

Helsinki University Library

The National Library of Finland

Annual Report 2002-2003

Helsinki University Library. The National Library of Finland

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The Expanding role of the National Library of Finland

Helsinki University Library (HUL) has traditionally performed a dual role as the library of the University of Helsinki and the National Library of Finland. As the National Library it has acted as the central unit for the twenty-one university libraries in the country providing all the legal deposit, bibliographic and national bibliography, library system, and, more recently, electronic resources licensing (FinELib) services for them. From 2005 on the official national library services, in line with the new strategic plan, will also be provided for the country's public libraries, polytechnic libraries and special libraries. Many of these have already had cooperative or customer relationships with the Library, but now, it is suggested, the services will be funded centrally from the budget of the Ministry of Education. The position and the name of the Library will also change. It will be given a more independent role within the organisation of the University of Helsinki, but it will still remain an independent institute of the university. The name of the library will officially be changed to the National Library of Finland in 2005.

It seems that 2005 will be an important year for the future of the Library. A new Legal Deposit Act is currently being formulated and will come into force in 2005. It will include the digital deposit, including online and offline materials. HUL has been harvesting the internet in cooperation with its Nordic partners for a couple of years, but from 2005 on

this will become an official task. This new task will not include radio and TV streamline; that task will be taken care of by the Finnish Film Archive.

The new National Library Strategy for 2004-2006 is very ambitious: its main goal is to develop the Library into 'a 100% service organisation'. The mission of the Library is to serve and build the whole knowledge society with its collections, services and professional staff.

The new strategy suggests building a value chain for all the customers of Library. The national digital value chain will include the acquisition (FinELib), delivery (library system, portal, DOMS – the Digital Object Management Software) and archiving (digital deposit) of electronic materials as well as content production (digitisation). This will be a powerful tool not only for the national library services but also for the academic community, the virtual university and the library network as a whole. An ambitious proposal to have the core national heritage digitised by 2010 has been put forth recently. This certainly will happen as far as the digitisation of newspapers is concerned as we have one of the most advanced systems in the world for digitising them. This will be described later on in more detail.

International Relations

On the international level the Library is active in a number of fields and is participating in the work of several organisations, including CDNL, CENL (chairing the work group of the network standards), ISSN Governing Board, Dublin Core Board of Trustees, Endeavor User Group Board, European Endeavor User Group, National Libraries Endeavor Advisory Board, ICOLC, E_ICOLC, a partner in the consortium of TEL (The European Library), a partner in ICOLC (International Coalition of Library Consortia) and the corresponding European one, partner in the Internet Archive Consortium.

The Library was recently accepted as the first non-American member to NISO to give the European perspective and know-how to the work of that organisation. In 2002 the Library participated in the following projects, for example: MINERVA – Ministerial NETwork for Valorising Activities in Digitisation, Nordic Journals (funded by the Andrew Mellon Foundation), CoBRA+, Nordic Metadata II, Nordic Web Archive NWA, ONE-2, Scandinavian Virtual Union Catalogue and The European Library TEL.

HUL has been hosting several international conferences and workshops, received numerous international visitors, groups and executive members of different states and libraries.

HUL has been visited and benchmarked for the FinELib solutions, for the active role in promoting libraries cooperation in the country, for the new 'triangle' concept of the library system (Voyager), portal (Metalib) and DOMS (EnCompass).

In general, the Library has managed to reach its goal to be one of the leading national libraries in Europe.

Funding

The structure of the Library's funding is explained in the annual reports for 1999-2000 and for 2001-2002. Funding for 2003 has improved slightly if compared to that of 2002.

The main part of the development work is still being carried out with the help of externally funded projects, although the Library has been able to hire more development staff by internal restructuring. The Library has received grants from the Ministry of Education, the European Union, the Nordunet2 initiative and NORDINFO. The grant needed for financing the measures required by the revised Legal Deposit Act has been included in the Library's regular budget in 2002, and this funding continues in 2003. Additional resources for establishing a National Digitisation Centre has been received from the Ministry of Education and the County Administrative Board of Eastern Finland. The European Union has provided funding for stimulating digitisation in Europe in the form of the Minerva project.

The size of external funding in 2002 was approximately €1 million. A similar sum was raised from priced services. The Library's total budget in 2002 was almost €16 million and in 2003 around €17 million.

The Staff

At present the total number of permanent staff is 179. The total number in staff-years is about 230.

Training of staff has been particularly active during this period because of the implementation of the new library system, Voyager, and the preparation for the legal deposit of electronic resources and the digital library in general (the purchasing of the portal, and DOMS software). The top management has participated in a special management program, which is continuing in 2003 and 2004.

