

Helsinki University Library

The National Library of Finland

Report of the activities during the year 1997-98

Responsibility for the library network

In addition to its basic functions, such as the reader services, bibliographic services and the maintenance of the national collections, the Library as the National Library has been given the responsibility to coordinate many activities of the whole research library network. This role includes among other things the responsibility for the computerized network of the research libraries. The Library is also the main development agency for the same network.

For the time being the National Library, together with the National Repository Library, is the only common resource for the research library network financed by the Government.

Organization

The basic principles of the development of the Library's organization and management were described in the previous report. In summer 1997 the new organization was officially adopted. The Library is divided into two main divisions, which officially are called 'main functions'. They are Collections and Library Services on the one hand and Library Network Services on the other hand. Directors of these functions have been appointed, one of them being the Deputy Director of the whole Library. The internal organization of these two divisions is subject to further development and can be revised together with the approval of the annual work plan.

With the help of these measures a long process has been completed. As a matter of fact, the development of the principles according to which the Library functions and its activities are managed has been of equal importance as the revision of the formal organization. A major change of persons in the leading positions also has taken place.

1. Major innovations / achievements during the year

As a special achievement the retroconversion of the National bibliography has to be mentioned. In summer 1998 the entire Finnish National Bibliography from 1488 was converted. It consists of more than 600 000 titles. The special unit created for that purpose is being closed on June 30. More than 95 per cent of the catalogues of other collections are available in the network.

From the beginning of 1998 the Library participates in four new projects within the EU's telematics programme. They are DIEPER, NEDLIB, ONE+ and TECUP. In addition to the implementation of technical solutions the Library is developing in particular procedures for administration of copyright and payment of the different fees. In this matter the Library cooperates with the Finnish collecting agency KOPIOSTO.

Planning activities aiming at the establishment of a National Archives of Recorded Sound, a new function in the Library, have been successful. The Ministry of Education has made the necessary decision and the resources have been included in the Library's budget for 1999. In this way the National Library will in the future function as the archives of print media and manuscripts, recorded sound and most probably also electronic publications and multimedia. Video programmes and films are the responsibility of the Finnish Film Archives. Archiving of the radio broadcasting programmes has not yet been organized.

The construction of the new underground stacks, started in the spring of 1998, has required a totally new administrative structure. In Finland a great part of larger buildings used for housing and professional purposes are not only real estates but formally companies with stockholders. For the new underground stacks a similar company was established. For the time being the University is the only shareholder, but the Government will take over the company when the purchase can be placed in the investment programme of the Ministry of Education. In this way the timing of the project could be done according to the needs of the Library.

2. Finance and funding

The frame of the Library's funding for the period of 1997-99 has been adopted by the Ministry of Education. The agreement confirms the Library's recurrent grant for National Library purposes, being in principle 75 per cent, in practice about 80 per cent, of the Library's total grant.

The expenses of buildings and their maintenance are, so far, administered separately, although they are a part of the Library's total budget. The remaining part of the annual budget, spent on salaries and the activities of the Library, is divided into three parts: the recurrent grant, revenues and special grants. The share of the revenues was in 1997 about 13 per cent of the recurrent grant without building expenses and about 8 per cent if building expenses were included. The share of the external project financing was of about the same size.

The development of the funding has underlined the Library's activities as the National Library in two different ways. The National library activities have been financed in an adequate way (more money could, of course, be easily spent!) whereas the local research library services have suffered from the reduction of the University's share. In addition to it, the additional grants for development projects have been given almost exclusively to tasks belonging to the responsibilities of the National Library.

The substantial reductions of the funding since 1992 have, of course, had their impact on the volume of the activities. At the same time they have, however, supported the big change of thinking which has taken place in the Library. As long as salaries were administered elsewhere and the Library operated only with the number of positions, departments felt that the staff posts belonged to them, not to the Library as a whole. They also had the feeling that the staff time did not cost anything. The staff, and not only the management, has now discovered that the staff resources are similar resources as all other expenditures, that the expenditure on salaries is a real cost, making a major part of the Library's total budget, and that the staff resources have to be reallocated according to the changing needs. The reductions of the funding, together with the new budget structure, helped in an efficient way in reorganizing the use of staff time and allocating it in a more flexible way.

3. Legal status

A new university law, common for all universities, was enacted on June 27, 1997. Statutes giving more detailed stipulations were given by the Government on February 6, 1988. The new legislation will come into force on August 1, 1998. The Library's status as the National Library is confirmed by the Law and the tasks are specified in the Statutes. In addition to the traditional national library duties the Library has to function as a service and development centre for the country's research libraries. The new wording is to some extent restrictive, because it excludes the public libraries. There is, however, no need for changing the Library's current policy, because networked solutions have to be developed for all types of libraries cooperating in the network.

