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Annual report. Royal Library, National Library of Sweden 1997

1997 will be a remarkable year in the history of the Royal Library. The extended and renovated building was re-opened by the King Carl Gustaf XVI and the Queen Silvia the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June after five years of very radical changes. The Royal Library is now a well equipped and a modern national library prepared to take the responsibility for the cultural heritage of the next century. As a part of the inauguration an extensive and very important exhibition was arranged, showing a lot of the most spectacular items of the library's collections from five centuries. A beautiful (and expensive) catalogue was printed: "Wonderful, wonderful!".

It is not unusual that after some time of hard work you discover some problems in a renovated old building, so totally changed. For the KB it is first a question of the building's physical climate which has been difficult to foresee in the planning phase. Second, the level of the sound in the office areas is far too high and third, the light coming in on sunny mornings sometimes makes it impossible to read the information on the computer screens. We also have problems with the exhibition areas. Most of the difficulties will hopefully, and costly, be solved during 1998.

The new organisation and new rules of procedures of the library were accepted the 1<sup>st</sup> of January 1997. The ideas behind these reforms was to establish a high degree of delegation of the decision-making, smaller units and more clear reporting routines to the executive directors. We also tried to create departments which corresponded to the tasks of the library. Most of these goals have been achieved and we will evaluate the organisation in autumn 1998.

An extensive work of development has been done in different areas together with the mentioned more formal organisational changes. Several important projects have started.

The national information system LIBRIS can from the 1<sup>st</sup> of March 1997 be used free of charge over the Internet. A very radical reform which changed the whole information-market in Sweden. Even public libraries are now offered to join the system. New information is also added to the system. From autumn the special bibliographies of history, art and literature can be found as well as publishers information concerning new books. The government has funded a project at KB which aims at establishing LIBRIS as a fundamental information resource system which final results are hard to predict. The possibilities are enormous.

The Kulturarw3 heritage project aims to test methods of collecting, preserving and providing access to Swedish electronic documents, which are accessible on line in such a way that they can be regarded as published. Through this project we will lay

the foundations of a collection of Swedish electronic publishing of our time. This project has been very much discussed and observed in media.

For the moment KB lacks an administrative library system. We use the LIBRIS system as our catalogue, for statistics, interlibrary loans and so on. All local loans are handled manually. But during 1997 the library has through a very carefully made investigation decided to use electronic help even for local loans of Swedish materials as well as foreign and other administrative routines. The decision in December fell upon the Israelian system Aleph, which will be installed during 1998.

Other important projects which have been introduced during 1997 are within the preservation-programme. Posters, historical pictures, newspapers manuscripts, historical and modern correspondence, old and rare Swedish prints are being digitised. And KB tries to find out different methods to make the processes as easy and effective as possible. Our ambition is that everything will be presented at the Internet and can be accessed through our home-page.

The Legal Deposit Law which have existed since 1993 is already out of date. A revision of it started in 1997 and will be finished during 1998. Of course, most urgent is to solve problems concerning Swedish publications on Internet, but legal matters, such as copyright, is also under consideration.

KB has officially by the Government got the task to negotiate with different information providers concerning national licenses to reference and full-text databases. These negotiations have partly been successful. The library has signed contracts with ISI and a lot of internal databases and we are just right now fulfilling discussions with some full-text database owners. The public library sector has shown interest in these negotiations as well, and the ambition is to include them in at least some of the contracts.

The international co-operation between KB and national and research libraries around the world has increased. The European Union is one reason for that, but also other organisations like IFLA, CERL, EBLIDA demands greater activeness from the KB. Most important is perhaps The New Book Economy project started this autumn. It aims at studying the book market of the future. It is funded by the Adapt-programme. Similar projects are running in several other countries such as Germany, The Netherlands, France etc. at the same time.

Stockholm is Europe's cultural city of 1998 and this fact has meant that KB in 1997 became involved in the preparation of a lot of different cultural projects. KB was also seen as a natural focal-point for the libraries' involvement in this big event. As a result, KB will at least have three big exhibitions in the building during next year according to that.