

Helsinki University Library

The National Library of Finland

## **Report of the activities during the year 1998-99**

Helsinki University Library. The National Library of Finland

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The year has been extremely important for the Library. The Library's position as the focal point of the library network has been strengthened. Its finances have been improved. It is going through an intensive period of building projects. It is in the middle of a fast development of electronic services. The programme 'National electronic library', launched by the Ministry of Education, has been a major step towards a virtual library, the basis of which will be the new automated library system which will be purchased for all university libraries and a number of other libraries. The National Library is in charge of the programme.

### **1. Management of the library**

Special emphasis has been laid on improving the organization and workflow within the basic functional units. The organization is based on production chains and is not only flattened but the aim is to develop the line of responsibilities to a horizontal one. With the help of an external consultant a major project has investigated the internal organization of the bibliographical and cataloguing services to improve the internal logistics and greater integration of different processes.

Major efforts are still required to introduce entrepreneurship as a commonly accepted approach to the work. It is not easy to empower the staff if it is not prepared to accept the corresponding responsibility.

Other points on the agenda have been costing and methods of evaluation.

The Library is preparing a written strategy for its national library activities. The strategy will be approved at the beginning of the autumn.

### **2. Major innovations**

The delivery of URN codes was started in May 1998. These permanent resource names are allotted automatically.

With the help of a Nordic pilot project digitization of newspapers from microfilm was started. Good results have been achieved also in the OCR treatment.

A special programme 'National Electronic Library' (FinELib) was an innovation of the Ministry of Education. It will be described in detail later.

### **3. Finance and funding**

No additional cuts have taken place. On the contrary. Within the budget frame for the three year period 1998-2000 the share of the national library financing has increased. The Library also received additional project money to start creating the National Archives for Recorded Sound. A major grant has been received for the National Electronic Library.

More money has been allotted to acquisitions and upgrading the internal computer network. Resources have also been reserved for tasks needed in connection with the new and renovated premises such as completion of the retrospective conversion of catalogues and cleaning and preparing the collections before the removal to the new premises.

The share of the revenues in 1998 was about 11 per cent of the total budget excluding building costs. The share of all external funding outside the regular budget was 24 per cent.

### **4. Legal status**

The new Statutes, attached to the University Act, came into force on August 1, 1998, and strengthened the Library's status as the service and development unit for research libraries of the country.

Preparations have been made to introduce a new practice of an annual contract with the Ministry of Education for financing the Library's tasks as the National Library. The contract will be part of the University's overall contract.

Due to historical reasons some universities are running institutions which have a national role. The present principles of financing the universities do not easily cover this type of activities easily. Therefore, the principles will be revised and a certain percentage of the total university budget will be reserved for national tasks. According to the Ministry of Education the National Library is a self-evident institution to be financed out of this budget.

### **5. Role of the National Library in the national library network**

As the National Library of Finland Helsinki University Library is, together with the separate National Depository Library, the only common resource for the whole network of the country's research libraries. The Library maintains all the common services needed to run the joint computerized library network. It is instrumental in the development of new electronic services as well.

The Library has a coordinating role in general. It also offers a number of services and functions as the National Focal Point of the programmes of the EU.

Of course, the Library is running also a great number of unique services for the whole country serving both individual users and other libraries.

## **6. Legal deposit of materials**

A revision of the Legal Deposit Act is being prepared by the Ministry of Education. The aim is to cover electronic publications in all formats. (See Juha Hakala, Electronic publications as legal deposit copies: <http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/tietolinja/0199/legaldep.html>)

According to a recent initiative the radio and television programmes also should be included in the Act. The quarters behind the initiative, e.g. the state-owned broadcasting company, suggest that the task to archive the programmes should be given to the National Library. This is a remarkable change of attitudes, because all earlier proposals have aimed at a separate radio and television archives. The initiative is based on the fact that the National Library is developing the National Archives of Recorded Sound and creating procedures for archiving electronic publications. It is to be hoped that the initiative will not cause additional delay of adopting the law.

## **7. Buildings and plants**

The building projects described in the previous report continue. The Library is living in the middle of a construction site, in two separate buildings in the same block. The most used open access collections are temporarily located outside the Library. The construction work has made good progress and the whole block will be in use in September 1999. The new large underground stacks as well as the renovated ones will be ready a year later.