4. Legal deposit

In September 1997 the Ministry of Education set up a task force to prepare a proposal for the revision of the Legal Deposit Law from 1980. In addition to the revision of the existing practise with the print media electronic online publications also have to be included together with multimedia. The task force completed its work by the end of April 1998 and the proposal to a new law will be sent to the Parliament during the autumn 1998. Publishers are already depositing electronic publications on CD-ROM on a voluntary basis. They are catalogued in the National Bibliography.

Studies needed for preparing the new proposal have been carried out by Helsinki University Library. Experiences from other countries have been studied in detail. Discussions have been conducted with producers of electronic publications. Technical expertise outside the Library has been consulted. Practical solutions have been investigated with the help of a development project called EVA, which has given the Library valuable expertise also for its participation in the EU project NEDLIB.

5. Buildings and plant

The building situation has improved substantially. The Library has taken over the adjacent building in the same block, which has been beautifully restored. These new premises of about 3,500 square metres give the Library the possibility to concentrate its reader services into these two buildings. This event is, however, only the first step. The Library will enlarge its open access capacity and therefore the old main building will be partly restored and an underground corridor between the two buildings will be built. One half of the building will, therefore, be closed for one year. The entire complex will be opened on September 1, 1999. At the same time, new underground stacks, deep in the rocks, are being built. The first stage, consisting of about 9,000 square metres, will be ready at the end of the year 2000. This enables the Library to concentrate its collections in the immediate vicinity of its reading rooms.

An important policy decision was made already a couple of years ago: the internal processes, e.g. the cataloguing, were removed from the Library's premises in the centre of the city to a more remote site. The results can be made easily available over the network. A similar decision on the location of the conservation activities was made. The new building houses only those routines which are needed for taking care of the reader services and the collections on the spot. The conservation is concentrated in Mikkeli, in the South-Eastern part of the country, where the Library has its Centre for Microfilming and Conservation. In this way, the Library's buildings in the central quarters are dedicated to reader services.

6. Acquisitions

Due to the continuing restrictions in the funding only a limited amount of printed publications have been purchased, the main focus being on journal subscriptions.

As a special arrangement and with the help of an additional grant a contract for a country license for the electronic journals was signed in the autumn 1997 with the Publishing house Academic Press. The license gives access to 175 fulltext journals to the members of the consortium, being mainly academic libraries. This was a major step towards the national electronic library.

With the help of a special grant a major collection of Jean Sibelius' musical manuscripts was purchased in cooperation with the Royal Library in Copenhagen. The manuscripts had belonged to the Wilhelm Hansen family, the former owner of the Edition Wilhelm Hansen. The purchase was of great importance for the Library's big project, the critical edition of the Collected Works of Jean Sibelius.

A major collection of Finnish grammophone records from 1920-61, consisting of 3,850 original 78rpm discs, was purchased from a private collector. The collection represents about 80 per cent of the total production in its field. It was an important addition to the collections of the Archives of the Recorded Sound.

With the help of external funding a special project has been started to collect as big a portion of the existing manuscripts of the Finnish composers as possible. The Library cooperates closely with the Finnish Music Information Centre and the aim is to receive the manuscripts as donations..

7. Conservation / preservation of collections

A major change in the preservation policy has been introduced. All publications which are kept permanently are treated immediately when they enter the Library and prepared for permanent storage. There are, of course, different ways of treatment for different types of material. E.g. all newspapers which according to the Library's policy will be microfilmed are microfilmed after their arrival. It is more reasonable to concentrate on preventive methods than to try to repair the damages afterwards.

The five year project of microfilming Estonian newspapers from the time between the World War I and II has been completed in cooperation with the National Library of Estonia and a couple of other Estonian libraries.

Digitisation of collections has been carried out in the project Muisti (Memory). Material free from copyright concerns has been made available in the network. The Library has, however, no plans to start a large scale digitisation of its collections. A more clear policy will be needed supported by adequate financing. On the other hand, an environment has been created for new services. Digitisation has in many cases replaced the photographic method in preparing reproductions for e.g. printing purposes.

That part of conservation which remains in Helsinki as well as the digitisation have received new premises in the new building.

8. IT and new technology

Development of IT and implementation of new technology have been in focus in many ways. A development unit was organized to take care of the projects and development programmes. The main part of the work is carried out with the help of external financing. The Library has run three major projects: 1) It has developed digitisation of old material (MUISTI, see above). 2) It is developing a fulltext service of new Finnish journal articles (ELEKTRA). 3) Further it works on developing procedures for handling and archiving legal deposit of electronic online publications (EVA).