The Digital Library of Finland

The Digital Library of Finland produced by the National Library will consist of three central modules: ILS (Voyager: in production), the Portal software (MetaLib: being implemented) for accessing remote and local databases and other electronic resources, and the Digital Objects Management System (ENCompass: LOI, contract negotiations). The goal is that these three applications would communicate and work seamlessly together, as well as with other applications, via API's and using open standards. Added value services will be implemented later on to support the use of the digital library.

In 2001 all university libraries, which form the LINNEA2 consortium together with a few special libraries, switched to a new integrated library system, Voyager. Given the large size of the project – 26 databases were involved – the system change went very well; the planned schedule did not slip at all as far as the library databases were concerned. However, its implementation as regards the Union Catalogue Linda was a little more problematic. The vendor, Endeavor Information Systems Inc., had to make some special changes to our union catalogue solution which slowed the process down. Linda has been available for searching since January 2002 but daily updates from the local databases did not start until January 2003. At the time of writing, August 2003, the implementation is almost complete: the updates from most databases are being done daily. Because of some software problems, the functionality is not yet satisfactory but we are hoping to get it enhanced soon.

Merging all Linnea databases into a central server and outsourcing the server has proved to be an excellent decision. University libraries have saved a lot of money both in server support costs paid to the hardware vendor and especially in server maintenance carried out by CSC, the Center for Scientific Computing. The quality of service has been good, and due to the reliability of the Finnish Universities and Research Network, FUNET, the usability of the system has been excellent.

In addition to Voyager, the LINNEA libraries are using Bookwhere Z39.50 client in order to maximise the efficiency of copy cataloguing. At present, up to 95% of new records can be copied from elsewhere, either from our own Union Catalogue Linda, or using freely available sources such as the Library of Congress. OCLC's WorldCat database has been used as the final resource if the record has not been available in any of the free databases. The copied records are converted to appropriate format and character set with UseMARCON.

Another initiative which simplifies copy cataloguing is the Scandinavian Virtual Union Catalogue. In this project, union catalogue hosts in Denmark, Finland, Iceland, Norway and Sweden have agreed to make their databases available for free, in return for access to all other databases. Similar agreement has been concluded with the Estonian union catalogue Ester and negotiations are underway with the other Baltic countries and Germany.

After a thorough evaluation, we chose an application for the information portal for the national network at the end of 2002. We decided to purchase Metalib, by ExLibris Ltd. The application is being implemented and will be in use in all twenty universities in January 2004. Our vision is to use MetaLib as a "one-stop-shop" application to access all kinds of material: the electronic contents and databases licensed by FinELib (the National Electronic Library programme), the Voyager databases and the digital objects stored in ENCompass. MetaLib supports OpenURL, OAI and Z39.50 standards that are essential in linking to heterogeneous material.

The third component of the National Library Network, the Digital Object Management System, was chosen in June 2003 and at present we are conducting contract negotiations with Endeavor Information Systems Inc about purchasing their product EnCompass. If everything goes according to plan, EnCompass will be in use in 2004.

The Digital Library

Many present activities of Helsinki University Library are geared towards the creation of a digital library. Our new “triangle concept” will provide the technical basis for the Finnish Digital Library. Content to the Digital library will be provided through licensing, e-publishing within the country and large-scale digitisation and work related to the new Legal Deposit Act. FinELib, the National Electronic Library programme, can be taken as an illustrative example of the creation of the digital library. FinELib made a lot of progress during 2002. An international evaluation team carried out an evaluation of the programme and the results were excellent. We have taken actions to be able to meet the recommendations of the evaluation. FinELib has become a truly national scheme. The central financing allocated by the Ministry of Education is today about €3.5 million and the total turnover about €10.5 million. The Ministry is financing the universities, polytechnics and public libraries centrally. The share of central funding to different sectors vary. At the time of writing 107 institutions have signed a contract with the programme, including all universities, polytechnics, regional public libraries and 35 research institutes.

At present FinELib has purchased licenses to about 8,400 scientific journals, more than 130 databases and a number of reference works and dictionaries in electronic format.. Some of the licenses are truly national in scope. Negotiations with additional publishers were very successful and at present there is less demand for negotiating new licenses; however, there is a growing need to re-negotiate old licenses as some of them are about to expire.

The usage level of the resources is high and it is increasing constantly. FinELib is also carrying out user surveys to analyse user satisfaction. Three master's thesis are being written at the moment which exploit this usage information as raw data.

