

NORDIC PUBLIC LIBRARIES | 2.0



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- Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland
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PREFACE

All over the world libraries are being challenged by the digital media landscape and by the change in user behaviour. Public libraries in particular must rethink their role, services and priorities. If we are to believe that information really is at our fingertips, 'providing access' may well be replaced by 'facilitating knowledge' as the core business of the libraries. And a range of services related to the library as a meeting place, a space for informal learning, cultural activities and events should be created.

With the present publication we wish to introduce new public library services based to a great extent on new social technologies and on the idea of including and involving citizens in an active way in line with the overall challenge. What these services have in common is that they have been developed in Nordic public libraries, and they are thus building on a Nordic tradition for public enlightenment.

The book is the result of a collaboration between the Nordic public library authorities: Danish Agency for Libraries and Media, Ministry of Education and Culture in Finland, Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority and Swedish Arts Council.

The same authorities are also the publishers of *Scandinavian Public Library Quarterly*. In all our publications we aim at sharing ideas and experiences for the benefit of library development. We invite you to follow further developments in this journal.

The present work is published with a view to being presented to the participants at the annual IFLA Conference in Gothenburg in 2010.

We hope that this Nordic book will provide enjoyment as well as inspiration.

Jens Thorhauge
Director General
Danish Agency for Libraries and Media



Entresse Library, Finland. Photo: Jorma Waldén

AGENDA FOR THE NEW LIBRARY

TOWARDS THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY: THREE WAVES OF CHANGE IN THE MODERN LIBRARY

Libraries all over the world have for decades been working systematically to exploit and adapt to the information technology, because quite early on it became clear that there were enormous possibilities in electronically based libraries.

In retrospect we can identify some phases and action lines in this work. An initial phase could be observed in the 1980s that focused on keying in the card catalogues and creating bibliographic databases which then formed the basis for the development of OPACs.

The second phase emerged in the 1990s and the beginning of the new century, and was based on the break-through of the Internet and the introduction of new digital media. Here the libraries developed new services such as access to electronic journals and web services like ask-a-librarian, subject portals and many other web-based services which often remained obscure to many library users.

The first two phases have in general been handled well by the libraries – and although there has been a tendency to a fall-off in the use of the classic core activity in the public library: the loan of physical materials, the general tendency in Nordic public libraries has been that to a greater degree patrons have used the libraries in other ways. First and foremost there is a definite tendency of more and more people using the physical library without in fact borrowing anything. A number of

Nordic studies show that we are talking about a figure of half the users of the physical library. There is also a marked growth in the use of web services and digital loans. The third phase of change is in its infancy. Its prerequisite is the break-through of search services such as Google, Youtube, Flickr and many more. The emergence of communication and knowledge services like facebook, twitter, wikis and the spread of ratings and tagging are also central examples of a completely novel media and information landscape. These services demonstrate more clearly than anything else the busting of the library's monopoly of systematic access to knowledge. They also demonstrate a tendency towards a new relation between information supplier and user, where the user actively assesses the material, or directly contributes to the development of a product like in Wikipedia.

Globalisation and the change of cultural behaviour

The waves of change described above are directly associated with the library's products and services and the competition they are exposed to from other services. But another and deeper layer of anchorage exists which influences the library's role and services. This has to do with the users' changed needs and conditions as a result of the impact of the new technologies in the production world, the wave of change which we characterize as the transition from the industrial society to the information society and globalisation.

The most important change is the goods production's independence of site, which has moved large parts of the industrial production from the Western world to the East, or where the production is cheapest. This development has led to new societal strategies where adaption, innovation, lifelong learning, education and research are central elements. This situation puts pressure on the public's potential for change and development in a way that challenges the library to establish new services.

The actual need for new services is emphasized by the general cultural development. Along with the technological changes we see very definite changes in the behavioural patterns of people.

Some of these changes are described by scholars like Anthony Giddens and Zygmunt Bauman in terms like 'flexible modernisation' (Giddens) and 'liquid modernity' (Bauman). Bauman's point is that in moving from 'solid' to 'liquid' life frames a new and unprecedented setting for life conditions confronts the individuals with a stream of challenges forcing them to constantly redefine their situation. The fragmentation of modern life forces people to be flexible and abandon the way of thinking and acting that was based on more well known conditions. Bauman's analysis is parallel to Giddens' statement that the traditional frames have been replaced with constant choices. This development can be seen as a tremendous challenge to education, lifelong learning and general culture. The new cultural trends seem to lead to a lack of identity and a demand to create new identities, new coherence building on new understandings and interpretations of life contexts. We might say it has become a more complex and demanding project to be a citizen in the knowledge society – and the need for knowledge and constantly developing competencies is growing.

There is a potential for libraries in this development. Front-running libraries have provided good examples, but most libraries are not yet quite ready to cope with the challenge.

There has been less focus on this kind of change than the more obvious globalisation trend, but the trends are interwoven and influence the way of living all over the world, and force the change from industrial to knowledge society that we are witnessing at the moment. The transfer of production from west to east forces governments to work out new strategies for maintaining growth. The main trend here is that improvements of lifelong learning activities, education, research and better innovative skills are becoming core focus areas.

Along with these changes another early prediction has become terrifyingly true: the digital divide, the divide between those who have access and the ability to benefit from ICT – and those who have not. The problem is

daunting, because the consequences tend to be even more far-reaching than feared and be joined by a huge problem less foreseen: a new illiteracy that to some – but only to some – extent can be seen as caused by the multicultural development in all European countries. The gap seems to widen and cause social tension. You might count in other tremendous challenges that call for social innovation that the library might address such as the climate change and the need for sustainability, the growing urbanisation, the ageing of the population and the growth in healthcare costs and many more.

The library challenge and the Nordic model

Thus the conditions for the libraries and their users have changed radically. There is still a market for traditional library services, but the younger generations find themselves on new platforms and use the library for something other than gaining access to information. From access to enabling could be the description of a development tendency. Access is still important, but the library cannot base its existence on giving access to information. The situation calls for solutions based on the new reality, including the new technology and the new media. The library's task will increasingly require not only to give access to information, but also to help the user to assimilate it and exploit it.

The public library's possibility of successfully becoming a central institution in terms of facilitating learning and inspiration in the emerging knowledge society definitely exists. The extremes in the spectre of possibilities we can imagine are, however, different. On the one hand ICT opens up the possibility for creating the perfect library service where access to 'the human record' is integrated into our daily lives – always only just a few clicks away – and information access should also be combined with access to hotlines that offer help and guidance. With a well-functioning service like that the library will have the majority of the public as patrons. This – slightly utopian – model presupposes that a solution has been found in relation to payment for access

to copyright-based material. The prices asked today are prohibitive for applying this library concept to all the library's materials. The other – slightly dystopian – model is based on a scenario with the price for access to digital media so high that the new library cannot in fact live up to the 'universal access' model at all, which libraries have been striving for worldwide for decades. A development towards such a situation will probably involve a further widening of the digital divide and consequently further social tension.

But the library must also take into account the cultural slide that has taken place – and create a new interaction with the users.

In professional library literature you will find an endless number of articles on this development pointing to a more user-oriented role for libraries. Statements on moving from collection to connection focus are endless, from product to user-orientation likewise. Also statements on moving from a library concept as a book container to a community centre can be seen as typical for the new way of thinking.

Is there a specific Nordic/Scandinavian answer in this worldwide professional discussion? Not in so far as the conditions in the postmodern, globalised society in the Nordic countries are similar to many other countries. But the strong Nordic tradition for welfare societies and the strong tradition for free access to information gives a position in the forefront to experiment with new answers. The Nordic countries have so far in their library policy been guided by a philosophy of democratic enlightenment enabling citizens to develop personally, assimilate new knowledge and take part in a democratic society.

The political awareness in the public library is reflected in government reports and strategies. In Finland the Ministry of Education has a strategy for the public library in the knowledge society 2003-2010 and a development programme for the libraries 2006-2010, with clear focus on development of web services. A national poli-

cy for 2015 and an updating of the library act concerning competence requirements have also been made.

In 2009 a government report was published in Sweden, which points to a more centralized management of the public libraries in order to ensure a harmonization of the development, including digital resources.

In Norway two messages have emerged from parliament in 2009. One calls for a major emphasis on the digitisation of the cultural heritage, and the other speaks about a library which will develop the library's function as a meeting place with reading and cultural activities as well as strengthen library networks and competences.

In Denmark a government report on the public library in the knowledge society has appeared in april 2010.

If we take a look at the Nordic libraries, their professional debate and the many new projects and experiments that take place in this complex reality, we can see the contours of the concept for 'the new library'.

It means first of all that the library's role must change so that it does not take as its point of reference the traditional *raison d'être*: collection and collection building, but is based on the public's needs and an understanding of the problems inherent in the societal agenda for the knowledge society and which the library can be instrumental in solving.

Secondly, the strategy for 'the new library' involves the development of new services in the library. It is a question of interaction between the virtual and the physical library, it is also a question of a different, more interactive, relation to the user and finally it has to do with the facilitation of information access, endeavours for empowerment and for enabling users to benefit being given a central position. New services will require new organisation and changed infrastructure.

Thirdly, it is a question of the library being right where people actually are. On the web, in the home, at work,

in associations and clubs, in kindergartens, schools and all educational institutions. It requires a new way of thinking and working for the librarian.

The present book deals with the three tendencies of change and presents new projects and activities under three headings that reflect these main trends in the development towards the new library.

Three major challenges

The first and basic challenge is to **integrate the library services into the daily lives** of citizens – like public service broadcasting – that in Denmark is being used by 70% of the population every day.

If libraries are to remain attractive as knowledge institutions they must keep in step with competing organisations in service deliveries. Libraries must offer a high quality selection of relevant e-content – journals, e-books, music, films, computer games etc. – on a 24/7 basis. Download should be permitted to relevant platforms: PCs, reader devices like Kindl, Ipods, cell phones. Particularly the younger generations are eager to test new devices and their perception of the library will be dependent on the library's ability to cope with new trends.

The initial part of this book features Nordic development initiatives aimed at this goal. Like for example new web sites for children, special e-services for the blind and dyslexics, as well as a number of initiatives that strive to realise the vision about a virtual library: the possibility of downloading music files, e-books, audio books and films on a 24/7 basis.

The **second challenge is to present new inspiring and enabling services** in the library space as well as on the web. The tremendous success of face book and similar services points to changes in people's lives and behaviour that are basic and lasting.

The second part of this book deals with the challenge of organising programmes in the library, it deals with the

challenge of running smaller libraries versus the metropol library as well as new ways of promoting services, knowledge and culture.

The library space should offer lifelong learning opportunities and cultural and social experiences. The space should be a medium for citizens to meet and take part. The web should boom with various e-learning offers, hotlines and other services. The very strong trend at the moment that users should be involved in an interactive way and be given the opportunity to contribute must be addressed.

From book container to community centre, the English concept of idea stores, the concept of a 'third space' as a necessity for a modern society, the library as an ideal accumulator of social capital – there are many ideas that take us in the direction, where space more or less becomes the medium and is organised to meet many different knowledge and culture related activities. In this way the library could also be a very important 'on-site' scene for democratic involvement, including debates and activities.

How do we get funding and resources for that? An obvious first step to take is to establish self-service automated concepts in all simple transactions in relation to access, lending and returning – and redirect resources to develop competencies in the library staff which will enable them to act as organisers of learning programmes, content promoters, chairing reading clubs and workshops. To do this properly we need a common vision and a basic strategy. A European library policy should provide us with the concept of the 'new public library'.

The **third major challenge is to 'reach out' with an offer that is relevant to the entire population.** Via the web-based services libraries tend to become 'medialised' and compared to broadcasting media and other web-based media have to legitimate their existence by a higher rate of users.

A means to this end is to build on partnerships which will establish contact with present non-users. The partnership strategy could be guided by two principles. The first is to add value to the partner. In the first place you do that by identifying the partner's needs. The second principle is to work systematically with partnerships – and not only dealing with partners by chance. The public library in Aarhus, Denmark, has more than two hundred registered partners. When finding partners you may follow the model of a life cycle – ‘from cradle to grave’, and choose partners related to different segments of the population. By such a step we confront and challenge the idea of the library as a collection of materials accessible for anybody at certain hours. Instead we will be forced to become more proactive in defining specific offers for specific groups and offer the services where people are: on the web, at the jobs, in the clubs etc.

Partners could be health visitor nurses, kindergartens, day-care offers, all kinds of schools and educational institutions, workplaces, trade unions, all kinds of clubs, associations, firms, institutions etc. In a fast changing media-landscape partners might also be broadcasting companies, newspapers and other news providers and services. ‘Crossover’ from one media platform to another is a new important trend, where the library can play a stronger role: You watch a programme on TV, go further into the subject on the web and continue by joining a discussion at the library and by blogging.

Library links and hotline offers should be available on all the most popular web sites related to learning, education, leisure, culture and citizenship.

The third part of the book presents some Nordic examples of how the library can move closer to the users. It is a question both of developing different library concepts for example in disadvantaged residential areas, new ways of running a book mobile, where people's booking of the mobile is the decisive factor, not the timetable. It has to do with the development of a successful concept for the physical library as homework café also becoming a web service. It is about book start programmes where people are visited in their homes, about kindergarten libraries, learning initiatives in the field of sport, about libraries for truckers. And it is a question of marketing and interaction with other partners.

