

The National Library of Finland

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Name of country: Finland

Name of library or equivalent national-level organisation: National Library of Finland

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The National Library of Finland, Country Report 2008(-2009)

1. General overview of recent major developments at the reporting library.

The higher education network in Finland is under major change. The renewal of the Universities Act will provide Finnish universities with internationally equal operational prerequisites. Universities will be granted the status of a legal person, enabling them to compete with the world's leading universities on an equal footing. The pace of the renewal is brisk; the law is expected to go into effect in August of 2009 and become fully applicable beginning 1 January 2010.

At the same time the higher education network will be reduced. There have already been some merges of universities and polytechnics and more will take place in 2010 and 2011. The aim of the structural changes is to increase the international competitiveness of the Finnish research and to improve the quality of research and education. The legal and structural changes affect also library services and work division between the libraries and national service providers has to be sharpened. The Ministry of Education has launched a project in 2008 to study how the changes of the network affect library services and how the role of National Library as a service provider could be strengthened. The project runs until 6/2009.

National research infrastructure survey was carried out for the first time in Finland in 2008. As a result 24 significant national-level infrastructures were identified and for the roadmap of new needs 20 proposals were accepted. The collections of National Library and Library's infrastructure for national licensing were chosen to the list of national research infrastructures. System architecture for memory organisations (inc. libraries) was chosen to the roadmap. Research infrastructure policy will be developed in the future and it will be linked to the national innovation strategy. The emphasis in the development of research infrastructures is to facilitate international level research in Finland. The digitisation of source material came up as one of the most important issues for development.

The IT environment of libraries, archives and museums in Finland is developing. The Ministry of Education is in charge of the Finnish Digital Library programme, consisting of two main projects, has been launched during 2008 and runs until May 2011. The aim of the initiative is to develop an efficient service for access to digital resources in libraries, archives and museums, and to develop specifications and recommendations for a national digital long-term preservation system.

The Library's representative is attending the European Commission expert group Member States' Expert Group on Digitisation and Digital Preservation together with the Secretary General of the National Digital Library.

2. Note of the reporting library's relationship to government, and citation of legislation

The above mentioned renewal of the Universities Act does not actually change Library's actions or functions. The part in the Universities Act that concerns Library directly does not change. The Library's status may strengthen depending on the conclusions after the Ministry's project about the changes of the library network (see 1.). The international evaluation focused on Library takes place in 2010, its conclusions may also cause some changes in Library's status.

3. Key facts and figures (size of major collections, number of staff, total operating budget, etc).

The Library was founded in 1640. The National Library of Finland is also the oldest and largest research library in Finland, serving scholars and readers nationwide. Among its internationally important collections are: The Slavonic and East European collections, The Monrepos Manor Library and The A.E.Nordenskiöld Collection.

The National Library of Finland is a service centre for libraries since 2006. The library is an active player in all the national projects mentioned above.

Size of major collections (in millions of units): 7

Number of staff (man-year): 256

Premises: 28 000 m²

Total operating budget: 25 milj. €

530 410 local and interlibrary loans

500 400 digitised pages in a year; total amount of digitised pages 2 million

4. New developments in creating and building collections.

The Library published a new collection policy describing the collections, future challenges in collection management and a new acquisition program. The collection policy was completed in cooperation with research community. The acquisition policy conformed libraries major subject areas: history and cultural studies, Russian and East-European studies and philosophy.

The National Web Archive was opened for public use the 1st of April 2009. The Web Archive contains 130 million files from the beginning of the year 2006. Finland is the most liberal country in Europe regarding the openness of the Web Archive. The Archive is open for everyone but only in the National Library estate without any telecommunication connections, of course.

The Library began mass digitization from its own collections in the beginning of 2008. The digitization is made in house. The production of the Digital Historical Newspaper Collection has continued very successfully, and the digitization of the old Finnish journals has started. The Digital Historical Journal Collection will opened to the public use in 2010. As special digital collections the library is building the Digital Collection of the Turku Academy Dissertations from 1700th to 1800th century. An other special digitization project started in the beginning 2009 to aim to digitize medieval parchment fragments. The fragment collection contains fragments from about 1 500 different medieval manuscripts. The Fragment-project contains also academic research as well as conservation of the original documents.

