A/S
ISSN 0036-5602
Electronic ISSN: 1604-4843

Scandinavian Public Library Quarterly (SPLQ) is published by the Nordic Public Library Authorities