There is still some way to go before ‘the new library’ is fully developed, but the Nordic libraries are marching ahead and with this book present experiences and ideas which we take great pleasure in sharing with the rest of the world.

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DIAGONALE - the Deichman main library interior. Lund Hagem Arkitekter/Atelier Oslo, Norway



2.0 **WEB SERVICES**

CITIZENSHIP IN THE KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY

In Nordic countries, the library has always been part of a strong tradition in popular education. There is no incongruity between this traditional duty and the new online services. The objective is to provide access to diverse collections and to help seek out relevant information, to support personal development and life-long learning, to facilitate contact with different authorities and to provide multicultural meeting places.

Instructing library patrons in the special skills needed for citizenship in a knowledge and information society is an extension of the old popular-education tradition, even if it should be a question of organizing Facebook courses at the library. It is about everyone's right to the knowledge and skills that are necessary for taking part in today's society, and it is about countering marginalization. Instruction in the use of the Internet and databases and promotion of information literacy is part of the daily work at the library.

The Nordic countries have a well developed and a comprehensive library network, which provides access to online services regardless of place of residence. In Finland, most of the bookmobiles provide Internet connections on their routes in sparsely populated rural areas.

Virtual libraries and web portals provide a wide range of services; important also because they are mostly domestic services in the vast

flow of Anglo-American web content. The library staff develops their expertise through continuous training. The everlasting image of the book-library has definitely diversified, although promotion of books and reading is an essential aspect of library activities and also a visible part of virtual library services. There are numerous literary portals and literary sites.

Finland's libraries.fi is a diverse, constantly growing service in Finnish, Swedish and English. It contains information and statistics about all of the public libraries, a diversity of library information for both library users and librarians, the 'Ask a Librarian' service, the 'Search Find Locate' and much more. Libraries.fi hosts the Web 2.0-based web-pages for youth and the literature portal.

Web pages for children are now being planned in association with the large media education project of the Ministry of Education and Culture. The pages will include links to the children's pages of the libraries and separate pages for media education, some of which are targeted toward the children themselves and some of which are targeted toward adults, with a special section for teachers as well.

Access to the digital heritage is an important part of online services. National digital libraries are by extension part of Europeana, the European digital library, but they also have great importance on a national level. It is not merely about the citizens' access to their own and to the shared European cultural heritage, but it is also about intensified cooperation between archives, libraries and museums. The only result possible is better opportunities for all partners to develop and expand their service.

The Nordic libraries are avidly used, even if book loans and library visits show an inclination toward decline. The reduced number of library visits should not come as a surprise to anyone after years of deliberate development of online services. Regarding the reduction in book loans, the library has many competitors. New media, the social web and digital TV's expansive selection of channels occupy more and more of people's free time. Facts are first and foremost googled, not always with too much care about verifying the reliability of the information.



The Internet bookmobile of Tampere City Library, Finland

In times of economic crisis, however, the book loan curve usually swings upward. Libraries are now reporting rising numbers in loans, especially for fiction.

The development of online services is essential for libraries in order to be visible and to provide up-to-date services. Web 2.0 and Wiki-thinking inspire the development of more and more diverse online services. At the same time, it is important to remember the library's traditional duty, the reason that library operations are sup-

ported by the state and the community. Libraries stand for professional expertise and quality in collections and services, regardless of format. People have to be able to trust the library.

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Drammen Library, Norway. Photo: Torbjørn Tandberg

NORDIC 2.0 INITIATIVES

A SNAPSHOT IN AUTUMN 2009

It is a pretty near impossible task to attempt an all encompassing picture of how Nordic public libraries work with different types of social networking tools, or how libraries use traditional web solutions together with web 2.0 applications.

Something that is red-hot one year can be technically dated and old half a year later. Continual upgrades, adjustments and improvements are the norm. A telling metaphor for web 2.0 is that it is 'in permanent beta' and this is certainly true of library 2.0. Products on show at exhibitions or featured in marketing material do not always reflect final release versions.

So, with these reservations I will try to present a picture of the current situation in the Nordic Countries – starting with Sweden as it is the country I am most familiar with. Generally speaking, Integrated Library Systems – which are mainly what we are considering here – include CMS software for publishing web content and an automated library system with modules for cataloguing and circulation. The basic system can be augmented with additional functions and applications designed to promote social networking with and for library patrons.

CS Library from Teknikhuset

The first and so far most successful library 2.0 product is CS Library developed by Teknikhuset AB. To date (Autumn 2009), 26 municipal libraries in Sweden have chosen CS Library or plan to in the near future. Teknikhuset is responsible for the development and maintenance of the web publishing application Content Studio which also incorporates open source components making it possible for

libraries to modify content according to local need. CS Library has been available for five years and is currently in its third version. Besides traditional web content such as contact information, hours of opening, etc., there is an ambition to create web sites that integrate social net-working functions with the library catalogue.

Visitors to such sites are given the opportunity to create a personal page where he or she can contribute their own reviews of books and other library materials. The idea being that the library site can function as a social meeting place for virtual conversations about reading and reading experiences and even be published as RSS feeds.

Searching the library catalogue can result in the creation of favourite lists or lists of new acquisitions based on personal preferences. Users will have access to language tools and catalogue searches will be able to be saved. If a search is unsuccessful, advanced search functions provide further help.

One of the main advantages of CS Library is the open interface OLA or Open Library Access. OLA allows a library's web publishing service to be independent of the library's automated system. This makes it possible for a group of libraries, which might have different automated systems, to share the same web site. There is also an ambition to promote the use of open source Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) that allow the development of social networks and mashups and ensure their compatibility with library systems.

The flagship among Teknikhusets CS Library reference libraries is the website minabibliotek.se (mylibraries.se), which was given the prestigious United Nations Public Service Award in 2008 – an award for the best innovations within the public service sector. The year before My Library had already received the European Public Sector Award in the category Collaborative Governance. The My Library site is the result of a collaborative project between six municipal libraries in the Västerbotten County in the north of Sweden. The project is led by the Municipality of Umeå. The website, which was launched 2007, has around 60,000 hits per month (Autumn 2009). Site development and maintenance is carried out by a full-time webmaster assisted by three part-time assistants and local web groups at the other libraries. In true collaborative spirit all library personnel are expected to contribute content to the website.

Other web sites using CS Library are the Stockholm City Library with their portal Biblioteket.se, (TheLibrary.se), and the V8-libraries, a collaborative project between eight municipal libraries in the inland region of the County of Västerbotten. Teknikhuset and The Mölndal City Librarys have discussed integrating Mölndal's acclaimed subject catalogue with CS Library and perhaps even making it accessible for other libraries using the product. Teknikhuset has together with TPB (The Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille) recently been commissioned to create a new CS Library web site focusing on literature for persons with print disabilities. The CS-Library concept is to be established in Finland during 2010.

Axiell Arena

Axiell is Sweden's largest supplier of automated library systems (Book It, Libra.se) and they too have a Web 2.0 solution based on open source code: Axiell Arena. At this point, Spring 2010, roughly 60 libraries – mainly municipal – have signed a contract with Axiell to use Arena as a platform to enable communication with and between library patrons. As with CS Library, Axiell Arena defines itself as a platform designed to complement the physical library with a virtual library. That the library catalogue is fully integrated with Arena is both a strength and a weakness. Advantageous if the library already uses one of Axiell's automated systems. On the other hand there are probably no other automated systems that work together with Arena.

Arena, like CS Library, allows the library to invite virtual visitors to participate and interact, and to be inspired by reviews, user-generated ratings and tags. Arena is collaborative within the Axiell Arena library family; tags, user-generated ratings and reviews are pooled resources for Arena libraries. Information is centrally stored and automatically accessible to participating libraries. Arena is built around open standards and open source code and can be installed as a framework for library applications which can either be used as the library's sole web portal or be integrated as a complement to an existing municipal web portal.

According to the product information the current version of Arena (1.0) features smart searching. If a search does not return any results help can be gotten from suggestions about similar titles or alternative spelling. There is an extended search result function with user-generated ratings and book covers sorted according to relevance, author, title or year of publication. Searches can also be converted to RSS feeds. It is possible to add and show tags, reviews and user-generated ratings. There are a number of interesting modules that can be integrated within Arena such as AXL web links portal, Axiell BookDesire, Axiell Karta 2.0 and on-line payment of fines and charges. As well, Arena's catalogue has a number of special features of the kind one expects in a modern OPAC.

Planned for the next version are book lists based on topical interests, an option to see which other books were borrowed by patrons who borrowed the book in question, an option to create book clubs with other readers and 'My Own Library': a function similar to the web application Library Thing. There is a clear ambition to position Arena as an interactive product where the library's virtual room has a social function just as important as the physical library.

Among libraries using Axiell Arena are the Norrköping City Library and The Lerum Library. Oxelösund, a municipality with a population around 11,000 inhabitants has recently (Spring 2010) launched a new web site, Koordinaten, built using Arena; a good example of how Arena works even in smaller municipalities with limited resources.

In the summer of 2009 Axiell announced that they had entered a collaborative agreement with the media company FörlagEtt. The collaboration meant that FörlagEtt's media jukebox (Mediejukeboxen) – A free standing device similar to a jukebox and housing a down-loading service with digital files (music, films, language courses, etc.) was adapted for use in Arena libraries. Axiell have also joined forces with Öppna Bibliotek, The Open Library. The Open Library is a database for book tips

and reviews, user-generated ratings, tags and other information. Libraries no longer need to produce all their own book and film tips. The ratings, reviews and tags created by users on different library web sites are accessible and visible in other Swedish libraries.

Regional Initiatives

Parallel with commercial interests – and sometimes in partnership with them – some Swedish county libraries have developed shared library web portals. In some cases library computer systems and library catalogues are more or less integrated with other applications. An example already referred to is the collaboration between V8 libraries in the County of Västerbotten where the county library has functioned as coordinator.

In 2007 a collaborative project in the County of Östergötland resulted in the creation of a shared library portal for municipal libraries in the county – Östgöta Libraries. Östgöta Libraries is built with Edge software supplied by local web production company, Teknomedia. Municipal libraries in the county and the Östergötland County Library are responsible for the project. Initially a shared library catalogue was not part of the project. Instead there was a meta search function which allowed parallel searching in several databases. Similar solutions were adopted in other parts of Sweden, e.g. larger library systems in central Sweden with their service Katalogsök MellanSverige (Central Swedish Catalogue Search).

In November 2008 library directors in the County of Östergötland decided to create a shared library computer system for the entire county. Politicians responsible for library policy and the Östsam Regional Development Council supported the decision. The project started in the spring of 2009 and is expected to be completed 2010. A similar project has been initiated by the Värmland County Library with the web portal Library Värmland, a portal giving access to the collected library resources in the county.

Nine municipal libraries in the Gävleborg County have, for the past few years, used a shared library catalogue based on Axiell's Book IT automated library system. The

joint effort is called HelGe-Library and incorporates practical cooperation on questions such as inter-urban loans, inter-communal transport and now even includes a library membership card valid in all of the participating municipalities. Parallel with this the Gävleborg County Library started a web portal called Webb biblioteket, The Web Library using the web/blog publishing tool Wordpress. The Web Library provides a shared portal for access to the municipal libraries' different web services.

Libraries in the northernmost County of Norrbotten are also working together, the result being the web portal Biblio.se which is built using Joomla, an open source content management system. Iphone users can get reading suggestions from Biblio directly in their phone.

Other Interesting Nordic Library 2.0 Initiatives

Norway

The PODE-project looks at new ways of using mash applications and metadata found in library catalogues. There are two main working models: 'The trip planner' which links travel guides in the library catalogue with place names from Geonames, Google Maps, weather information from the Norwegian weather service Yr and book covers from the Bokkilden bookshop and the Open Library.

The idea behind the music mash is to connect the music catalogue with recommendations based on similar artists and albums based on functionality taken from the LastFM music community. The catalogue records are also enhanced with facts and illustrations relating to the artists.

The Library Laboratory – BibLab is a collaborative project between ABM-utvikling (The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority) and the Oslo University College. BibLab is designed to be an active communications and developmental platform for those interested in the development of library data and social technology. BibLab has started a wiki to communicate and exchange ideas. A Norwegian version of the Open Library is due to be installed during 2010.



Rauma House of Culture, Norway
Photo: Thomas Dahle

Libriotech is a commercial company started by librarian Magnus Enger to market open source applications for libraries with the main focus being on the automated library system Koha.

Reaktor is a web portal started in 2010. This free web service is aimed at all those interested in film, photo, animation, music, comics, writing and drawing. Anyone can become a member and upload their own work, discuss other members' work and find new friends with the same interests. Reaktor was initiated by the Deichmanske Bibliotek (The Oslo Public Library) and the Trondheim Public Library and is collaboratively managed with Culturenet.no (The Norwegian cultural portal initiated and financed by the Ministry of Culture and Church affairs) with support from ABM-utvikling.

