

FINLAND

THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FINLAND

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THE NEW STATUS OF NATIONAL LIBRARY IN THE SOCIETY

The status of the National Library of Finland as the central service unit of the Finnish library network was legally confirmed in August 2006. After the change the National Library is serving university and polytechnic libraries as well as special and public libraries. The library network has defined the services that have been included in the first stage and the range of services will most probably be expanded in the future. Particularly at the beginning of the strategic period, the Library will prioritise the enhancement of services to the libraries and measure their impact. As the strategic period progresses, the Library will also strive to significantly improve the quality of local services and digitisation.

The National Library's new role, a service unit for the library network, has resulted in certain practical administrative changes, the most visible of which has been the change of the organisation's name. The Helsinki University Library - the National Library of Finland has become simply the National Library of Finland. The new name emphasises the importance of the Library's national responsibilities. The steering mechanism of the library has also changed. Within the library network, the National Library is the only library conducting budgetary negotiations directly with the Ministry of Education. Cooperative mechanisms between the library network and the National Library are also being developed. Another important administrative development area is the budgetary system, where the aim will be to streamline the library's fairly complex financing arrangements, even though most of the funding is allocated by the Ministry of Education.

As a result of the Library's new role and the strategic steering, the organisation has been renewed. The organisation now consists of four strategic divisions: Library Network Services, Research Library Services, Collection and Description of the National Cultural Heritage and The National Digitisation Centre. The Centre for Microfilming and Conservation in Mikkeli.

In close co-operation with the library network of Finland and the Finnish IT Center for Science (CSC), the National Library launched a project for consolidating the existing servers. There are five Sun computers, containing 50+ Voyager databases, the national MetaLib portal and the digital asset management system. All these systems will be placed on a single server next autumn. The new server will be about 50% more powerful than the existing ones are cumulatively, and the annual maintenance costs will also drop significantly. The project has proven the technical feasibility and usefulness of network level consolidation projects in library automation.

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