

## **Annual Report 1996-97**

### **National Policy and Coordination**

A general policy for the development of the research library network in Finland has been the subject to an intensive debate for most of this year. After the adoption of the new single line budget the previous concept of national resource libraries had been questioned by the Ministry of Education for some time. Finally, the arrangement was abandoned in 1996 as part of the budget negotiations between the Ministry and the universities. This was a major change in the previous policy and has to be seen in connection with the Ministry's efforts to make the universities accountable. It is true that for many years no additional money had been granted to the national resource libraries, but the concept itself was still accepted by the universities whose libraries had received that status. From now on it will obviously remain the responsibility of individual universities to make sure that the document delivery services for the whole university system as well as for the surrounding society is kept at an adequate level. As a result, there is at the moment no national policy on information provision.

It is, however, obvious that this streamlined policy will not meet to the existing needs. As a result of reductions in university budgets acquisition budgets have been cut substantially, and the Ministry already once had to grant additional money explicitly for book acquisitions. The Ministry may again have to provide additional funds for this purpose later this year. This may indicate that fully decentralized responsibility does not work and that the Ministry will always have to intervene if it wants to maintain a well-functioning infrastructure.

In connection with the above mentioned decision a new responsibility to improve and coordinate cooperation between university libraries was given to the National Library. At the same time, a new Council for Finnish University Libraries was established on a voluntary basis and the university libraries together share the costs of one full-time secretary in the Library's Secretariat for National Planning and Coordination. The main issues have, so far, been the national policy for collection development and negotiations about the possibility of arranging country licences for a number of database services, i.e. bibliographic services as well as electronic journals.

A couple years ago the Government launched an ambitious programme for an information society. In line with this strategy the Ministry of Education in 1995 launched a special programme, Information strategy for education and research. Within the framework of this programme it is financing several development projects and also made available money to the universities to upgrade their networks and hardware. As part of its new policy the Government has announced that it will increase the country's expenditure on research to 2.9 per cent of the Gross National Product. The first steps will be implemented over a period of three years starting in 1997. Money will also be available for library activities and for that purpose a special task group is working on a pragmatic action plan for a National Electronic Library.

A revised copyright statute will be given by the Government during 1997. A draft is going to be made available for comments before the summer of this year. The new Statute will for the since being not cover electronic publications. The National Library has been actively engaged in the preparations and it seems possible that the Library's special needs will be catered for.

### **The Library's Status as the National Library**

The Library's status as the National Library of Finland is based on the present University Act and accompanying statutes. A proposal for a new University Act covering all universities of the country was presented to Parliament at the beginning of 1997. The issue of the status of the National Library is included in that proposal and the Library will remain part of the University of Helsinki.

An equally vital issue is the financing of the Library. The principles for financing the universities will change and the main part of future university budgets will depend on the number of degree examinations taken at each institution. That is why the University of Helsinki feels that the National Library costs should not be included in its general budget. The Ministry of Education, in its turn, is prepared to exclude the costs of a number of national activities from the budget, one of these activities being the National Library. The Ministry will accept most of the Library's costs as special National Library expenditure. During 1996 it was, however, not possible to reach final agreement on the breakdown of the costs.

For the time being a preliminary agreement for 1998 (and possibly also for the years to come) has been drafted on the basis of the proposal submitted by the Library. The Ministry has made an offer to the University accepting the Library in its entirety as a national institution. The University, however, is expected to pay a part of its costs, because the University makes extensive use of its services. This concept would be a significantly better for the Library compared to the present situation.

It should also be noted that the Undergraduate Library, a department of the University Library, was removed from the Library's organization at the beginning of 1997. In this way the Library is more and more losing its previous role as the Main Library of the University and becoming a more clear-cut National Library.

## **Electronic services**

The Library runs the centralized network services for all university libraries and makes a number of databases available, one of them being the union catalogue of the major public libraries. For the time being the Library is preparing for a migration to the software of the next generation based on a client-server architecture. The aim is to find an agreement among all university libraries to use the same software. This requires a major effort on the part of the Library as well as discussions with the participating libraries.

In addition to developing bibliographic services the Library has launched two major projects aimed at developing new full-text services. The projects are, so far, financed by the Ministry of Education in the framework of its information strategy programme. The project [Elektra](#) will develop a production environment for a service offering in electronic format current journal articles catalogued in the Library's bibliographic database of journal articles. The project [Muisti](#) (Memory) is aimed at developing facilities for the digitization of printed collections and pictures. Both projects are joint projects, with a number of other institutions also participating.

The project Elektra, in particular tackles the problems of copyright. The Finnish collecting agency Kopiosto participates in the project with the aim to solve copyright issues in practice. According to the recent decision of the Ministry of Education the Library has been given financing also for a third project, which will develop procedures for handling legal deposit arrangements of electronic publications as well as the harvesting of electronic publications from the network. The project has direct connections with the preparations of the NEDLIB Project submitted to the EU on the initiative of CoBRA+. The Library also coordinates the "[Nordic Metadata Project](#)" financed by NORDINFO.

On the request of the DG XIII of the EU a State-of-the-Art Report on Library Automation in the Nordic countries was prepared. The full report will be published by the Commission. The Finnish national report is already available from Helsinki University Library.

The revision of the legal deposit legislation is still waiting a decision from the Ministry of Education. Electronic publications, in particular on CD-ROM, are however already delivered by publishers on a voluntary basis.