Denmark

One of the most exciting Nordic projects relating to web-based solutions for libraries is the Danish project Ting. The municipal libraries in Copenhagen and Århus have started a cooperative project with the Danish Bibliographic Centre (DBC) to create a common universal platform for the future information needs of Danish libraries. The goal is to give libraries free access to all jointly owned information sources. The resource will be continuously updated with data resulting from interaction with patrons. This information will then be made accessible to libraries and other participants through open APIs allowing dissemination of information irrespective of interface, platform or type of material. Ting is built using the CMS tool Drupal. Århus and Copenhagen launched their new Ting-based web sites in March 2010. Around the same time a new library web portal for children was launched, Pallesgavebod (Palle's Gift Shop), even that site being built with the help of Ting.

Free is good

The dominant trend just now is social networking; more specifically, blogs, Twitter, Facebook not least of which are tools for open source codes which can support functions for social and mobile webs.

Many library strategists are interested in the development of free library computer systems in the Nordic market. Koha is considered a possible option in Norway and this has inspired the Halland County Library to conduct a test project with Koha. Municipal libraries in Norbotten are interested in testing the open source library software Evergreen.

A future scenario might be the development of APIs that connect library catalogues to social webs and even encompass similar applications for mobile phones. It is obvious that such developments will be closely followed by suppliers of library solutions and products as well as those organisations responsible for library development on a national level.

Another trend is the tendency to see the library's presence on the social webs as part of their marketing activities instead of as branch libraries. It is characteristic that many of the libraries actively working with integrated library systems also create a presence for themselves on social networking sites such as Facebook. This is a result of actively embracing integrated library systems which, in turn, increases knowledge about how social networking functions.

This is a new experience and traditional library web sites just are not the answer. Libraries have to be where people get together virtually.

Public libraries are there where people work together to build knowledge. Evidence of this can be seen in Helsingør Denmark, where they use a wiki, Helsingør Leksikon. Here, the library is a partner as are the local folklore society, genealogists, and an interested public in presenting local history.

Openly contributing to a common knowledge base is going to be more important than a monopoly on knowledge. It is a sign of the times when leading encyclopedias such as The Great Danish Encyclopedia and the Great Norwegian Encyclopedia are made available to the public free of charge.

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DIGITALFORTALT.NO

CULTURAL MEMORABILIA ON THE INTERNET

Do you have a story you would like to share with others? Do you know of any cultural material or traditions with an unusual history? A place, an object, a local custom, some strange phenomenon or even something completely everyday which might be of interest to others?

'Digitalt fortalt' ('DigiTales') is an Internet website intended to create and to share interesting and untraditional tales about material and immaterial cultural memorabilia. In order to stimulate interest and involvement in the various aspects of our cultural history, the government designated 2009 as the Norwegian Year of Cultural Heritage. 'Digitalt fortalt' is an initiative launched in this connection by the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs together with the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority, although the project is going to be continued and further developed in the years to come. The aim is for the website to become a resource for the production and distribution of stories relating to cultural memorabilia throughout the country, while at the same time interacting with other digital services in the archive, library and museum sectors. 'Digitalt fortalt' is also closely connected to 'Kulturnett Norge', Norway's official portal for culture on the Internet.

The mandate of the Authority is to strengthen archives, libraries and museums as active and relevant institutions in the community. Transparency, accessibility and user perspective are key considerations. Employing modern technology in this way to encourage new voices as mediators and interpreters will open the door

to fresh views on our cultural memorabilia and heritage. The website also plays a role in raising the level of expertise throughout archives, libraries and museums in the constructive use of the Internet, digital tools and social media.

Open to all

Sharing, interaction and user-generated content are the central features of 'Digitalt fortalt'. The website is open to all and no form of approval is required before posting an entry. One can just go ahead and publish or comment and rank other people's contributions. There are links to sources and other websites, such as personal homepages and various net-based resources. Access to the stories can be gained via an institution, an author, geography, a subject title or a category such as 'most viewed' or 'most popular'. The site is simple to operate and the information easy to use and tailored to local needs.

The stories are located and labelled with metadata such as county, municipality, institution, author, subject title and category. The labelling makes the stories traceable and easy to link with each other. With the aid of RSS, Really Simple Syndication, one can use the metadata to select and subscribe to stories from any particular institution, municipality or favourite subject. Content is automatically updated every time something new is published and the site also preserves the digital content.

What is a digital story?

In the context of the website a digital story can consist of a text with illustrations, a video, a sound file, animations, photographs or a net presentation. The stories can be based on a variety of sources, not only written or oral but also inspired by objects or personal experiences. They should have a personal narrative voice, be short and to the point.

Project organisation

Within the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority a group covering a range of disciplines works with 'Digitalt fortalt'. A central aim is to use the initiative actively towards raising the level of expertise not only in the digital field but also with regard to dissemination in general. There is close cooperation with regional cultural networks and each county has a contact person responsible for assisting local bodies in the use of the website. Throughout 2009 the Authority has collaborated with the regio-

nal cultural networks to run courses in digital story-telling in all the counties. Target groups have included archives, libraries, museums, local history associations and others interested in various aspects of our cultural heritage. County contacts established in connection with the 2009 Norwegian Year of Cultural Heritage are also vital partners in the development and improvement of the service, not least as ambassadors to spread the good news.

In 2009 the Authority gave support to a number of projects aiming to use 'Digitalt fortalt' as a channel for dissemination. Cooperation was also established with several organisations, such as the Genealogy Society of Norway, the Norwegian Museum Association and the Norwegian Institute of Local History. An initiative has also been taken to establish Nordic collaboration between 'Digitalt fortalt' and the projects 'PlatsR' and '1001 fortællinger' in Sweden and Denmark respectively. Cooperation of this kind can be a source of inspiration, learning and a sharing of knowledge between countries.

Status

The Minister of Culture and Church Affairs launched the project at the opening of the 2009 Norwegian Year of Cultural Heritage with his digital story *Only that which is taped lasts forever* (a pun on a well-known quotation from Henrik Ibsen's *Brand*). Since then 1194 stories have been published (as of 7 Jan. 2010) and the number posted on the site increases from day to day. Our target of 1000 stories by the end of the year is surpassed by a good margin. Most of the stories come from archives, libraries and museums, but very many private persons have also contributed. One of the most popular stories is the tale of the ski jumper Johanne Kolstad (1913-1997), today an unknown and forgotten sports-woman. The story tells of broken barriers, sporting triumphs and personal tragedy. The text, written by her grandchild, is a personal, biographical portrait. The presentation consists of photographs, text and a video and its appeal can be demonstrated by the very many comments it has provoked. It also provides a good descrip-

tion of the life and roles of women at that time and is still topical today with regard to the question of whether or not women should take part in ski jumping. This story is personal, fascinating and relevant.

Other stories posted on the site range from purely personal histories to more academic reflections or descriptions of cultural memorabilia. From a video about graffiti in Sandefjord to an article about *Laterna Magica* in the county of Sogn og Fjordane. From the Drammen Library's praise of the Norwegian computer game 'Pyton' to the Trøndelag Folk Museum's dramatisation of an alleged rape in 1888 of a 14-year-old girl in a Trondheim pharmacy. The variations are wide and many with regard to themes, form and content.

What can we deduce from user statistics?

In the period from 19th March to 17th December 2009 the website had 83,463 hits, 46,337 of which were from individual users. They have viewed 408,206 pages and have spent an average of 4 minutes each time. The number of users has gradually increased and now stands at an average of 400 daily. The majority of these enter the website via the regional pages, which would indicate that local affinity is an important factor with regard to visitors, use and the production of content.

Where the regional cultural networks have been active, holding courses and promoting the website at various arrangements and in the local media, both the visits to the site and the contributions posted have reached a high level. One county, Møre og Romsdal, is in a class of its own with no less than 209 published stories. In this county the museums in particular have made active use of the website as a channel for the publication of material relating to sources and cultural objects which would otherwise be inaccessible. Museums also incorporate stories from 'Digitalt fortalt' on their own home pages and in their presentations to the public.

Testing, sharing and democratisation

Our objective is for 'Digitalt fortalt' to develop further into both a channel and a platform of competence for



An untraditional digital position in Vejle Library, Denmark Photo: Anders Brohus

all institutions in the archive, library and museum sectors. The aim of this initiative is to ensure that digital stories and the use of social technology can become a natural and integral part of work in these sectors, so as to raise the whole process of dissemination into an interactive digital world. We believe that the use of new technology and digital tools will help to open up these institutions, introducing new perspectives and voices to the field of cultural heritage. Priority has long been

given to the tasks of documentation and registration. Now the time has come to bring this material to life on social websites.

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PARTICIPATION, DIALOGUE AND NEW UNIVERSES

LIBRARY SERVICE TO CHILDREN ON THE NET

The competition for capturing children's attention is getting tougher all the time as new types of media emerge. Danish public libraries have accepted the challenge and together with Copenhagen Bombay (Animation, Film, TV, Crossmedia Production company) and the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media they are now creating a national children's library site which is to promote a wide range of materials and exploit the net as social medium.

The Danish report on future library service to children (2008) presents ten suggestions as to how the libraries can develop their offers to children so as to match children's every-day lives, their media interests and other cultural needs.

One recommendation is for the libraries to develop their net services and consider them in the context of the libraries' collective offers on the net. The aim is to provide children with special experiences on the net and contribute to the development of their multi-modal competences. These competences include the ability to create, interpret and exchange complex patterns of words, images and sounds which to a great extent are disseminated via media technologies. The method for creating better web-based library service to children is to increase the use of social technologies and dialogue-based elements that attract many children and engage their capabilities and their curiosity.

Several libraries in Denmark are already working with these elements in their web-mediation to children, for example through the popular service Ask Olivia (www.spoergolivia.dk) where children can ask any question under the sun and also answer each other's questions. The site is run by a network of committed librarians throughout the country. A handful of libraries have established exclusive communities on the net for children with a particular interest in fantasy (denhemmeligeloge.dk) just as there are children's sites with reading and writing tips from user to user (boggnasker.dk).

So the libraries are well aware that their web-based offers to children have to be mediated in a way that speaks directly to them and are based on user-generated content as well as children's interest in sharing their knowledge and interests.

More than just a display window

The target group for the libraries' new children's site is children between 8 and 12, the so-called tweens. Based on a humorous and interactive universe the site will highlight the libraries' materials and competences and stimulate children to become users. At the same time the site must create a framework where children can communicate with the library staff.

Development of the platform for the new children's web site and the running of it are in 2009 and 2010 financed by means from the Coordination Group for Net Libraries. This financial support includes development of the technical and editorial platform, access to the site for children in all municipalities as well as a start package with materials that support the web site's universe and the activities that will unfold on the site.

The site will focus on experiences rather than learning, a universe that presents books, films, music, games, mobile features, web sites and events in the physical library on equal terms. The universe will also include cartoons, smaller games, and music videos produced by Copenhagen Bombay. Apart from this, there will be a number of themes that bring materials together in new and surprising contexts. The themes for the site's first year are: Agents, Records, Below Ground, Humour, Nerd, Fright and The Other World. The site launch is scheduled for spring 2010.

If the children's site is to be a success it is absolute vital that children's library staff engage themselves in delivering content via a theme- or subject editorial commitment. It may be in the shape of book- and games reviews and tagging of material. Just as important is for the children's librarians to engineer dynamism on the site by starting new time-limited fora themselves and chats on topical subjects. The site invites to personal and straightforward mediation. It is therefore quite obvious for children's librarians as well as children to write reviews, comment on each other's contributions and altogether communicate online.

A basic premise for the site is that the web activities are connected to activities in the physical library spaces round about the country. Children's use of cultural products moves across platforms. Whether stories or universes are to be found on the net, in books, in films or in the three-dimensional space is basically uninteresting for this generation of media and technology-competent children, and they must therefore be made aware that there is continuity and recognition in the library's offers. When the theme of the month is Agents on the site, there will also be Agent quizzes, Agent authors and other Agent arrangements at their local library.

Experiences with children's media usage across platforms make it rather obvious for Danish Radio's new television channel for children to broadcast daily from Aalborg Public Library. The programme will be based on the library's activities for and with children, including the theme activities that originate from the children's site.

The interaction between the children's site, the activities at the libraries and the new television channel for children requires a great degree of coordination, but at the same time it opens up for synergy effects and a massive exchange of ideas. The common goal for the many participating municipal library systems, the state represented by the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media, the commercial partner Copenhagen Bombay and the public service Danish Radio is a better, funnier

and more coherent library- and cultural offer to children. It is to a great extent the children's site that must connect the diverse strands and there are high hopes for this national development project.