Our major challenge now is the implementation of the IR portal in twenty universities. As described above Metalib software has been chosen for this purpose. The portal will be opened for the public in early 2004.

More information about the National Electronic Library Programme can be found on its homepage: <http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/finelib/english/index.html>.

Digitisation

The development of digitisation is carried out in the Library's Centre for Microfilming and Conservation in the city of Mikkeli, in south-eastern Finland about 230km from Helsinki. The Library has created a permanent digitisation service which has the ability to digitise materials on a large scale. The Ministry of Education and the County Administrative Board of Eastern Finland has provided financing for establishing a National Digitisation Centre.

Activities

Helsinki University Library/the Centre for Microfilming and Conservation was responsible for the Benchmarking Framework Working Group of the Minerva Project, funded by the IST programme of the European Union. The aim of the project was “to create a network of Member States' Ministries to discuss, correlate and harmonise activities carried out in digitisation of cultural and scientific content, for creating an agreed European common platform, recommendations and guidelines about digitisation, metadata, long-term accessibility and preservation.” The domestic partners in the project were the National Archives and the National Board of Antiquities.

The Benchmarking Working Group created an online benchmarking system for the self-assessment of digitisation initiatives in Europe. Projects and programmes are now able to search for good practices in digitisation and find benchmarking partners. Additional parts will be added to the knowledge base so that it will provide a unique opportunity to look into the digitisation practices in the European Union. Good practices will spread more easily and the information about projects, programmes and policies will be available to the public at large. In the end this will lead to more successful new initiatives and better-quality end-products for digitisation.

Helsinki University Library is also coordinating a digitisation programme for research and public libraries in Finland. The Library was nominated coordinator of this programme in 2001 by the Digital Working Group for the Cultural Heritage established by the Ministry of Education. The coordinator has established a framework for the digitisation programme based on a digitisation survey carried out in the libraries in early autumn 2001. Technical and special collections expert groups have been established. When a plan for the digitisation programme is completed, we will have a broad understanding of the national digital heritage to be available on the web and of the needed technical solutions. The next step will be to find funding for that part of the digitisation programme which will be carried out in cooperation between organisations in Finland and Sweden. The Centre for Microfilming and Conservation is cooperating with some Swedish national institutions in, for instance, the digitisation of newspapers and library materials from the 17th - 19th centuries. As the digital programme has been established on a voluntary basis, the domestic libraries can, of course, run digitisation projects on their own.

The future challenges of digitisation in Helsinki University Library include extending the national digitisation programme into a policy, coordinating the projects involved in the digitisation programme together with the libraries, promoting project cooperation between memory organisations and developing digitisation functions.

When the IFLA Newspapers Section visited the Mikkeli centre last year, an idea emerged to arrange a workshop on the steps in the digital process. In June 2003 a group of library experts from six countries gathered up in Mikkeli to take part in a workshop titled ‘Hands on the Digital Chain’. It was organised in cooperation with the IFLA Newspapers Section. The aim of the workshop was that every participant should have an opportunity to work hands-on in all the phases of digitisation. The positive response indicated that the practical approach of the workshop had been the right one. The workshop was based on

an existing programme and the participants could have discussions with one another. So they could pick up various processes and practices that they will be able to use in their own work to improve performance and save money.

Projects

The work of the Mikkeli Centre has focused on digitising newspapers and periodicals. The Library was responsible for running the Nordic Historical Newspaper project, TIDEN, launched in October 2001. This was one of the first newspaper digitisation projects in which Gothic text was interpreted by Optical Character Recognition to enable free text search to large newspaper contents in Sweden and Finland. All Finnish newspapers published between 1771 and 1860 have been digitised and the next phase containing copyright-free newspapers until 1890 is underway. By the end of 2003 The Finnish Historical Newspaper Library, available at <http://digi.lib.helsinki.fi>, will contain 300,000 pages of data. It has rapidly become a very popular service with a million page searches per year. In addition to the full text searches the user has available a newspaper index which has been digitised in the project. The user will receive the facsimile of the original on the display. During the Historical Newspaper Project the database, workflow and access were built from a digital library perspective.

The PERI+ project, which is digitising scholarly journals, has digitised about 200,000 pages from these journals. The Finnish copyright organisation KOPIOSTO has developed a procedure which will help us to solve the copyright issues related to making the material available on the Web. The service will probably be available at the beginning of 2004.

The Library maintains the E-thesis Database containing the University of Helsinki's electronic publications, primarily PhD theses. Approximately half of the all PhD theses published annually are available via the E-thesis service (<http://ethesis.helsinki.fi>). There are plans to extend the service so that it would contain at least an abstract of each thesis, and a selection of other publications.