Conversion of card catalogues into electronic format is making good progress. About 85 per cent of the catalogues are already available on the network. Two special projects are on line. The National Bibliography will be fully converted in the summer of 1998. The work is being done by a special unit created for this purpose in 1989. The catalogues of the Slavonic Library and its internationally well-known Russian collections are being converted with the help of a two years' grant. Also this work will be completed in the summer of 1998. Services are being partly bought from the National Library of Estonia in Tallinn.

The Library is negotiating with the central wholesaler of the book trade about new cooperative ways to improve the availability of new literature. A new type of book catalogue on CD-ROM will be launched on a trial basis in the autumn of 1997.

National authority files are one of the Library's responsibilities. Special attention has been paid to the Finnish thesaurus for subject indexing. During 1996 a Swedish language version of the Thesaurus was published. A multilingual approach is needed in all computerized solutions.

A CD-ROM edition of the bibliographic database of the Finno-Ugrian research during the period of 1917-1987 in Finland and the former Soviet Union *Bibliographia Studiorum Uralicorum* has been prepared in cooperation with the INION of the Russian Academy of Sciences in Moscow. The product BSU CD-ROM will be available in the spring of 1997.

## **Buildings and public services**

Extensive building plans proposed during the past few years will be put gradually into practice. In the summer of 1996 the renovation of the adjacent large building was started and the work will be completed at the beginning of 1998. Construction work will continue in the old building and on the underground stacks.

The Library will concentrate on its readers' services in its main building and the adjacent new building mentioned above. The arrangement gives an opportunity to introduce new services and to modernize the old ones. The timing of the retrospective conversion of the catalogues has to be seen in connection with the new premises. At the same time other local network services are also developed and the services offered over the telephone have been improved. The creation of a team of subject specialists has started in order to improve the quality of the services.

The new building will mainly house services for researchers. Reading rooms for rare materials, legal deposit collections, electronic materials, Slavonic collections, music etc. will be situated there. An American Resource Center, run as a joint arrangement by the Library and the US Information Service, will also be located in the building.

Most part of the technical services have been relocated to premises outside the central area of town.

## **Research and development projects**

In addition to the projects mentioned above the Library has set up a task force to prepare a scenario for the future development of the computerized library network. Extensive background work has been carried out and the results will be published (in Finnish) in the summer of 1997.

A major research project with the aim of producing the publication of a critical edition of the Collected Works of Jean Sibelius (*Kritische Gesamtausgabe*) was launched in May 1996. The project is being carried out in cooperation with the Sibelius Society with the help of external

financing. The result will be a series of 45 printed volumes and the project will need about 25 years for its completion.

The project of the earlier National Bibliography financed by a major external grant in 1996 produced two printed volumes of the Bibliography covering the period of 1488-1700. The Bibliography of the 18th century will be published only on CD-ROM together with the preceding centuries, it will also be made available online.

## **Management, policies, strategies**

A development process aiming at new management practices and a revised internal organization has produced a number of important results.

The goal of the development process is to

- replace the traditional hierarchical organization by a flexible organization where relationships are mainly horizontal; to this end the internal processes are being analyzed and remodelled in such a way that processes are not split up by internal organizational border lines and that every process has its own products and customers
- revise the hierarchy of goals by changing the previous process driven organization into a user-driven organization; this may sound simple and self-evident, in practice it is, however, a revolution
- create new relationships between the readers' services and internal processes; a customer-supplier relationship between the readers' services and the internal processes is being tested; the most important step has been the formulation of mission statements for the core responsibilities: the policy decisions on the internal processes are made by the readers' services and not by the processes themselves. The internal technical services have to function according to the customer's order.
- make the Library function like a service company; cost-benefit consciousness is an essential part of these efforts, including the costs of the staff and overheads; another necessary feature is to get the organization to accept activity-based budgeting as well as the fact that goals can be revised and the tasks of the staff can change. It has to be possible to lead the organization and not only to run it.
- place the responsibilities and the decision making power on the right levels and to get these levels to accept both the responsibility and power and not to delegate difficult or unpleasant issues upwards
- remodel the whole organization according to the Library's core functions.

A substantial amount of time has been used to formulate policies (starting from the statements of purpose) and strategies. Policies have been formulated for those functions which are producing the Library's results or output. Strategies have been developed to give guidance to practical work at all levels.

The planning process has been refined step by step. At present the management already has a good overview of costing in the whole Library. The use of resources can be influenced much better than earlier, when various departments and even processes were more or less autonomous.

To enable the development of the output as well as the organization an analysis of the different users and user groups has been carried out. In close connection with this analysis the functions of the Library have been analyzed and grouped into main (core) functions and auxiliary technical functions.

At the beginning of 1997 the Chancellor of the University gave a new internal Statute to the Library. It abolishes the old departments and adopts functions as the basis of the internal organization. Decisions concerning organization can be made by the Library itself.

## Publications

ALLÄRS. *Allmän tesaurus på svenska*. Utg. av Helsingfors universitetsbibliotek. Helsingfors 1996: BTJ Kirjastopalvelu Oy. 464 pp.

BSU CD-ROM. [*Bibliographia Studiorum Uralicorum 1917-1987*]. Publ. by Helsinki University Library.

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*Suomen kansallisbibliografia. Finlands nationalbibliografi. Finnische Nationalbibliographie 1488-1700*. Toim., Red av., Redaktion Tuija Laine & Rita Nyqvist [1-2]. Helsinki 1996. 803, 621 pp. (Suomalaisen kirjallisuuden seuran toimituksia 642, 643 & Publications of the Helsinki University Library 59, 60.)