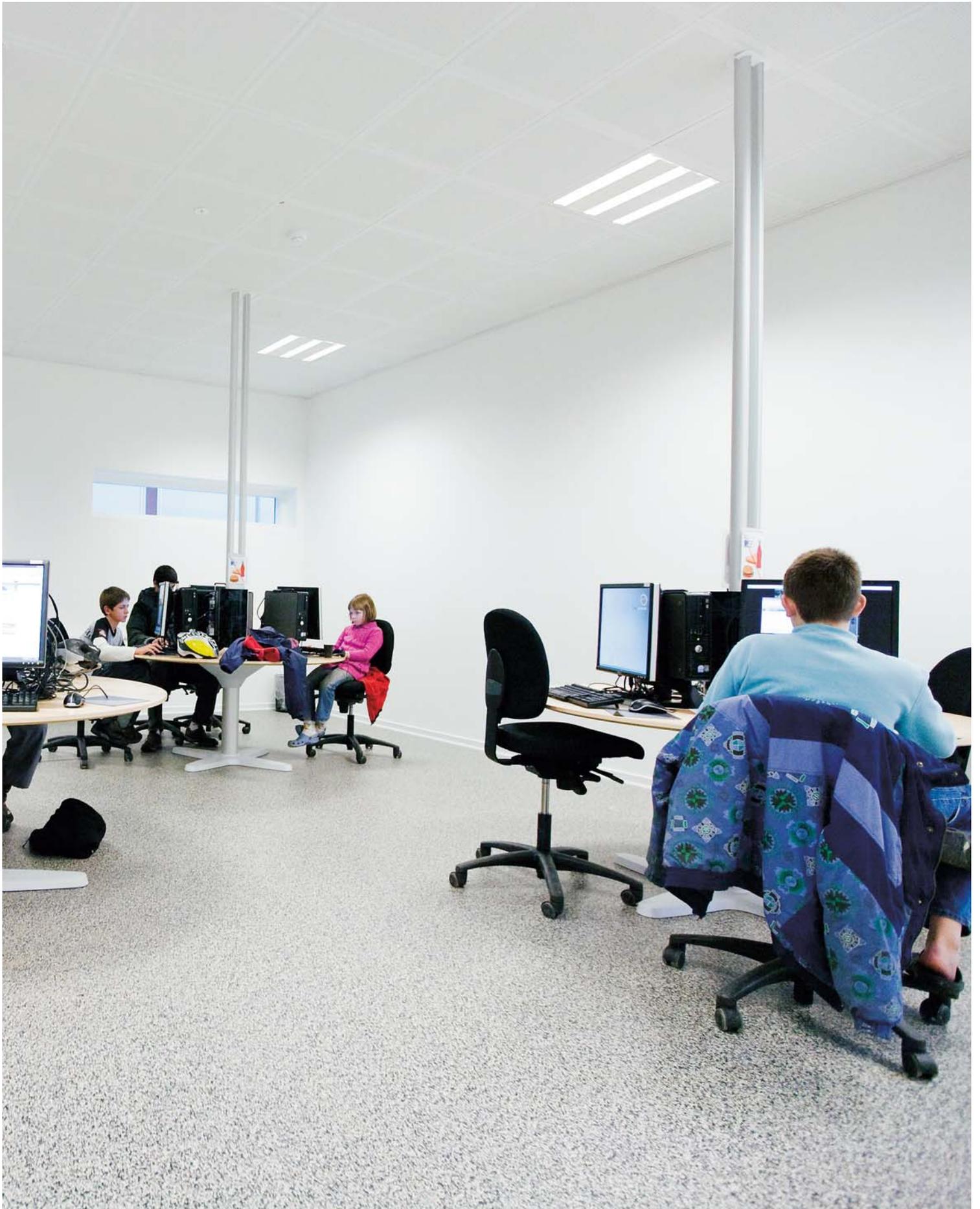
Skrivebua – a glance at Norway

The Danish libraries' new children's site is very much built on children's desire to participate in the activities on the net and create content themselves. User-generated content is also a keyword when it comes to Skrivebua.no, which is a Norwegian writing space for young people between 10 and 20. The site receives funding from the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority and is run by Nordland County Library.

The site is an example of a successful digital project, based on the users publishing their own texts across literary genres. Children and young people who are keen on writing, do not have to write just for the desk drawer, but can present their texts and get a quick response online. During the period 2004-2008 more than 500,000 texts were published. The keen activity on the site shows that this is a popular arena, where children and young people get in touch with like-minded budding authors as well as professional writers. Like on the new Danish children's site a mixture of themes are introduced. On Skrivebua the themes provide fuel and inspiration for creative writing. The web-site is available both in Norwegian and in the Sami language.

Challenges in the collaboration

In connection with the establishment of the Danish libraries' new children's site various challenges spring to mind. First of all, it is important that as many as possible of the country's 97 library systems provide content for the site and do not act as free riders, who enjoy the benefit of the common product, but do not themselves spend staff hours on developing the site. In this context library directors have a special responsibility for setting aside personnel resources for the work in connection with the site and helping to keep the energy level at a peak.



Internetpoint for tweens. Skive Library, Denmark
Photo: Tobias Toyberg

An inter-municipal collaboration has previously been operating in connection with another type of children's library site with children throughout the country as target group. This site, too, required allocation of resources at the individual library. The Danish Agency for Libraries and Media has conducted a dialogue with the libraries as to whether these local resources should be maintained within the framework of the children's library and be used in future work with the new children's site.

The commercial company, Copenhagen Bombay, has been chosen as cooperation partner due to its strong creative profile and ability to create unusual and surprising universes for children. The company has always placed great emphasis on its artistic integrity – an integrity that is challenged in the collaboration with the libraries. It is not enough that Copenhagen Bombay is 100% behind the children's site and its mediation strategy, the libraries and library staff's feeling of ownership is essential, for it is they who are the primary mediators of the site in the sitting room and have to use it as driver for a large part of their mediation in the physical library space.

There has in fact been a heated debate between some libraries and Copenhagen Bombay about the name of the site. It is agreed that the name must be idiomatic and have 'clout'. It should not signal 'here is something for children' or 'children's library' – that would alienate rather than attract the 8-12-year olds. How far can one go in this naming of the site – and how closely should the name reflect children's own free and at times boundary-pushing terminology?

This is a discussion characteristic of the challenges that present themselves in a partnership between a private company in the creative line and a municipal library sector, which cannot renounce a concrete, political reality where support for new, resource-demanding initiatives is an absolute must.

The naming process has resulted in www.pallesgavebod.dk (Palle's gift shop – a Danish figure of speech for everything being free of charge). The name is suitable for the building of a narrative and at the same time an

ironic comment on the point that the Danish children's libraries with this site offer an enormous amount of experiences – for free.

New dynamism between state and municipalities

The children's site is based on close cooperation between Copenhagen Bombay and the municipalities, but the state, represented by the national authority, Danish Agency for Libraries and Media, also has a large stake in the collaboration. The Agency has been the prime mover in relation to formulating tender material and negotiating with Copenhagen Bombay on editorial, technical, copyright and legal elements in the contract and at the same time communicating with the library sector on expectations and requirements in connection with the new site. The dialogue is and will continue to be time-consuming, but it also emphasizes the picture of a more open and closer form of cooperation between state and municipality.

This tendency can be observed, too, as a recurring feature in the inter-ministerial Network for Children and Culture's two-year-old collaboration with 14 model municipalities. The experiment with model municipalities is a method-development project that puts focus on an upgrading of the work with children and culture – an upgrading which is also meant to benefit other municipalities. As a government authority Network for Children and Culture has a specific task here in offering consultancy to the municipalities, collecting knowledge and facilitating networks within the field of children's culture in Denmark.

Two other examples within the Danish cultural sector is the Danish Arts Council that wishes to support the local art-political initiative and currently discusses the need for an underpinning of the efforts within this area with the municipalities, and the Heritage Agency of Denmark's cooperation with selected cultural heritage municipalities, which explores the possibilities for letting the cultural heritage be a dynamo in local development.

The libraries' new children's site differs from the other initiatives in that a private company is also involved, and the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media does therefore not only have to conduct a dialogue with the municipalities, but also facilitate the dialogue between the municipalities and Copenhagen Bombay. A notable challenge for all parties involved is to keep up the spirit throughout this long procedure from project maturing, prequalification and contract negotiation to development, implementation and operation. One motivating factor is that work with the site is fundamentally creative and experimental. Another is that this site has the potential for indicating completely new standards of quality for the promotion of children's culture on the net within a public framework and at the same time widening the frames for library service to children.

- www.pallegavebod.dk
- www.bibliotekogmedier.dk
- www.skrivebua.no

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Translated by Vibeke Cranfield



Two boys studying Palles Giftshop, Denmark

LIBRARIES.FI

Libraries.fi was established in 1995 as a shared website and library directory for Finland's public libraries. Over the years, something that began as a simple website has developed into an extensive national Internet service, which, in addition to the parent portal, consists of many different services.

Meanwhile, the emphasis in Finnish libraries' Internet service production has shifted from local projects to broad, national services and joint projects. At the same time, the general development of the Internet, changes in the users' modus operandi and in the structures of communication create great challenges in the competitiveness of entire library institutions.

Libraries.fi services

Libraries.fi is a comprehensive library and information search service available to everyone. It is a channel to all library services and it includes information search services, professional services in the library field and Internet services for literature, music, children and youth, among other things. In 2008, the number of visitors was about 2,007,500.

Production organization

The Networked Library Services Unit of the Central Library for Public Libraries, along with other libraries and the Libraries.fi publishing office, produce the Libraries.fi services in the Helsinki City Library. At present, in 2009, the unit has an editor-in-chief and 10.5 designers. The National Library of Finland, the Finnish Library Journal, the Bookmobile Team, the Finnish Library Music Association and the

National Repository Library are all involved in the production of Libraries.fi. The Kirjasampo.fi project also has designers at the Turku City Library. Information technology is acquired from several different sources. The Ministry of Education and Culture has commissioned the services and funds production with annual grants. A steering committee comprising representatives from the Ministry and all library sectors functions as a production council.

The development and financing strategy of the Ministry and the Central Library for Public Libraries, in accordance with the Library Act and regulation, and the National Library of Finland together produce national Internet services for libraries. Work distribution between these national participants is especially clear and they work closely together. The Central Library for Public Libraries produces the services for Libraries.fi, and the National Library of Finland is responsible for the foundation of essential information management, i.e. the National Bibliography of Finland, common catalogues, the National Digital Library of Finland, the Finnish General Thesaurus and Finnish General Upper Ontology, the acquisition of licensed material search engine services, and for national digitisation. This model ensures that the benefits of public libraries and their patrons are taken into consideration in developing the services and that there are different alternatives available to use in the development work. On the other hand, the boundary is no longer as clear because Libraries.fi has transformed from a public-library website to a comprehensive service that serves all sectors of the library; for example, the National Digital Library of Finland will become a shared, central search service for all types of organizations that store information.

Objectives

Libraries.fi services have from the outset sought to support the activities of the library institution, increase accessibility and awareness of library services, support a national information management and to promote the functionality of the national library network. In a way, Libraries.fi is carrying out the library's traditional task of educating the public in the context of the cyber world. In the Internet world, Libraries.fi is closely associated with the idea of free access and distribution of knowledge and the outcomes of development work, i.e. open access, open data, open source and Web 2.0.

The central development objectives and success factors of Libraries.fi are based on demand and flexibility, and on cooperation with the library community. The decentralized maintenance is based on this voluntary cooperation. The content is open, free-of-charge and portable. Standardized methods of description (classification, thesauri, ontologies) are used. The network-type production organization is structurally light. There is cooperation with all library sectors and networking also outside of the library sector. The modular IT architecture can be adapted to needs, as it is not system-oriented. Libraries are provided with centrally maintained, free technology that has browser-based user interfaces.

The acquired experience has demonstrated that Libraries.fi has proven to be an easily approachable gateway to the world of libraries for patrons and libraries. According to studies, Libraries.fi is a relatively well-known Internet service, but not well enough known. The libraries' experiences participating in the content production of shared services and development have been positive.

Challenges

Right now, the central challenges for development are the requirements specifically of Web 2.0 and 3.0. Perhaps the greatest change compared to previous goals is that the aim is no longer merely to get the greatest visitor volume possible to use Libraries.fi, but to try to provide each library's information contents openly to users and for the use of other services and to bring services closer to the users using popular communal online services.

We are trying to increase Libraries.fi's visibility on the Internet, visitor volume, attractiveness and influence by:

- Structural change: the contents and services of the parent portal are being condensed and transferred to separate services. This way, we can build better servicespecific user interfaces and make them into more easily marketable brands. The homepage of the parent portal will have a more up-to-date display window for the contents of different services. We will shift to a more transaction-focused way of offering services.

| Map of libraries.fi | | | | |
|--|---|---|----------------------------------|--|
| Ask & search | Marketing & connections | Literature | Music | Pro |
| Ask a librarian & semantic archive + chat | Library database | Kirjasampo.fi - site of fiction, semantic web 2.0 based catalog of fiction (2010-11) | Fono.fi - record database | Forum, blogs, current awareness, inter-library reference desk a.o. services for pros |
| | New library database (2011) | | Music libraries and databases | |
| Frank Metasearch - for searching from all catalogs | Kirjastokaista.fi - web tv and radio | Okariino.fi - for children (2011) | New music site and search (2011) | Labs.kirjastot.fi |
| | | | | Mediaeducation (2010) |
| Semantic Search, Find and Locate | Web version of Finnish Library Journal (2011) | Sivupiiri.fi - fiction for Teenagers | | Public Library Statistics |
| Link Library | lfla2012.fi | | | Statistics of web services of public libraries |
| New semantic link directory (2011) | Finnish library architecture (2010) | | | LibraryWiki |
| | ikirjasto.fi | | | Public Libraries Classification System |
| | | | | Thesaurus and ontology of fiction |
| | | | | Project management |

- Integration into a whole entity: individual services will be integrated into a whole using visual elements, ontologies, widgets and searches. Furthermore, common functions, such as 'Ask a Librarian' and Frank Metasearch as a positioning service will be added to the services.
- Improvement in better observing the requirements of the Web 2.0 and 3.0 environments by increasing the input of the user community and the effectiveness of personalized functions.
- Building new services primarily using open source code technology. This will achieve cost benefits and continuity for development work and will enable us to take advantage of the generally very progressive work results of the global developer community and also to participate in the developer community activities. Currently in use are Drupal, Django, Mediawiki, Kulttuurisampo technology, Phpmysites/Piwik, Redmine and WordPress.
- Describing contents using ontology, which will enable more semantically advanced searches and browser functions, more intelligent content sharing and portability.
- Adding audio-visual material and game-type elements.
- Supporting the ubiquitous use of services through developing (semantic) cell phone services.
- Investing in marketing, particularly in the branding of individual services, network marketing and visibility in community services and on libraries' web-pages.

