

National and University Library of Iceland: Annual Report 2000/2001

Landsbókasafn Íslands – Háskólabókasafn

National and University Library of Iceland

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Introduction

Two projects stand out when the year 2000 comes under review: on the one hand negotiations on greatly increased access to information databases and electronic journals, and on the other hand preparations and negotiations for a national integrated library system to replace a number of systems now in use in Iceland.

Besides, more exhibitions were held in the library in the year 2000 than ever before.

Funding

The total budget for 2000 was approximately 450,000,000 ISK (USD 5,300,000), an increase by 12.5 per cent compared with 1999. The government provides most of the funding, of which about 13 per cent is channelled through the University of Iceland. About 9.5 per cent are revenues, which is more than usual owing to partnership arrangements and other funding in support of exhibitions and other cultural activities of the year.

Management of the Library

Various improvements were made in the management of the library. This included the introduction of a formal training programme for the staff. An evaluation of all jobs in the library took place, partly in order to make a better use of the possibilities offered by the salary structure. First steps were also taken to revise working-processes and procedures throughout the library, and a service agreement was signed with a private health company in order to promote preventive health services for the benefit of those who work in the library.

A national integrated library system

During the last decade the library, together with about ten other Icelandic libraries, has used the Libertas library system from SLS in England. A few other library systems have also been in use in Iceland. However, it has been a policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture to select one system that could replace all the existing systems. For this purpose a committee with representatives from both the state and local government was appointed by the Ministry about two years ago in order to work towards this goal. Following an international invitation to tender, tenders were received from eight companies and after a rigorous selection procedure the Aleph library system from ExLibris was chosen and a contract was signed in April 2001. The first implementation is scheduled at the National and University Library in the first half of 2002. It is a complicated task to make one library system replace almost all other library systems in the country, and negotiations are taking place about financial and other responsibilities.

National access to information databases and electronic journals

In 1998 the Minister of Education and Culture appointed a committee with the purpose to explore and make recommendations to the Ministry on how access to domestic and international information providers could be negotiated and how this could be implemented within the Icelandic society. The committee delivered its report in April 1999. In February 2000 the Minister appointed an executive committee to implement the policy of the Ministry, i.e. to negotiate for nationwide contracts.

The National and University Library will act on behalf of the Ministry towards the information providers in all contract, financial, technical and public awareness related matters. The Reykjavík University will be responsible for certain aspects of user education. The first contract was signed with Encyclopedia Britannica, the second one in October 2000 with Bell & Howell for ProQuest, Literature Online and Literature for Schools and more than 3000 electronic journals. In January 2001 a contract was signed with the Institute for Scientific Information (ISI) for access to the Web of Science, covering their all three citation indices. The contracts will allow all residents in Iceland access to those databases if they are connected to the Internet by domestic Internet service providers. The access is based on IP addresses and currently there are ten ranges of addresses from five Internet providers.

Currently there are negotiations with several providers of electronic information for national access to some additional databases and more than 2000 electronic journals.

Digital library projects

The SagaNet, which started in 1997 and was to be completed in the year 2000, was extended to mid-2001. The project entails the conversion of several hundred thousand pages of Saga manuscripts and printed material into digital form.

VESTNORD is a co-operative project between the national libraries of Iceland, the Faroe Isles and Greenland. Its goal is to digitise all journals and newspapers from the beginning of publishing in those countries until 1920. An OCR-technique will be used to make the text searchable through developing an interface for search and document retrieval. TIDEN is a parallel project of the national libraries in Finland, Norway and Sweden, and the State and University Library in Århus, Denmark. VESTNORD started in the year 2000, and it is

expected to be completed in 2003. Both projects are supported through a grant from NORDINFO.

Legal deposit of materials

The proposal for new legislation on legal deposits has been under consideration in the Ministry for Education and Culture since February 2000. We still have good hopes that the bill will be passed as new legislation in 2001, to become effective in 2002.

Exhibitions and cultural events

In the millennium year there were far more occasions for historical exhibitions than ever before: Reykjavík was one of the nine European Cities of Culture, and the fact that there were a thousand years since Christianity was formally adopted in Iceland and Leifur Eiríksson became the first European to sail to America called for celebration.

A travelling exhibition, *Living and Reliving the Icelandic Sagas*, was opened in the library on 1 March 2000. Other venues were Library of Congress, Cornell University and the University of Manitoba. The exhibition threw light on the development of printing in Iceland and the tradition of having manuscripts for use in the home that continued into the 20th century.

A guest exhibition from Germany was on display the whole of May: *1000 Years of Iceland – Bremen Relation*. For centuries Icelanders have been in contact with the cities on the northern coast of Germany, and until 1104 the Archbishop in Bremen was the highest prelate in the Catholic church in the Nordic countries. Trade and fishing relations with Bremen have also been strong until the present day.

The Library's summer exhibition, *Reykjavík in Letters and Diaries*, threw light on the lives of ordinary people in Reykjavík in the past two centuries.

A conference of the International Map Collectors' Society (IMCoS) was held in Reykjavík in September 2000. For the occasion of the conference the Library set up an exhibition of old Icelandic maps.

The last exhibition of the year, *From One Mind to Another*, referred to reading in general, focusing on the history of printing and publishing in Iceland with a special emphasis on the publishing history of the Bible.

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