Legal deposit

A Proposal for the new Legal Deposit Act was completed in June 2003, with complementary work with Copyright Act. The new law will cover a wide variety of electronic resources, including Web content and radio and TV programmes. The bill will be submitted to the Parliament in the autumn 2003 and the new law is expected to enter into force in March 2005. The National Library is getting prepared for this, e.g. by acquiring ENCompass. In addition to ENCompass other applications will be used. At present we are already harvesting freely available Web resources, using the NEDLIB harvester. The Finnish Web archive contains 11.7 million files harvested from 42 million locations. Millions of these files have been indexed in full text.

Acquisitions

The majority, with €10.5 million, of serial acquisitions are at present carried out centrally via the National Electronic Library Programme. As regards acquisitions of traditional library materials, additional funding is received from the University of Helsinki and the conversion of Russia's debt to Finland into licensing of Russian data sources and delivery of Russian publications to Helsinki University Library's extensive Slavic collection. These have helped the library to maintain its collections in spite of meagre acquisition funds. With €980,000 the library increased its collections with 9,000 monographs and 1,600 periodicals.

Preservation and Conservation

During the last few years the Library has been working out a model for a condition survey of its collections. The survey is primarily based on the famous surveys carried out in the university libraries of Stanford and Yale almost two decades ago. Of course, we are also familiar with many other surveys such as those conducted in the Hague and in Uppsala. Many condition surveys are still being carried out in libraries, some on a regular basis like the one in the Netherlands and collection-specific surveys like those in Harvard University in the USA.

Our survey has two main aims. One is to demonstrate the condition of the national and special collections internationally, to our politicians and our main public. The other aim is to get a deep understanding of the condition of the specific collections in our library. That is why a stratified sample of research disciplines and other specific collections is being carried out. Based on the survey we will be able to see the what kind of damage has been caused to the materials and decide on the best way to repair them. The survey's results will, of course, be linked to our preservation and digitisation programmes.

A specialist in statistics has planned the survey. A program for collecting the data has been worked out. To this day the research disciplines of the National Collection 1810-1944 has been dealt with and the statistical analyses were done in spring 2003. The survey will continue for at least two more years.

Services to Readers

The Library aims to improve its reader services continuously so as to make them even more suitable for researchers. At the same time, its goal is to offer an increasing share of its services to be used on its websites. As a national library it must also try to strike a balance between easy access to and the security of its printed collections. These are the main focuses of the Library's user services strategy. The Library will respond to these challenges by both carrying out digitisation projects and launching a new "triangle service" which consists of an IR portal, an Integrated Library System and DOMS

Implementing new services in the old historical buildings after the renovation of the library premises has not been very easy. The library will introduce a new Electronic Users Guide to its open-access premises and its services in the autumn term 2003. The guide will be released in Finnish, Swedish and English and it will be available also on the Library's website.

There has been a small decrease in local usage in 2002. The Library introduced a new web-based service which made it possible for users to make orders directly from the closed stacks through the database HELKA on Webvoyage. With the Voyager Library Systems call-slip function the library staff can give direct information to users about the status of their orders. Users can check their own personal loans, orders, payments, and renew their loans on Webvoyage. This service saves the researchers' time and Library has received a lot of positive feedback from them.

Cultural Events, Exhibitions and Publishing

The library arranged sixteen exhibitions, eight of them with other cultural institutions. Both National Library Gallery exhibitions, i.e., "The Finnish Landscape" and "The ABC-book" in autumn 2002, were very successful. In terms of media coverage, the major event during the period of this report was the international exhibition titled "The Metamorphoses of Writing", mounted in cooperation with Helsinki University Library and The Royal Library Copenhagen in spring 2003. Another exhibition having the same theme, "CON TEXT – The New Contexts of Writing", was put together in cooperation with the University of Art and Design at the same time. In connection of the writing exhibition we produced a CD ROM and an online exhibition titled "From the cuneiforms to the alphabets", which was awarded the gold prize in Media & Message competition 2003 in Turku.

We arranged eighteen public lectures, four authors' meetings, two panel discussions and four concerts. The writing exhibition included a series of thirteen lectures by some of the top Finnish professors which attracted listeners in record numbers. All the exhibitions and events were highly visible in the mass media.

In the autumn 2002 Helsinki University Library took part in the Helsinki Book Fair and in January in the happening The Night of Sciences. During 2002-2003 the Library's published a number of books, including *The Finnish Landscape, ABC* and *The Metamorphoses of Writing*.