Current services

The parent portal will contain libraries' contact information, the 'Ask a Librarian' service and library field professional services and a Music Libraries section. The expansion of the current library database, containing service information about public libraries, is being planned as a service to be used by all library sectors.

Services for library professionals include field-related news and announcements, forums, blogs, journal follow-up, bookmobile pages, KirjastoWiki, public libra-

ries' online services statistics, public libraries' operational statistics, project management, and public libraries classification system. The Music Libraries section includes an Instrument Names Directory, Difficult Music Names and Music Themes databases. Music services also include Fono.fi, produced by Libraries.fi, which is an open search interface to the expansive database of the record library of the national broadcasting company.

The Libraries.fi service most commonly used is the Frank Metasearch, which searches the open collection databases of all Finnish libraries. Frank is an open source code application made by Libraries.fi. A new version of it using a Django platform was released at the end of 2009. The search results of the new Frank will be visible in the user interface of another service.

Perhaps Libraries.fi's most important service is 'Ask a Librarian', which was launched in 1999. The service has provided over 30,000 answers, 4,000-7,000 annually. There are nearly 500 respondents from a respondent society made up of public libraries and specialized libraries.

In 2008, the application was redesigned and analysis of previous answers based on the semantic web was added, among other things. The answer interface enables the easy use of earlier answers and, if necessary, the application can make automatic descriptors and looks for information in other information sources. The inquirer can use natural language phrases to look for previous answers before submitting a question. In addition to answers, the inquirer is provided with relevant links from the Link Library and the opportunity to continue searching other sources using the search engine of the information search port, or the SearchFindLocate. Questions can also be submitted using chat channels.

The SearchFindLocate port is an aided search service primarily for Finnish material. A 20,000-word term index and classification system provides the foundation for searches.



Using net services at Turku Library, Finland. Photo: Jorma Waldén

New services: Internet service for literature: Kirjasampo.fi

The objective is to create a central Internet service for literature in Finland. The foundation of the service is a register of literary works, which specifically supports the requirements for information searches. Literature is described in as many ways as possible and the varied and retrospective content description of literature is done once in one database.

The creation of the literary works registry and the ontology of fiction is a part of the work carried out in the national Semantic Web 2.0 project. The Literary Works Register includes information about more than 30,000 works. Author information from over 3,000 libraries is linked to the Literary Works Register.

Kirjasampo.fi provides libraries with a developed and very versatile literature search service. Retrospective and complementary content description is based on a voluntary cooperation network of library professionals. The community of fiction readers is included in supple-

menting the description information and they are provided with a new way to approach fiction. The beta version of Kirjasampo.fi was opened in 2009.

Library architecture

A Finnish library architecture website in the English language, which will also include other information about Finnish libraries, is being created in cooperation with Kirjastolehti. The service was launched at the end of 2009.

Library channel

Libraries.fi and Täsmätelevisio Oy, together with publishers, are producing a library Internet channel which focuses on libraries and literature. This channel was launched in 2009.

Labs.libraries.fi

Labs is a test environment especially for testing open source code applications in the library field. Book and music searches on the Internet and the usability of

libraries' online applications can be tested in Labs, as well as the improved usage and opening of rich metadata, conceptualization of information in interactive interfaces, the library's role on a semantic Internet, and the relationship to social networking and search services, the physical existence of the library and how it is enriched with the information from the Internet, usage of real-time data as a search aid and searching for book usage information as a basis for recommendations.

Labs functions as part of an international library community and contributes to development projects for open source code software. Labs was launched in summer, 2009.

Online service for children Okariino.fi

Together with libraries, Libraries.fi is creating a shared online service for children, Okariino.fi, for libraries. It is a new kind of Internet library service, a game-type, visual and audio-visual interactive service. The goal of the service is to attract children to library services and to pedagogically support children in learning to read and developing media literacy skills, information search skills and to provide them with interesting related experiences.

The service comprises approximately ten different modules (such as 'Book Carousel', 'In the Author's House', 'Cartoon Generator', 'Who Wants to Be a Scientist?', 'Homework Help' and 'Ask Anything'). We want the children to have an important role in content production and children can, for example, make videos and answer questions. The service is intended for 6-10-year-old children, and it has a separate section for 3-6-year olds. Okariino.fi will be launched in 2010.

Mediaeducation.libraries.fi

This website has media education material, which is useful for library workers, teachers and other educators. The goal of the media education website is to promote

the media literacy and information retrieval skills of children and youth, to support libraries' expertise and position as facilitators in instruction in media education and information retrieval and to create cooperation with the different sectors of media education. One subsection of the media education website is an information package related to games. The service was launched in autumn, 2009.

Link directory

Libraries.fi's current Link Library is being linked to a bigger link directory and a new type of service is arising from this union. The service is based on an ontology and community bookmark services application. The new Link Directory will give rise to an independent service, belonging to Libraries.fi, which will have its own brand.

One important aspect of the Link Directory will be the description of information for the use of other search services, in the same way that the Link Library's contents are now being highlighted in the 'Ask a Librarian' service and in the advanced searches in the Tiedonhaku port. The service will be launched in 2010.

Sivupiiri.fi

Sivupiiri.fi is a genuine community service directed toward youth and young adults that presents the writing of youth. Young people can write about their reading experiences and libraries' book reviewers write book reviews. The beta version was launched at the beginning of 2009. Sivupiiri.fi has enjoyed a particularly enthusiastic reception.

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Translated by Turun Täyskäännös

ELECTRONIC SERVICES ADAPTED TO PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL NEEDS

Nota – National Library for people with reading difficulties – is an institution under the Danish Ministry of Culture. Nota's vision is to provide equal access to knowledge for everybody. Nota's users are the blind, dyslexics and others with a documented handicap that means that they cannot read ordinary printed text. From Nota one can order audio books, e-books, books in Braille as well as journals and get easy – and free – access to knowledge and entertainment.

§17

§17 in the Danish Copyright Act allows Nota to choose any publication and transform it into an alternative medium – for example an audio book, e-book or book in Braille. Nota is then free to spread these files to its registered users. In the case of sound editions of these publications, Nota has to pay royalty to authors and possible translators. All other publications are free of charge for Nota to produce and distribute. Royalty on sound is a fixed amount per recorded minute, which is an obligatory license that is currently agreed between Nota and the two Danish writer's associations.

E17

E17 (www.e17.dk) is a user-based net library developed jointly between Nota, the Danish public libraries, Danish news suppliers as well as a number of interest groups. Here the Nota patrons can order books round the clock, gain easy access to knowledge and entertainment,

read and/or listen to the news of the day, find journals as well as listen to and/or read recommendations of the best books available right now. The users get the chance to write comments on the reviewed books – and the intention is that in time this service will be developed into an actual community, where the users get a much better opportunity to interact, give good advice and share their knowledge with each other.

Web 2.0

At Nota virtual communities are used in many different contexts. In the autumn of 2009 Nota e.g. held a conference for dyslexic children and young people aged 14-16 years. A Facebook page was established that linked to the conference title 'Skab dig! Og bliv hørt' ('Create and be heard' - create both in the sense of being creative and creating a fuss). Here the youngsters get the chance to watch films about young dyslexic role models, upload their own films and post pictures and links to pages which they feel are relevant to other young dyslexics. The page – as well as the conference – was designed to make contact with the young, gain knowledge about their needs and an insight into the kind of expectations they have of Nota as a library for people with reading difficulties. The page is created on the youngster's premises – and created in a forum where they are present and act.

Create and be heard

40 pupils from 22 continuation schools for dyslexics in Denmark took part. Here they got the chance to be creative and to be heard. Two workshops with manga cartoons and interactive computer games respectively, carried out the first part, while Nota via focus groups managed to draw out a great deal of knowledge from the young people – and in that way ensure that they will get a hearing. All the material produced in connection with the conference was later put on the Facebook page. And from the 40 young participants in the conference the knowledge of the page quickly got distributed to other young potential Nota-users.

Online distribution

Towards the end of 2009 Nota launched a streaming service which enables users to stream the audio books directly from the net. When the service has been fully implemented, all Nota's 16,000 titles can be downloaded and read directly on the users' computers.



Photo from "Learn more about IT" – e.g. by using the mobile.
A project from the National IT and Telecom Agency

The same service was launched earlier this year at the Celia Library in Finland. The project is called 'Audio Stream'. Celia Library was founded in 1890 in Helsinki and is a state-owned special library. It produces and lends audio books, Braille books, e-books and other special materials.

Audio Stream

The Audio Stream project is Celia's latest project. Since the beginning of 2009 the library users have been able to stream DAISY audio books online. The original idea behind the project was to use the Internet as a distribution platform and to open Celia's collections to users. Furthermore, the project aimed at creating new services and products. So far, Celia has developed a new distribution platform and some new service and production models. Within a year, Celia will launch new services for the coming online audio book players. Another main aim of the project is to offer users direct and quick access to Celia's collections without the hassle and expense of audio books on cd-rom. In the near future even downloading of audio books and electronic books will be possible.

Multichannel distribution

In general terms, the project aims at shifting some library services online, while keeping the cost of lending reasonable and also making participation in the global library possible. The basic principles behind the project have been to create a multichannel distribution, accessible and innovative services, a design for all, flexible production methods and a service design that may be accommodated to all kinds of end-user devices and software.

Dolly

In Sweden a similar project is called 'Dolly' – Daisy OnLine LibrarY'. This project aims to make the digital content of Sweden's special library – Talboks- och Punktskriftsbiblioteket (The Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille), TPB – available on every web site belonging to all ordinary libraries throughout the country.

TPB is a state institution. TPB adapts literature to people with reading handicaps and participate in the development of new technology that can improve accessibility for this group. TPB's strategy for the future is to make sure that people with reading difficulties are given the chance to order books themselves directly on the net – both from home, in the library, at school or work. In order to live up to this goal TPB has launched the Dolly project, Daisy OnLine LibrarY, which is a collaboration between TPB, Stockholm Public Library and Jönköping University Library's catalogue 'Julia'. First of all, the Dolly project is aimed at the inhabitants in Stockholm, but TPB anticipates being able to do a national launching of the Dolly project during 2010-2011. Then the users should be able to search and find all TPB's 70,000 audio books via the homepage in all the country's public libraries. Finally, the Dolly project should make it possible for TPB's users to be guided directly to the audio books – whichever library's network they log in to.

The effect

According to TBP there is no doubt that the Dolly project helps to improve the service for the reading-handicapped users. When the Dolly project is fully implemented it will mean that all the country's public libraries can service people with reading handicaps, instead of – as was the case before – only TPB as the central national library being able to do this. The Dolly project also means that the public libraries can be used as suppliers' of TPB's services – even when the services are moved onto the web, and when the distribution of audio books will take place via the Internet.

Pipeonline

In Norway the Norwegian Library of Talking Books and Braille (NLB) is also working on a project which is to improve the service for its users. One of the projects is particularly aimed at young students at university. NLB is a state institution under the Ministry of Culture and Church Affairs.

In order to improve the service to visually impaired students and students with reading difficulties in higher

education, NLB will introduce a set of new services. The services are based on a partnership between each university/ college and NLB. Earlier on NLB has not had the opportunity to be as flexible as needed when it comes to giving students the service they require. Historically NBL has produced DAISY talking books with narrators which is both time- and cost consuming. Students today need a more dynamic service. They have more individual needs for literature and articles and compendiums are an essential part of their reading material – and they need it fast.

Better service for students

Together with the DAISY-Consortium NLB has therefore developed 'Pipeonline'. Pipeonline is an application for creating and executing jobs on a Pipeline-server via the Internet. The technical solution will be located at – and supported by – NLB. NLB will also include English and Norwegian TTS in the service. Representatives at each university can access Pipeonline via their user account and produce DAISY audio books with TTS based on uploaded files. The university downloads the finished audio book and distributes it to the student. This solution will be suitable for literature with a simple structure and where the student needs the material immediately. In many cases the university has access to electronic files – e.g. articles, databases, compendiums and lectures – which with minor converting can be used. NLB covers the cost of running the service and each university covers its own administration costs. This solution should be fully implemented together with other solutions no later than by the end of 2009.

- www.e17.dk

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THE LIBRARY LABORATORY

The Library Laboratory is a think tank for technology and innovation in the Norwegian library system. The project is the outcome of co-operation between the Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science at Oslo University College and the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority. Representatives from both these institutions together with members representing public, university and college libraries constitute the project's management group of 6 persons.