In 1998 the Library started a new project aiming at development of principles and practical mechanisms for the University's electronic publishing activities. In addition to the technical issues legal aspects, organizational arrangements and long time archiving problems have to be tackled.

On the international scale the Library has taken initiatives in the field of standardization. It has promoted the development of a European agreement on Z39.50 and it has been active in supporting the introduction of the URN. Together with the Royal Library of Sweden it will start allocating URNs at the beginning of May 1998.

The Ministry of Education has launched a new programme called the 'National Electronic Library'. It is aiming at creating information content in the network, e.g. by financing country licenses of much used bibliographic services and fulltext journals in electronic format. The programme will also try to improve the access to electronic information in other ways. The programme is financed through an extra grant and administered by the National Library. It has a Steering group of its own, where also other libraries and a number of other organizations are represented.

A scenario *Information Technology Usage in Libraries 1997-2006* was prepared and published (in Finnish) in autumn 1997. The text will become available also in English. It will serve as a basis for the strategy of the development of the computerized library network.

On behalf of the university libraries of the country the National Library has started a process aiming at procurement of a new generation of software for the basic library systems in all university libraries. The tender procedure will follow the rules of the EU. In this connection the architecture of the network will obviously be revised. The question about the data format will also be considered.

New strategic decisions were made on the Library's own local area network. The Library is now in a systematic way installing the NT- technology.

9. Services to readers

New reading rooms have been furnished for a number of purposes. In this way both the Slavonic and East European Library and the American Resource Center have opened in the new premises. A number of other reading rooms and services have also been established, such as a Music Library with studios, a special reading room for rare material and a reading room for the archival collection of Finnish literature. A reading room for electronic publications will also be opened. The new reading areas in the new building are equipped with network connections. More than 95 per cent of the Library's catalogues are accessible over the network.

The new building has a profound impact on the organization of the reader services. New procedures and working methods have been developed. The goal has been a new kind of flexibility aiming at one stop shopping. E.g. the interlibrary lending has been integrated into the general reader services. A part of the back office work still exists but it is nothing the users have to be aware of. A series of quality projects has been used to start a process of renewing the working methods. An external consultant has

also been used. The planning of new routines and furnishing of new reading areas have fully absorbed the development capacity of the staff.

As long as the construction work is going on the use of the Library will be suffering from temporary arrangements.

10. Exhibitions and Publishing

Several exhibitions in the library building have been arranged showing the Library's collections to the great public. A number of publications are being prepared. As a new publication on CD-ROM the central wholesaler of the Finnish booktrade, together with the Library, has in the beginning of 1998 started to publish a new bibliographic tool *FinnBooks*, containing information about new Finnish literature. In addition to the bibliographic data also covers (images) and content pages as well as summaries of the contents are included. All the functionalities needed for the book trade are included. The CD-ROM will appear ten times a year.

13. Library co-operation

Cooperation between libraries has been a characteristic for research libraries in Finland. According to its brief the National Library is supporting cooperation between libraries. The three projects mentioned above are based on consortia consisting of several libraries and other relevant organizations. New services for the network are developed preferably as cooperative projects.

The National Library's coordinating role is supported by the arrangements libraries have undertaken jointly. University libraries have established a common formal organization, the *Council of Finnish University Libraries*. Libraries together finance a planning secretary placed in the Secretariat for Planning and National Coordination in the National Library.

The new programme the 'National Electronic Library' is strengthening the development of a common approach in developing the services of the research library network. The National Library is the common instrument for such consortia.

The common efforts to upgrade the present computer systems have been mentioned already.

14. Staffing matters

The Library has developed a policy for staff development, both for developing the staff skills and the staff structure. Attention has to be paid, as everywhere, on the

command of new electronic methods in particular. In addition to acquiring more experts in this field the staff skills have to be improved in general. At the same time the share of people with scholarly education will be increased at the expense of the traditional library routines.

Shortage of people capable to lead various development projects has become obvious. The problems are caused, at least partly, by the fact that projects are financed from external sources and it does not necessarily allow permanent appointments of the project leaders.

Staff members in managerial positions in various levels have been trained in particular, because their role in achieving the required results is increasing.

15. Conclusion

It is obvious that the year has been successful for the Library. The only problem has been the shortage of the money for purchasing literature. In all other respects major progress has been made. The Library's role in the international cooperation has also been strengthened in a remarkable way.