

Helsinki University Library - The National Library of Finland

Development in general since Autumn 1994

In connection with the new budget practice of the Government (single line budget) the Library's dual role as the National Library and as the main library for the University will split the Library's budget into two parts. For the time being, many questions are however, still open, e.g. whether the National Library should be seen in the broadest sense of the expression (including foreign collections in the field of arts and humanities) or more narrowly. Future decisions on the structure of the budget are partly dependent upon the decision whether or not to continue the national shared acquisition scheme which covers a number of officially selected national resource libraries. The new budgeting principles are threatening that type of arrangements and strategic alliances.

The Library is in the process of revising its internal organization. Attention is being focused on horizontal production lines. The centralized acquisition and cataloguing unit, mentioned in the previous report, became operational on October 2, 1995. At the same time, a team of part time subject specialists (bibliographer, Fachreferent) has started work on a trial basis.

Local use has grown by about 25 %, both in number of loans and visits. A similar development has taken place in the network services and in the use of the databases which the Library offers to all kinds of users. At the same time the budget is shrinking alarmingly.

Public finances are still weak and will be for years to come. The acquisition budget has been hit especially severely. In addition to reducing the cost of general expenses, staff costs will have to be reduced by 8 % during 1995-1997.

By the end of 1997, the Library will acquire additional space, when the adjacent university building will have been renovated for the Library. New, research-orientated services will be set up in the building and the Slavonic Library will be moved back into the Main Library. In addition to the new building, planning of the long-needed underground stacks under the Library's main building has made good progress. The new storage area will be shared with the National Archives and possibly the State Museum of Art. The new store rooms will be available in 1999-2000.

Development of the electronic library network

The Library maintains the electronic library network (LINNEA) which is growing step by step into a common facility for all types of libraries. Three new databases were opened during the winter 1994/1995. An important extension of the scope of the Library's services was the opening of the union catalogue database MANDA for public libraries, represented by eighteen regional libraries. The two other new databases were firstly VIOLA, a database for music, combining both national bibliographic data and the music catalogues of individual libraries and secondly ARTO, a contents index of Finnish periodicals. The possibilities are also being investigated of making the corresponding texts available in a full text database. Retrospective conversion of the printed National Bibliography should be completed in about three years' time and the conversion of the catalogues of the old collections in arts and humanities in about three to four years' time.

The internationally interesting catalogues of the Slavonic library, kept in cyrillic, may be recorded onto an image database by using the facilities of VTLS. If the procedure proves to be feasible the work will be carried out during 1996-97.

As a part of the Government's overall policy the Ministry of Education has produced a detailed information strategy for education and research. It covers research libraries also and

emphasizes the role of the National Library especially in digitalizing already existing texts and making them available through the network. The plan also includes a provision for substantial retraining of staff as well as large-scale updating of the existing work stations. The Library itself has set up a panel of experts and representatives of various relevant activities to carry out a review of the future of the electronic library network and to develop future strategies for its development.

The Library participates in the EU project ONE and represents the Scandinavian national libraries in the CoBRA Forum. The Library was one of the three libraries working on the creation of GABRIEL, the new WWW-network of the European National Libraries.

The National Bibliography

A decision has been made to stop printing the annual volume of the National Bibliography. The last volume to be published covers the year 1994. The monthly issue, however, will still be printed and developed into an efficient information tool.

A feasibility study is being carried out to develop a new type of information tool on CD-ROM about new and current Finnish literature for the needs of the book trade. The present Fennica CD-ROM will still be published four times a year. The new CD-ROM would contain additional information such as abstracts, contents pages, pictures etc.

Implementation of the International Standard Music Number has started. The retrospective National Bibliography of the oldest Finnish literature up to 1800 has made good progress. The bibliography for the period 1488-1700 will go to print in October 1995. The period 1701-1800 will not be printed, but distributed on a CD-ROM covering the whole period 1488-1800.

Legal deposit and copyright legislation

The present law on legal deposit (from 1981) does not cover electronic publications. As a part of its information strategy the Ministry of Education has decided to revise the law. It will, however, be part of a larger reform covering not only traditional publications in different forms, but also the cinema as well as radio and television programmes. A committee may be set up later in the Autumn of 1995.

Finnish copyright law has been revised during the Spring of 1995 but the duration of the protection was not prolonged from 50 years to 70 years. The law does not yet cover the new electronic media.