The Library Laboratory (www.biblab.no) came into being in 2007 as the result of a proposal to establish a group to study the possibilities for future technological development in the library system. The idea was for the Authority to share out funds to small, individual projects without the need for too much paperwork, so-called micro-financing. It is difficult for libraries generally to pursue technological development without funding from the Authority, but such financial assistance is mostly given to larger projects with potential onward benefits and substantial budgets in order to achieve the concentrated effort the Authority considers important. This way requires considerable effort from the specific library concerned. Competent project management is needed and the follow-up process for both the Authority and the library can be quite demanding. In addition a certain amount of bureaucracy and other overheads are unavoidable. The Library Laboratory initiative was therefore looked upon as a simple way to stimulate development on a small scale.

The Archive, Library and Museum Authority felt that a resource group of this nature was a good idea and chose to support the initiative. Throughout the length and breadth of Norway there are some 430 municipalities with many small libraries and only a handful of large ones. This leads to fragmented and weak library environments with significant variations in competence and opportunities. Many libraries in Norway have skilled and active staff, but often they have little time and small possibilities to work on technological development and to improve expertise in this area. Few librarians possess programming skills and consequently few libraries can make use of their talents. By gathering interested persons into a think tank, it would be possible to create an innovative milieu which could look ahead, select new targets and become a national driving force. It would also lead to a higher level of expertise throughout the library system.

Meeting place

What then are the actual functions of the Library Laboratory? First and foremost it acts as a meeting place and an informal network for librarians and others who work in libraries and who are interested in the use of technology. More and more librarians and others with a relevant background are joining the network and we observe a growing contact between different environments, also cross-sector activity.

In addition the Library Laboratory seeks to encourage cooperation across national borders and Laboratory representatives take an active part in international conferences. Contact has also been established with similar professional milieus in other countries.

The most important communication tool is to be found in our websites. These consist of a blog (www.biblab.no/blog) and a community portal/wiki (wiki.biblab.no) where today's technology and interesting problems can be explained and discussed. The Laboratory's websites are our gathering point and the best way to be visible in the library landscape. They are also used to announce competitions for original ideas, the best of which have resulted in applications for project support from the Archive, Library and Museum Authority. The Laboratory also arranges seminars and conferences with a focus on problems particular to the library sector, often in connection with projects in progress. Workshops have also been set up with a specific aim, such as solving concrete problems in connection with access to metadata.

Projects and ideas

One project with its origins in a Laboratory competition for ideas is Pode (www.bibpode.no). Pode is a project at Deichmanske bibliotek/Oslo public library which aims to create a platform for the development of mash-up applications based on the library catalogue. These applications could be links to external sources, such as lexicon articles, cover pictures, reviews and other presentations of catalogue data. Pode has also established websites to illustrate the use of these applications. In addition the project will also examine the challenges and possibilities inherent in web technology in relation to present-day systems, catalogues and practice. All this activity is continuously documented in Pode's blog (www.bibpode.no/blogg).

A project such as Pode would hardly have been launched in Norway without the Library Laboratory. Here was an ambitious idea which it would not have been normal for an individual library to pursue. Under the guidance of the Laboratory, however, it was possible to develop and present a project application. Pode has also received backing from the milieu surrounding the Laboratory in the form of help to solve individual problems, communal thinking about the way forward and, above all, invaluable moral support.

With the Pode project as a starting point and the cooperation of ICT management specialists at Oslo University College plans are being drawn up to establish a test environment for a variety of initiatives and experiments which are outside the scope of any individual library. The first of these will be a Norwegian trial of the Swedish project, 'Öppna bibliotek', which can perhaps be developed into a nationwide base of user-created tags, book mentions and media reviews available for use in all libraries, as is the case in Sweden.

Roles and results

The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority has several important roles to play in relation to the Library Laboratory. First and foremost was that of giving the project a mandate and the funds required to make a start. Subsequent funding has also been granted in order for the project to continue. In addition the Authority has given the Laboratory a number of concrete assignments, such as developing websites, publicising competitions for new ideas, arranging seminars and conferences, and maintaining contact with other professional environments of interest, not least internationally. The Authority sometimes 'commissions' project applications within areas of particular interest. The Library Laboratory is also an important factor with regard to the interest surrounding open source technology in Norway. Everything developed by the Library Laboratory is open source.

What have we learned from the Library Laboratory so far? It would appear that this method of working gives good results. We begin to see the formation of an enthusiastic environment around the project, a development which has led to increased interest and understanding for the significance of this work. There is a beneficial exchange of expertise between those involved and consequently a distinct improvement among individual participants. These take their experiences back with them to their libraries, thus spreading knowledge and enthusiasm about technology. All these factors raise the quality of the work being carried out.

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LITERATURE DISSEMINATION 2.0

“I am gradually finding out just how much you can do on the new exciting site”
“It is really cool that it has now become so easy to join – and resign – from the reading clubs, if you want to take part in the debate”

(User comments on the Literature site)

The Literature site (www.litteratursiden.dk) is a web site that disseminates and writes about fiction.

The site has 150,000 unique users a month. The site is run by the Danish public libraries and financed by membership fees and the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media. In this article we take a look at the Literature site's development from the original idea phase to the recently launched version 2.0 with special focus on user inclusion in the net dissemination of literature.

History

In the spring of 2000 an idea meeting was held in Aarhus where the Danish public libraries' future Internet-based literature dissemination was discussed. The background was that more and more public libraries had started to collect and disseminate literature in electronic form via various net services. At the meeting it was decided to combine forces in one net magazine through a network consisting of interested public libraries, and a creative collaboration and networking took form and were established during the following summer. The basis for Litteratursiden.dk was a reality.

The purpose of the new Literature site was to spread and encourage the dissemination of fictional literature in Denmark by creating an inviting, inspirational, qualitative, engaging and comprehensive homepage dedicated to fiction. The idea won approval from the Danish Library Agency who chose to support the idea financially.

The net magazine was organized in a steering committee, an editorial committee and a project manager/editor. The steering committee consisted of representatives from the Danish Library Agency, the Literature Council, Danish Writers' Association, Danish Authors of Fiction, the web site's project manager/editor and library directors from the five participating libraries in the network. In 2003 Litteratursiden.dk became an association following a general meeting, and a board was elected. Gradually, more and more libraries have joined the association Litteratursiden, which today has 85 membership libraries.

From knowledge consumers to knowledge producers

With the realisation that our society is undergoing changes, a new communication perception is on the way, which is based on the recipient's world and universe. The transition to a network society means that the rules for communication and marketing have changed. Today it is to a greater extent the market and the recipient that set the agenda, which turns previous practice for communication and marketing upside down. New forms of network communication and social media are gathering momentum, which means that one-way – or even two-way – communication is being replaced by network communication and 'conversation' where the users provide input. The recipients become co-producers, as they want to be involved and get the opportunity to act. Interactivity has become vital when using the Internet. Today a company (or an association like Litteratursiden) is not supposed to 'write the story', but rather to provide the users with the tools for writing it.

The old perception about beginning, middle and end is thereby changing. A perception which does not only exist in communication, but is a part of our entire line of thought, logic and organisation of life as such. The new communication concept and use of the Internet mean a shift from static to dynamic, from hierarchically organised to joint management and continuous development, and from user-as-consumer to user-as-contributor. Instead of thinking mass communication, we must now think dialogue. Rather than striving to keep control of a message, the grip has to be loosened or abandoned altogether.

Development

The original Literature site was based on a traditional one-way communication, where the content for the site was written and

produced by librarians or writers connected with the site and the libraries. It was possible for the users to add their comments on the content, but the site did not place particular emphasis on this possibility. The Literature site therefore launched a new version in 2008, often called Literature site 2.0. The intention was to develop a more user-inclusive version of the Literature site, where the users do not only have the chance to comment on texts written by professionals, but also get the opportunity to contribute themselves with recommendations, blogs, ratings etc.

Literature site 2.0 combines the library's traditional literature dissemination of high quality with user-generated content. A user-friendly design takes into account users of high as well as low IT- and linguistic competence. The site is thereby characterized by very considerable accessibility for the users. Literature site 2.0 is based on social media and contains overall two different, but intertwined service functions: the traditional services, where knowledge-sharing takes place from a professional editorial platform to the users, and the relational services where knowledge-sharing happens between users.

The traditional services consist i.a. of recommendations of new books, a monthly theme like for example 'Eastern Europe in Literature', analyses of older Danish novels, overview of the decades in Danish literature, portraits of important Danish and foreign authors, interviews with authors as well as answers to questions from users.

The relational services include the possibility to establish user profiles, write recommendations and blogs, get reading friends, rate books, create book shelves and become an expert on a particular writer's works and answer questions from other users. Apart from that, users can participate in and produce content for the numerous and very active online reading clubs that the Literature site is characterised by and known for. The reading clubs are facilitated by librarians, just as all user-generated content is being edited.

Via the Literature site the library's knowledge has become accessible to users round the clock. The site has also been a generator for the inclusion of modern technology in the librarians' daily mediation in the library space. Through the use of net dissemination librarians take on a more proactive role, where they not only make books available, but also express their views on the books. The librarians can save resources and provide a better service to the users by applying the Literature site's content in the mediation at the physical library. At the same time librarians can encourage the user to find the sought-after information or inspiration himself.

Cooperation with external players

As far as the Literature site is concerned, cooperation is a keyword. The establishing of partnerships with players outside the library world can give the libraries more 'punch' vis-à-vis the broader public.

Together with the television channel dk4 the Literature site produces a 25 minutes interview for the TV programme Litteratursiden, broadcast on dk4, and a 5 minutes interview for the Literature site. Dk4 pays the production costs, while the Literature site's editorial staff is in charge of interviewing the authors. Collaboration like this is resource-saving for the Literature site while at the same time exposing the site effectively on TV.

The Literature site also has cooperation agreements with other sites on mutual exposure of content. The Literature site is produced in an open-source program, and it is therefore easy to exchange content with other sites. Via other frequently visited sites on the Internet an ever increasing amount of users are being pointed towards the Literature site.

Visions

The Literature site's objective is to continue to develop the site, partly through further development of the technical platform and partly by constantly increasing the number of users through efficient marketing. The

development of the technical platform can move towards two general scenarios, one where the present balance between user-generated and professionally generated content is maintained, and an alternative scenario, where the users to a greater degree produce content and the editors mainly have a monitoring function. Within the latter scenario one can imagine various perspectives, i.a. that the users are given the opportunity to upload videos, audio files etc., that a greater degree of direct communication is created between the users via a chat function, and that the Literature site increasingly includes mobiles and integrates the various possibilities that these offer.

The most important vision for the future is, however, to maintain and build on the success and credibility the Literature site enjoys from its users, and at the same time increase the number of users and the awareness of the Literature site among potential users. An important strategy for making the Literature site more widely known is to make sure that it enjoys an optimal position in the media landscape through the establishment of partnerships.

The Literature site endeavours to continue to be:

- a source of inspiration for enjoying literature
- an independent and credible platform and gathering point for people interested in fiction

- independent of experts on fiction
- independent of commercial economy
- good facilitators of literature
- a space for dialogue with and between authors and users.

Other Nordic countries also have visions about literature dissemination on the net, using social media and user-inclusion, i.a. Norway and Finland who have visited and shared our experiences and knowledge about the use of web 2.0 in literature dissemination.

Not only net mediation is undergoing changes at this time. Also literature's own forms and formats are influenced by the many new digital possibilities in the shape of e-books, podcasts, sms-novels and much more. But whatever format or form the literature of the future assumes, the Literature site's objective will continue to be to inspire people to experience the joy of reading and contemplation.

- www.litteratursiden.dk

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2.0

THE PHYSICAL LIBRARY



Reading and pc-table. Hjørring Library. Denmark
Photo: Laura Stamer

LIBRARY SPACES

New libraries are being built and old libraries are being renovated. New concepts are being created for large and small libraries. Public libraries are no longer being defined by their collections or their roles as information intermediaries but rather by their ability to relate to patrons in a sensible manner.

The New Library should facilitate and promote communication. New libraries should be built and furnished in dialogue with patrons. Local strategies for communication should be formulated together with the local community and local surroundings. Cooperation should be developed within the municipality and with other municipalities in the region. The library's profile should reflect local conditions.

What is the public library's most important attribute? How can libraries respond to citizens' demands? How does the library establish itself as a vital and important arena in the local community, suburb or city? How can the public library be a resource in the local community? The collections? Professional competence? What exactly is it that makes the library the cornerstone of a democratic society. What is library's unique attribute?

Dialogue has become a key operating component. Customer treatment and user surveys have become more important than preservation and book care. Library patrons have been able, to a greater extent, to influence decisions regarding library content, opening hours and disposition of library materials. There's a growing tendency towards input from library

patrons through local dialogue and focus groups so that citizens can explain just what they expect from their library.

Today there are clear-cut strategies for improvement of operative routines, network-building and the development of new forms of cooperation. Strategies that have resulted in library operations characterized by quality and diversity. Local communities, organisations, institutions and the general public – patrons and working partners – have become active participants and co-producers of user-defined libraries.

Internet and the development of web-based library services have led to municipalities cooperating over municipal and regional borders as well as engendering a national perspective. Acquired expertise can be used in new ways; the exchange of knowledge and information contributes to higher levels of competence for library staff, and patrons have been able to count on better service and better access to combined library resources.