The building project is a major investment and it will improve substantially the Library's conditions. It also provides a beautiful environment for the users. A new exhibition area and a larger cafeteria will also be provided.

## **8. Acquisitions**

Funds allotted to the acquisitions are too small, due to the reductions earlier in the 90s. Today, the acquisition of foreign research literature belongs to the responsibility of the University, which, however, can not afford any significant increase of the acquisition budget. The Library is, therefore, preparing a proposal to be discussed in connection with the budget frame 2001-2003 suggesting that, as a part of the National Library budget, funds be granted for maintenance of a broad basic national collection of foreign literature in particular in the field of arts and humanities. Traditionally, the Library has been the last resort in the whole country in this area. Purchasing specialized research literature would remain a responsibility of the University. For this purpose the Library is preparing a new collection policy where a clear distinction between these two aspects will be made.

The government programme carrying the name 'National Electronic Library' has made remarkable progress. During 1998 and 1999 country licenses have been purchased for about 2 600 electronic journals and 70 bibliographic databases. The financing of the programme is limited to the universities. Both the financing and the decision making are centralized. With the help of a separate Steering Group and a number of working groups views and needs of libraries are, however, channelled into the decision making. On the other hand, when purchasing licenses for specialized services libraries have to share the costs. A special scheme for shared financing has been adopted by the participating libraries as well as by their university authorities. The National Library is the responsible organization for the programme.

See e.g. Inkeri Salonharju, Electronic Licensing - the Consortium Model of Finnish Research Libraries: <http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/tietolinja/0199/electron.html>

The National Electronic Library (FinELib) is a major improvement of the working conditions of the universities. It also compensates, at least partly, the earlier cuts of libraries' acquisition budgets. It is recommended that libraries try to discontinue the subscriptions to corresponding printed journals.

As a continuation of earlier acquisitions a major amount of Finnish grammophone records from 1962-73 have been purchased from a private collector. About 30 composers have given their manuscripts to the Library within the framework of the collecting project LYYRA launched in co-operation with the Finnish Music Information Centre.

## **9. Conservation/preservation of collections**

Several important projects are going on. A major project investigating the influence of neutralizing on the aging of paper is being financed by the Tekes Technology Development Centre. The project has several partners, one of them being from the Netherlands.

Another project is studying the digitization of newspapers from microfilm. National libraries from Iceland, Norway and Sweden and the State and University Library of Aarhus, Denmark, are also participating in this TIDEN project, which is co-financed by NORDINFO. It is supplemented by a new project AURORA, which has recently received financing from the Finnish Ministry of Education.

Digitization and OCR treatment of newspapers are one of the Library's top priorities in this field. Because the technical prospects are promising the Library wants to make newspapers available on line in the net at least as far as the copyright restrictions allow it. Contacts with newspaper publishers have also been established.

When microfilming newspapers it is imperative to aim at the highest quality both in the camera and the laboratory work. It goes without saying that accuracy in the camera work is critical for digitization. It is extremely expensive to refile newspapers and it is not at all self-evident that old newspapers can be microfilmed repeatedly. When refileming newspapers which for the first time were microfilmed in the early 50s the Library has discovered that microfilms which are produced now will be the only sustainable medium for permanent archiving of newspapers. The present condition of the printed newspapers printed hundred or so years ago suggests that they will be no longer available for a new microfilming process if they for some reason should be microfilmed once again e.g. in 50 years' time.

Until now the Library has bought the microfilming services from outside. From the beginning of April 1999 it, however, had to take over the work and the staff, because the University's audiovisual service was reorganized. This was against the Library's principles to outsource those activities which do not belong to its core functions.

With the help of a special project the collections will be checked, cleaned and prepared for removal into the new underground stacks.

The Library has formulated a policy for the maintenance and preservation of its collections. A summary of it will be published in English in the Bulletin of the Library in the Summer 1999.

## 10. IT and new technology

Three main lines can be found in the Library's IT development:

- development of electronic library services
- the process of upgrading the research libraries' computer system
- improvement of the Library's own local infrastructure.

### *Development of electronic library services*

The Library has strengthened its unit for development of electronic library services and is, in addition to its own projects, attending in a number of European and Nordic projects.