Digitisation

The logistics and processes of the Library's digitisation procedures and their tools have been under major development in 2008 – 2009. The National Digital Library initiative and Europeana have been the framework for the extensive processes and tracking tools built throughout the Library. Co-operation in the recreation of processes has been international and has produced results remarkable on the European scale. The Library has launched its preservation policy and is working on a digitisation policy, building ground for the National Digitisation Strategy.

The Library's National Digitisation Centre has among other scanners an automatic book scanner in production, the first one purchased in the Scandinavian national libraries.

The importance of national digital collections is evident as the use of the digitised materials of the National Library rose from 3,3 to 4,75 million page requests in 2008.

5. New developments in managing collections.

In the new digitisation processes the administrative and tracking tools are integrated which enables the effective management of the collections and the logistics.

The Library's databases were converted to marc21-format. Another big database development is the new national union catalogue which is based on Aleph-data system.

6. New developments in providing access to collections.

Accessing digital collections
Digital rights management

The Library is creating a metadata profile in order to ensure the access, searchability and long-term preservation of national digital collections. The development is interactive with the National Digital Library.

Negotiations are going on with the national copyright organization to find solutions for licensing copyright material, for instance newspapers and journals, both groups in high demand.

The library is cataloging retrospectively the national collection in order to make it more accessible and also to enable effective mass digitization. The planning of the new platform for digital collections is going on and the results are impending in 2010.

7. Examples of collaboration between the reporting library and other national collecting institutions

System architecture for memory organisations was chosen to the roadmap of needed research infrastructures. The Finnish Digital Library forms the main part of the concept. The Finnish Digital Library initiative has been launched as part of the Finnish Information Society strategy for 2007-2015. The aim of the initiative is to develop an efficient service for access to digital resources in libraries, archives and museums and to develop specifications and recommendations for a national digital long-term preservation system. The initiative is very ambitious. The participating organisations range from different kinds of libraries to art museums, science museums, audiovisual archives and other archives. Altogether, there are 35 organisations represented in the programme. The IT infrastructure of libraries, museums and archives will be undergoing a major change due to the initiative. The aim is to improve the efficiency of processes, save costs in digitisation, improve access to information and preserve content in the long term for use in education, research and innovation for the benefit of the country.

Finnish Digital Library project consists of two subprojects namely the public interface and digital preservation project. The challenges in these two subprojects are different. In developing the digital long-term preservation system, the technical challenges are huge. It is not possible to choose among a large variety of software. At the moment, the National Library of the Netherlands runs a digital preservation system and the National Library of New Zealand is developing one in cooperation with ExLibris and an international group of experts. In addition many National libraries have chosen to develop their own digital preservation systems. The experience gained in these projects will be used in the Finnish project.

The challenges of the public interface project are more political or human than technical in nature. Questions such as “ Who is the user and what are the needs of users?, What content can be accessed?, What is the

added value of the new system compared to current systems?" have to be answered. The needs of users and, particularly, the entrance of the "Google generation" into universities and other institutions are exerting a powerful influence on the development of library services. Developments in standardisation and IT technology provide libraries and other memory institutions with new tools to react to the new demands.

The public interface project runs from 2008 until May 2011 and by then a service for a large group of memory organisations should be up and running. Year 2009 is dedicated to the definition of the functional and technical specifications, preparation of the documentation for a tender and organising the tender. In 2010 a pilot to test the software(s) will be organised. National library of Finland is responsible of the coordination of the public interface project.

The memory organisations coordinated by the National Library participated in the MichaelPlus project, creating a national portal for libraries, archives and museums. The libraries, archives and museums are cooperating on a voluntary basis in the digitisation field in the eKAM group.

Legal deposit and web archiving

Cultural Materials Depositing and Preservation Act, repealing older legislation governing legal deposits, came into force at the beginning of 2008. Among other things, the new Act mandates legal depositing of materials available on the web. The 2006 reform of the Copyright Act already gave the National Library of Finland authority a number of legal mandates requisite for web archiving, but Cultural Materials Act makes it a positive obligation and sets down more detailed regulations.

In April, 2009, the National Library opened the National Library Web Archive for the general public. All members of the public may use the archive, but only in the premises of the National Library. No digital copying of the material is allowed. In the future, a handful of other libraries will be able to offer the same service.

The tenet of the Act is that library-initiated web harvesting is the principal method of archiving web materials. If required, the publisher must take steps in order to make harvesting possible. Where harvesting is not applicable, the Library may oblige a web publisher to deposit materials in another manner. These processes are under construction.

At the moment the archive contains circa 130 million files.