Social media tools (blogs, wikis, web-based forums, podcasts, social networks, chat, e-mail, etc.) are all part of the same phenomenon. Today library service is more disparate and diverse than ever and there are an increasing number of arenas where libraries operate.

Libraries today are moving from supporting information competence to supporting co-production. It is still about adult education, reading and inclusiveness. But in a whole new way. Libraries today are expected to be creative by cooperating with other institutions that can support and complement library goals. The emphasis is user-oriented: finding out what citizens want and then focusing attention and resources on the needs of different target groups.

First class communication, active listening and a readiness to change will be decisive factors for the future development of libraries.

Instead of rooms for books the emphasis is now on creating spaces for patrons. Books are no longer the dominant factor in library areas. Traditionally, weeding has been carried out to create space for the collections. The purpose being to create room on the shelves for displaying front covers.

Now weeding has a new purpose: to create space for multimedia devices, reading, gaming stations, web surfing, espresso machines and free areas for patrons to use as they wish.

With bookshelves on wheels library space can quickly be rearranged to host different types of activities such as author visits, debate evenings, book circles, etc. If the library is to be a genuine meeting place then there must be a continual flow of activities and events. Continuity creates reasons for visiting the library and becomes a focus for patrons' communication.

Weeding is only one of several important strategies for the New Library. Other crucial measures include the creation of Information Points. Circulation desks are replaced by self-service stations. Entry Halls are redesigned so that the visitor is met by an attractive selection of new books and other material instead of a large circulation desk laden with intrusive information on overdue fines.

Professionalism has become more visible in the New Library. The handmade signs of yesterday are gone, awareness of the role played by interior furnishings and (new) materials has been heightened. There is an increased focus on new user groups. Books are not repaired to the same extent as before. Change happens in tandem with library patrons. The range of materials, hours of opening and library content are all based on user-demand. Librarians facilitate information searches by acting as personal information brokers. Library staff is trained to establish and cultivate a climate for greeting visitors that allows them to experience a feeling of genuine participation in the library's public arena.

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Multimediaroom, Entresse Library, Finland. Photo: Jorma Waldén

OSLO, STOCKHOLM, HELSINKI AND AARHUS

LIBRARIES IN URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Three Scandinavian capitals – Oslo, Stockholm and Helsinki – and Denmark’s second largest city, Aarhus, are living in the midst of urban change and a developmental phase of their city centres. Each one of these cities has a pending project for a main library as part of their development process. In this article, I will describe projects by exploring the significance and role of the libraries in the cities’ development and by presenting the architecture competitions that were held. I will also consider the need for renovation of the libraries.

The sources I have used primarily comprise the competition programs and the jury reports, which are available for viewing on the web-pages listed at the end of the article. The fact that I have served as a member on the jury in the Oslo and Stockholm competitions brings an added dimension to my article. I became acquainted with the works of the Aarhus competition as a member of the expert group during the competition. In Helsinki, where the architecture competition is just being planned, the design of the new library is a central part of my work.

Oslo: a library for the city’s new cultural centre

The road to acquiring a new library in Oslo has been a varied one. There is a great need for a new library, because the Deichmanske Main Library, completed in 1933, has long been in poor condition and cramped.

One architecture competition was already held in Oslo in 2002. At that time, the area in question was Vestbanen around the former railway station, where other cultural services were also planned in addition to a library. However, the project was never initiated because the lot and its buildings belonged to the state.

Decisions concerning a new architecture competition were made in haste at the beginning of the summer in 2008. As in 2002, it is now also a question of making changes to expand the urban structure. This time in the Björkvik area, which joins east and west Oslo.

The port area, which is in the vicinity of the main railway station and still marked by a multi-lane highway, will be the location for Oslo’s new cultural center. A new highway will be built underwater in a tunnel and cultural buildings will rise up where the old highway was. There is already an opera house in the area, which was built in the spring of 2008. It was designed by the Snøhetta architecture firm and has become a landmark and attraction in Oslo. A competition was organized in the fall of 2008 for the Deichmanske Main Library and the Munch Museum, which are to be new cultural buildings in the area.

Looking for a functional library, not outstanding or sensational WOW architecture

The private company HAV Eiendom AS organised the architecture competition. The City of Oslo has a contract with the company to develop the area. Ten architecture firms were invited to take part in each competition, and ten others were selected based on the preliminaries.

The competition for the library premises was not for a detailed design, because it was a ‘concept competition’. The gross area for the library was to be 18,000 square meters, 13,900 square meters of which was floor space. Of this, 9,300 square meters were to be public areas.

The new library must be a front-runner in the development of public libraries, a significant source of information and culture, it must reach new users by means of new technologies, it must be a meeting place for people to present their different points of view, it must strengthen the awareness of literature and the importance of reading, and it must fortify Oslo’s position as an international and multi-national capital city.



Prospect of Diagonale. Lund Hagem Arkiteker/Atelier Oslo, Norway

A significant phrase in the designing instructions for the competition program was “new library space is structured in accordance with the users’ activities and not dominated by the traditional arrangement of collection.” It is estimated that the new library will receive 2 million visitors per year.

The library must be well-functioning, but the building need not be an ‘icon’ in the area, because this role has already been taken by the opera house. The new Munch Museum building may also become a secondary ‘icon building’ in the area. There were in fact three lots intended for the library. It could be designed over all three, or limited to one. Other buildings to be built in the area are apartments and commercial services.

Norwegian architects’ creation ‘Diagonale’ announced winner

‘Diagonale’, submitted by the Norwegian architecture firm Lund Hagem og Atelier, was announced the winner in March, 2009. The presentation was not a verbal description of the library; rather, it was primarily based on a visual presentation.

In ‘Diagonale’, the library is a separate entity, apart from the commercial services. In practical terms, this means that the library is built on only one lot, which results in a multi-story building solution. The multi-story solution, however, allows the library user the possibility to move upstairs where it will be quieter during peak hours.

The jury considered this a better alternative than rectangular, open spaces that would extend a couple of hundred meters. A feature, which particularly aroused interest, was the contact to the environment via the windows that faced out into different directions and the opening of light, which seems to penetrate the whole building. The jury's report states, "The concept creates a very urban unity of the library and the commercial areas, while at the same time allowing the library to stand out in its uniqueness."

Although the jury's decision spawned some critical articles, the decision-making has already begun to move forward in Oslo. The city government decided on 17. June 2009 that the winner of the Munch Museum competition, 'Lambda', by the architecture firm Herreros Arquitectos, and Diagonale will be the bases for the continued development of the projects to take place as soon as possible.

Construction of the museum, which is not dependent upon re-routing of traffic, is slated to begin at the beginning of 2011 and to be completed in 2014. Construction of the library can only begin once the traffic tunnel is completed. Work can begin in 2014 and the building will be completed in 2016. City Council is expected to process the case in August.

Growing urban pressures in Stockholm

Stockholm is a rapidly growing city. The population of the Stockholm area is estimated to be 3.5 million by 2030. This also necessitates the reorganization of traffic systems.

In Stockholm, the initiator of the main library project was, ultimately, the development of Odenplan's traffic hub at the corner of Asplund Library. The plan includes a new rail link and a connection station for subway and train passengers. Daily users are estimated to be 150,000, which substantially increases the number of visitors in the vicinity of the main library.

The need for an additional building to complement the main library in Stockholm stems from the cramped

space of the current building. The library, designed in 1928 by architect Gunnar Asplund, is a pilgrimage destination for architects, and also valued and loved by the city residents. The library has been lightly renovated, but the 3,700 square meters of public space is not sufficient to house the development of new services and to serve over one million annual visitors.

Designing another building next to Asplund Library is a great challenge, as is the undertaking of the construction of a new building in a pre-existing urban environment. The area, which is the site for the design, already has three buildings in it that house some library functions and some other types of functions.

Over one thousand submissions to the open architecture competition

Since the interest in Asplund's architecture is so great, the city wanted to hold an open architecture competition. The competition brief contained abundant material about Asplund Library and the environment where the new building is to be located. Requirements set for the library highlighted the change of the times from Asplund's day. "Respect, silence, enlightenment are words associated with the library of 1928" the competition program stated, and went on: "The vision for the new library is that it should facilitate communication, be accessible, visible and contemporary."

According to the program, public space should be increased from 3,700 square meters to 16,600 square meters. When including space for storage, administration and other spaces, the total surface area of the MUA (main usable area) is 24,000 square meters, which equals c. 29,000 gross square meters.

The organization of space is based on the location of material by theme. The quantity of material is estimated to be reduced from the current quantity by a little less than 100,000, but there will still be 600,000 books on the open shelves. The number of study and reading areas and seats will increase, while daily visitors are estimated to increase from 3,000 to 7,000.



Prospect of 'Delphinium' in Stockholm, Sweden

There were over one thousand entries in the competition and c. 6,000 architects from 120 countries registered in the competition. The competition was one of the biggest architecture competitions of all time.

German Asplund expert won

Of these thousand-plus competition submissions, the jury chose six entries for the second round. The key words for the whole competition were 'open', 'bold', and 'feasible'.

The German architect, Heike Hanada, from Laboratory of Art and Architecture, won the competition with his entry 'Delphinium'. Hanada had extensively studied Asplund's architecture even before participating in the competition.

Hanada suggests demolishing the existing, additional buildings and building a low-entrance building next to Asplund, which would connect Asplund to the high, capacious building. It will form the background to Asplund Library from the direction of the main entrance on Sveavägen street. A 'secret garden', which is between the lower building and the hill next to the library, will offer a place of quietude. Of the entries that made the final cut, Hanada's work best depicted the key words, 'open', 'light', and 'communicative', which were set for the library.

The choice sparked a lot of public discussion. The dispute was not only concerning the fact that the existing additional buildings would have to be demolished according to Hanada's submission, but also concerning whether or not the new library should be built next to the Asplund building at all, or should it be situated somewhere else.

When I wrote this article in September 2009, the project website stated that the costs and funding for construction were in the process of being determined. On 12 October Madeleine Sjöstedt, the politician responsible for Stockholm's culture and sports affairs, wrote in her blog that construction to expand the library will not happen. The aim will be, instead, to renovate Stockholm's library network and create modern library operations. The funds intended for the extension will be used for this development work.

Library in central position in development of the harbour area in Aarhus

In Aarhus, the new library building is firmly linked to urban structure development in the harbor area. It is one of the biggest development projects in the history of the city, which involves rebuilding the pedestrian and bicycle paths in the beach area, as well as automobile and rail traffic ways, market squares and parking



Prospect on MEDIASPACE, Aarhus, Denmark. schmidt hammer lassen architects

lots. The direction and significance of the development is also described in the slogan used by the city: “From viking city to knowledge city”.

The library was added in 2006 as part of this development, which began as early as 1990. However, the new main library was no longer called a library, but ‘Mediaspace’. The concepts ‘science, growth and development’ reflect its activities and significance. The citizens are at the center of its activities and Mediaspace will be the heart of the city in terms of science and culture. As a result of the breadth of the project, the architecture competition in December 2007 was not only for the library, but also for the entire area under development. The objective was to create a lively, active urban harbour space, which was approximately one kilometer long.

The level of the project’s objectives is best articulated by quoting some words from the project documents: “Expectations for the project are high: it is intended as a pivotal point for Aarhus, standing out with a building magnificent even by international standards to be located where the city meets the bay. The MEDIASPACE building must feature visionary architecture, a sustainable structure that forms a compelling contribution to the perception of Aarhus as a future-oriented, innovative city.”

Seven values guiding the library design

If there is a high objective level for the overall design of the project, the same is true of the library’s design. One distinguishing factor is the inclusion of citizens in the designing process. Another special feature in Aarhus’ designing process has been that the project has advanced through many experiments.

In part, these two principles are, of course, intertwined. There are many examples of these principles on the pages of the project documents. The current main library, completed in 1934, does not pose any obstacle to these many projects either, although it no longer meets the many needs for change of a modern library.

The design of MEDIASPACE is not founded directly on the activities of the library, but is based on seven key points or values, which include the citizen as key factor, lifelong learning and community, diversity, cooperation and network, culture and experiences, bridging citizens, technology and knowledge, flexible and professional organization and a sustainable icon for Aarhus.

In addition to the traditional collection and service areas, the premises program of the competition includes features such as a square/foyer, a transformation lab, campaign activities and theme exhibitions, a hybrid learning space, multipurpose hall and stage, as well as a play library for children, inspiration area, oases, and an eating area.

The residents of Aarhus themselves define the level of their library as follows: “The ambition of MEDIASPACE is to be both a real and virtual place where citizens meet new media, knowledge, and each other for many decades to come. Human development and interaction should be both the starting point and the objective. The concept of multiple media communication involves all the senses. A variety of different spaces in MEDIASPACE provides a higher quality of communication for all the senses and intelligences.”

According to the program, MEDIASPACE’s useable area is 13,000 m², and the gross area is 18,000 m². Additio-

nally, 10,000 m² of optional area is reserved for cooperation partners. Since the entrance hall is 1,000 m², the total gross area of the building is 32,000 m².

**The winner of the competition,
the Danish schmidt hammer lassen architects**

The development plan for the whole of Aarhus' sizable harbour area influenced the way in which the competition was implemented. There were a total of six invitees, pre-qualified architecture offices. The competition was executed in two rounds; in the first round, three offices were chosen to continue without ranking order.