The priorities are:

- participation in the development of standards and working methods such as metadata, URN and Z39.50 profile; in this field the Library is also co-ordinating the efforts of the CENL.
- development of a platform and working methods for handling legal deposit of electronic publications, projects: EVA, NEDLIB
- provision of current publications in electronic format, projects: The National Electronic Library and ELEKTRA (Finnish journal articles)
- digitization of newspapers.

The Library is also strengthening its capacity in digitization of ordinary texts and images but it does not plan major projects in this field. The capacity is focused on a limited number of tasks as well as on on-demand digitization for the users.

Procedures for electronic publishing are being developed for the University. It is, however, not at all given that the Library will want to become the publisher of the University. It might be more reasonable to hand over the task to some other organization, when the regular production has to be started.

More information:

Juha Hakala, Uniform Resource Names: <http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/tietolinja/0199/urnart.html>  
Kirsti Lounamaa and Inkeri Salonharju, EVA - The Acquisition and Archiving of Electronic Network Publications in Finland: <http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/tietolinja/0199/evaart.html>  
Majken Bremer-Laamanen, Testing of digital search methods: Promoting access of historical newspapers in the north: <http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/tietolinja/newspape.html>

### *Upgrading the research libraries' computer system*

The main IT task for the whole library network is the upgrading of the basic library system for all university libraries and a number of other libraries. The Library has been authorized to run the process and to prepare a proposal to the software to be chosen. All university libraries will also in the future have the same software. They also participate in the selection process.

For the time being four products have been shortlisted and the final proposal will be available in September. (See Annu Jauhiainen, LINNEA2 - A New Integrated Library System for the National Library Network. <http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/tietolinja/0199/linnea2.html>).

It may be of interest to mention that a radical change of the network architecture is being discussed. At the moment all libraries (with a couple exceptions only) are running their own local installations, which are connected with the union catalogue maintained by the Helsinki University Library. A strong alternative to this model seems to be a concentration of the server capacity in one place even in the case that libraries still want to maintain databases of their own. A possible place would be the company CSC, owned by the Ministry of Education. It is already responsible for the university network FUNET. The concentration would obviously be a far cheaper alternative than the present distributed one. It would also guarantee a much greater reliability. Due to the powerful data transmission network physical distances do no longer play any role in Finland. As a matter of fact the connections between universities are better and more reliable than within the universities.

If this option will be chosen, it would be a major innovation and it would help us in making full use of the power of the new technology. It would also help us, free from local ambitions, in outsourcing processes which do not belong to our core functions. This alternative amalgamates individual libraries into one networked library and, by taking care of the basic technical operations opens, individual libraries an opportunity to invest their resources in more demanding electronic services.

#### *Improvement of Library's IT infrastructure*

Since the summer 1998 the Library has received a new internal network and introduced the NT technology. Servers have been replaced as well as a major part of the PCs. The office software has been unified for the whole Library. Staff supporting the use of computers has been increased.

#### *Policy issues*

According to the prevailing legislation the Library has to charge for the use of all other databases than those being its own catalogues. Libraries participating in the joint computer network are entitled to use the union catalogue free of charge. Public libraries in particular are arguing strongly for a free use of the Library's databases one of them being the union catalogue of the main public libraries. The case is still open. But to introduce the desired change the Library will need compensation for the lost revenue, even if the legislation would be revised to allow a free use.

## **11. Services to readers**

Readers services have been improved through new reading rooms which were opened in June 1998. On the other hand, the building project described above, has created exceptional circumstances and caused a number of difficulties from the users' point of view. The use has, therefore, not increased corresponding to the increase of the seats, so far.

One of the services which is also internationally well-known, the Slavonic Library, is one of the top priorities at the moment. Since the 70s the Library has been located elsewhere and now brought back to the Main Library. Its services will be integrated into other services in the field of arts and humanities and in this way users will have a better access to all material they need for their work. The profile of the services will also be developed.

The new space arrangements have already had a major impact on the working conditions of the staff. Almost all staff members working in the library division (one half of the Library) are now

involved in reader services, which was not the case earlier. This has been a major psychological change, not very easy to everybody.

Service agreements have been prepared and should be completed in the summer.

## **12. Exhibitions**

Several exhibitions have been shown in the Library's own small exhibition room and material from the collections has been on loan in a number of exhibitions elsewhere. As mentioned above, the Library will receive a new larger exhibition area in the autumn.

After having received new meetings facilities the Library has intensified its cultural activities. For this purpose a new steering group has been set up. Seminars for scholars and other experts are arranged on topics related to Library's collections. The most recent seminar dealt with newspapers as sources for research. Programmes for the public are also organized. The response of the public as well as of the press has been very encouraging.

## **13. Publishing**

The main event was the publishing of the first printed volume of the critical edition of the collected works of Jean Sibelius, *Jean Sibelius Werke*, the publisher of the series being Breitkopf & Härtel at Wiesbaden, Germany. In 1996 the Library launched a major research project together with the Finnish Sibelius Society. The series will comprise more than 45 volumes. Two volumes will be published annually.

Printing of the monthly issues of the National Bibliography was discontinued by the end of 1998. In stead of a printed bibliography the information is now available on two different CD-ROMs and in the net.

The information bulletins have been restructured. Information intended to librarians and information experts is published in an electronic journal, information distributed to other readers will be printed, because it can not be assumed that they would actively seek the information the Library wants them to receive. Consequently, the profile of the traditional printed information bulletin, published in Finnish, has been revised. Internal information to the staff is distributed in the network.

*Helsinki University Library Bulletin* will be published once a year as well as one issue of the electronic journal *Tietolinja News* in English (<http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/tietolinja/news/>).

## **14. Cataloguing and other technical processes**

The production of the National Bibliography has been trimmed in order to make the catalogue records available better on time. The Library has an agreement on the sale of the records with the company Bibliotekstjänst, which is serving public libraries.

The National Bibliography of books and periodicals is now available on line from its beginning (1488). The Library's shelfmarks need still to be added. Earlier parts of printed music and maps have still to be converted.

Conversion of two other big catalogues, those of the foreign research collection and the Slavonic library, is nearly completed. The work will be finished either this or next year.

In connection with the task to create a National Archives for Recorded Sound the Library had to assume the responsibility for cataloguing sound recordings such as grammophone records and cassettes. Since 1981, when the legal deposit of AV material was introduced, it had been the task of the Jyväskylä University Library. Now the Library has to create catalogues of the earlier grammophone records also retrospectively.

It has been investigated, whether the Finnish research libraries should abandon the data format of their own and adopt the USMARC. The question is still open and has to be solved in connection with the selection of the new computer system. On the other hand, the National Library has still to support the present FINMARC format, because public libraries will continue using it.

The Library is maintaining a general thesaurus both in Finnish and Swedish. The maintenance of the Swedish thesaurus is being bought from the Library of the Abo Academy. When developing networked public services the Ministry of Finance asked the Library to make the thesaurus publicly available in the network. It will happen this year and it will be one important step in the integration of library services into other networked services of the society.

## **15. Library co-operation**

The Library participates in

- European projects CoBRA+, DIEPER, NEDLIB, ONE-2, TECUP as well as the New Book Economy
- Nordic projects Nordic Metadata, TIDEN

The Library is a member of CENL, CERL and will also join the EROMM.

On behalf of CENL the Library is responsible for the chair of a Working Group on development of URN, Z39.50 profile, ILL profile etc.

In addition to formalized projects and programmes the Library participates in a number of other initiatives both in European and Nordic scale. Of special interest has been licensing of electronic publications.

On the national level, co-operation is a precondition for the Library's functions as the National Library. Co-operative activities have been described above more in detail. Finnish research libraries have a strong tradition of co-operation as has been exemplified above when speaking about the joint computer network and the programme 'National Electronic Library'.

To some extent the Library also co-operates with archives and museums, but the results have, so far, been rather modest.

## **16. Staffing matters**

The Unit for Retrospective Conversion was closed in June 1998. In spite of it the total number of permanent posts has increased, because the Library has taken over the whole microfilming staff



and all the janitors and service people, who earlier belonged to the University's technical services. This may make the Library's staff figures more compatible with corresponding figures in other libraries.

In addition to the permanent staff about 40 FTEs have been paid from other sources such as projects and government employment programmes. On the other hand, there have been some vacancies because the Library is in the process of revising its staff structure.

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