The final selection between the three chosen offices was announced in March 2009. Five criteria with different areas of emphasis were assigned points in the evaluation. The purpose of these criteria was to evaluate the architectural, aesthetic, functional and technical quality of submissions, to ensure that the cost level was maintained, to determine the staff presented for the competitor's project, to obtain a bid for the work and to get an idea of the project process and the possibilities for citizens to participate in the project. Using these criteria the calculations of the points indicated that the winner was the Danish schmidt hammer lassen architects. At the moment, the designing is progressing and the goal is to complete MEDIASPACE on schedule by 2014 without exceeding the estimated costs.

Library at the Töölönlahti area cultural center in Helsinki?

No political decisions have been made about the new library to be constructed in Helsinki's city centre. This is the reason for the question mark in the title. The project has been pending since 1998. The heart of debate has been a particular feature of Helsinki's library network, which is that the main library is located outside of the city centre in the Itä-Pasila district.

The case has a historical explanation. Helsinki's first library, the Rikhardinkatu library, was opened in 1882, and in its day it was the first building in Scandinavia to have been designed as a public library. This library proved too small for the first time in the 1910s.

The space problem became unbearable in the 1970s, when the city's library network grew and functions that are part of the main library's activities, such as administration and book archiving, could no longer be carried out effectively, due to lack of space. Itä-Pasila became the location of the new main library, which, according to the plans at the time, should have become Helsinki's new city centre. This did not happen, however. The decision to move the main library outside of the city centre spurred criticism even at the time of its opening in 1986. From the patrons' point of view, the solution was not good, but for administration and support services the solution was at least satisfactory.

After different processing phases, the matter was set in motion when, at the end of 2006, Mayor Jussi Pajunen assigned an official work group to consider the project, where culture, learning and communication and the traditional library would meet. On the basis of the result of the work group and of a report by an outside administrator, the Mayor specified in 2008 that a city-owned lot in the Töölönlahti district would first and foremost be examined as the location of the central library.

The Töölönlahti district is being built into an urban art, culture, events and recreation oasis, a city-dweller's living room. In 2011, the Helsinki Music Centre will be built there. The concert and congress centre Finlandia Hall, the Finnish National Opera, the city museum and the Museum of Contemporary Art are also there. The area is also close to the main railway station. Building the library in this area would strengthen this cause even more.

Symbol for Finland's centennial independence celebration in 2017?

Although no political decisions have been made concerning the construction or lot for the library, City Council has approved one million euros of the 2009 library operating costs for the project plan needed for the architecture competition. The project has been slated for completion in 2017, which is the centennial year



A vision from the work group report on the new Helsinki library. *The Heart of the Metropolis – the Heart of Helsinki*. Review Report 2008

celebration of Finland's independence. In order for the project to be finished by that time, the project plan must be ready by the beginning of 2010 and project decisions must be made during 2010. This way, the architecture competition for the project could be arranged in 2011.

The project's size and content is affected by the structure of the existing library network. In addition to the Rikhardinkatu library, there are two other large libraries near the city centre. Furthermore, all of the service for the entire library network will remain in the current main library. The new library only contains space for patrons and it is not a new main library; rather, it is a city centre library. The name describes the library's location, not its activities. These factors also influence the size of the library, the goal for which is 10,000 square meters of usable space, or a building of c. 14,000 gross square meters.

In Helsinki, we are experiencing a phase in which we are beginning to consider library content in more detail. Earlier plans already contain pointers about the nature of the library. In addition to the fact that the premises are only for patrons, the objective is for the traditional library in the building to develop into a new kind of multiform, non-commercial meeting place. The search for partners and financiers is also pending.

Trends of the future

Although Stockholm may have stopped additional construction for the time-being, Oslo, Aarhus and Helsinki are by no means the only cities in the world where libraries located in the city centres are being developed. Many cities have already successfully opened new, significant library buildings: Vienna in 2003, Seattle in 2004 and Amsterdam in 2008, just to name a few. Similar projects are pending in Birmingham and Berlin, among other places. A new main library is also under discussion in Copenhagen.

As the examples show, the implementation of a library project is most likely set in motion when it is integrated into the general development of the city. On the other hand, libraries with the highest visitor numbers bring city centres to life and are therefore attractive partners.

Library activities also implement new city strategies in which innovations, development, science and information are often key words. Libraries could well be called non-commercial oases of information and culture, with the inside of libraries said to be antique market squares, an agora, where people can meet each other and come into contact with different ideas.

This is a challenge for library design as well. Indeed the libraries presented here also strive, each in their own way, to create something new. In the designs, the shift of emphasis from the collection to the people, to the library users, is apparent. According to Aarhus' dimensions, 70 per cent of the space will be reserved for people, 30 per cent for material. In Stockholm, it is estimated that, in 2013, the collection will be smaller than it is now and the number of visitors will have doubled. In Helsinki, the entire building will be for the patrons and there will be no administration or book archives.

Still, the question arises of whether or not libraries can be freed from traditional methods of operation and whether designers can see far enough into the future. It is noteworthy that the presented cities are now building their second main library, because their first buildings became too crowded and inoperative in less than 100 years.

Is it wise, for example, to bring a collection of hundreds of thousands of books to the most expensive places in the middle of a city, when only a fraction of the books are used actively? This is the kind of question that comes to mind when reading about the big removal operation currently at Malmö's city library, in which

books and their shelves are being taken away by the ton to make room for other functions.

Now we must be prepared for perpetual change and for maximal flexibility in space use. Today, we cannot know what we will really need ten, or even five, years from now. On the other hand, the message of the existing, big library buildings is clear; they are extremely popular and libraries, as public spaces, will thus be needed in the future as well.

The deeper, social significance of the library is becoming less apparent with the new library designs. The completion of the library in Helsinki in conjunction with Finland's hundred-year independence day celebration provides an opportunity for this deeper meaning. In Finland, the development of the library institution was essentially associated with the nation's struggle for independence and the creation of a democratic society.

All of the Scandinavian countries have proven by many measures to be strong and successful democracies. All of these countries also have high-quality public libraries. Large libraries in the centre of large cities do not only shine as symbols of democracy, but also ensure equal and diverse types of access to information and the opportunity for all people to develop themselves according to their own needs.

When I wrote this article in September, the project website stated that the costs and funding for construction were in the process of being determined. On 12 October, 2009, Madeleine Sjöstedt, responsible for Stockholm's culture and sports affairs, wrote in her blog that construction to expand the library will not happen. The aim will be, instead, to renovate Stockholm's library network and create modern library operations. The funds intended for additional construction will be used for this development work.

Although Stockholm may have stopped additional construction for the time being, Oslo, Århus and Helsinki are by no means the only cities in the world where libraries located in the city centres are being developed.

www.arkitekt.se/asplund

www.haveiendom.no

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www.nyttstadsbibliotek.stockholm.se

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OPEN LIBRARIES AND SELF-SERVICE

Self-service has been used as a service model in Danish libraries for several years. Until now primarily in the form of automated registration of loans, but also – lately – in the form of robots or machines (with conveyor belt) for the reception of returned materials. The new thing is that it is now also being used at the point of access to the library – supplemented by various forms of assistance inside the library, i.a. an InfoStander (Info Holder) placed in Gjern and Them libraries. Silkeborg libraries have been the first to introduce this extended service concept as a supplement to the manned opening hours.

Development of the library structure in Denmark

Since the first municipal reform in 1970 the development concerning the number of libraries has moved towards a centralization of service points. Rational operation has been associated with fewer physical service points and as a result many library branches have closed down.

When the latest municipal reform was introduced on 1. January 2007 this development accelerated, not least due to the financial crisis.

Unfortunately the open library concept has taken some time getting off the ground, and it has not been possible to make the model operational before the desired development won

through. Had it happened, perhaps the closure of some of the smaller libraries could have been avoided.

The service model

In Danish libraries the users have primarily been serviced via a model featuring *general opening hours* and the service *book-a-librarian*. The latter has gained a footing to a greater or lesser extent in most of the larger libraries.

Self-service – an open library without any staff present – is the new addition that complements the concept in the same way as cash dispensers for getting cash quickly have broadened the concept for the banks' customer service.

An important parameter has also been accessibility, where small libraries in rural areas and suburbs will be exploited much more rationally, if the concept is added to ways of accessing the library.

HISTORICAL OUTLINE

Silkeborg

The extended form of self-service – to open the library towards the users in the area by way of special access cards – was established when Silkeborg Public Library in 2004 took over the operational responsibility for Gjern Municipality's libraries. Silkeborg Library had already for some years been using RFID-chip for identification in the administrative handling of library materials, and the idea of using the chip in a special borrower's card grew out of this.

With funding from the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media as well as help from the innovation company Cordura, an access computer was initially developed for the library, which – upon verification of the user in the library's database, gave access to the library. When accessing the library, a logging of borrower-ID to the system's server was simultaneously activated, and cameras put up in the library took pictures of any movement in front of them. These data were collected on an external hard disk and kept for a fortnight to enable the library to follow up in case of theft or vandalism.

For the time being the age limit for access has been fixed at 16 years – but children are welcome, accompanied by adults with RFID-cards.

An Info Holder was erected at the same time for users inside the library. On the Info Holder one can – having inserted the user card and tapped in the pin code – see borrower status, reservations and accounts, and you also get the opportunity to search in the library's collections via a web interface.

In order to inspire to new loans it was decided to combine the exposure of a book on the Info Holder with a reference in the database which had been established in connection with another Danish library project, i.e. My Library.

Via a linking together of 6-7 libraries' loans it was possible to combine information about the loan of a concrete title with the information that a number of further titles had been borrowed by other borrowers. This functionality is also known from the Internet where several online booksellers offer the same kind of inspiration, when an actual title is being purchased. The list mentioned is an inducement to new reading, and appears if the ordered book is available in the database of the web service. The new suggestions appear in anonymous form without information about previous borrowers.

Another innovation is a service which searches in the web service 'netmusikken.dk' where virtual music files (WMA with DRM protection) can be downloaded by registered borrowers. In this web service the placing of a CD on the Info Holder can release a reference that plays 30 seconds of the first number of the CD with the opportunity to listen to the remaining numbers on the same conditions. Both possibilities are called by the material's ID (Faust number) which is identical with the library's ID on the material in the databases mentioned.

Apart from this, a HelpDesk has been connected to the Info Holder. In the first phase as video call to a colleague in front of a PC at Silkeborg Library. In the second phase with the possibility for call to chosen telephone number via a dedicated Skype phone connection.

The next step will probably be the connection to a nationwide call centre on the Info Holder, developed in collaboration with the national service 'Biblioteksvagten' (Ask-a-librarian).

Aalborg

In 2008 Vodskov Library - inspired by Gjern Library – introduced the possibility to enter the library by way of an ordinary National Health medical card – without validation in the library's borrower's register. The only thing that was checked initially when entering was municipal affiliation, i.e. the municipal residence was Aalborg. Aalborg has since introduced this form of access in 2-3 other libraries in the municipality, with no age limits.

Other places

During the project sequence with self-service in Gjern and Vodskov many people paid a visit to gather inspiration. A great deal of interest has been generated and a desire to integrate the service in other libraries. But only with the introduction of the extra financial 'pool' of 6 mil. DKK, which the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media released for the development of new service forms in Danish libraries in 2009, have things started to move rapidly in relation to the establishment of open self-serviced libraries as a supplement to manned opening hours.

The only other place in Scandinavia where one will find an open library is in Veberöd near Lund in Sweden, where a library branch opened 1. November 2009.

Reactions from the users

Before, during and after the introduction of the concept in Silkeborg Libraries the users have had to adapt to the new way of using the library. This has happened via focus groups who took part in the discussions about security, opening hours and support facilities etc. during unmanned opening hours.

The users' reaction has been extremely positive. The new opening concept has meant flexibility and open-

ness vis-à-vis the local community. Picking up reserved materials has become easy, and the users groups are now fitting visits to the library into their daily rhythm – without any problems at all. And that applies to everyone – whether you just come by on the way from work, are a child-minder, teacher or just need a film for a Friday night.

Ownership in terms of the library has also been intensified thanks to the library's increased openness towards the local community.

Technical solutions

The technical solution at the Silkeborg Libraries is based on using the RFID chip on loan materials, but also in a newly developed access card, where a mounted chip carries borrower-ID added from the library's database when being processed.

After registration of card and displaying user name, the computer at the entrance requests a 4-figure pin code corresponding to the one, which is also being used when borrowing or making reservations on the net. The user is validated in the library's database of patrons before access.

Aalborg Libraries have not made new cards or had the possibility of using RFID-chip, but have just used a National Health medical card which contains information about personal ID number and municipal affiliation. Pin code has not been requested.

In Aalborg it has been possible to phone the duty desk at Aalborg Library, while an Info Holder at Gjern &

Them Libraries have had a pressure-sensitive screen with 'Call' function connected to a SKYPE account which via the Internet has put the call through to Service Information at Silkeborg Library.

The technical solutions in Silkeborg have been created primarily via Cordura, while a local firm, Lønstrup Sikring, has produced the technical system in Aalborg.

The interest in open libraries has meant that also well-established system suppliers have embraced the concept. Just recently, Axiell has offered a Biblio Branch-Solution, which contains the same functionalities for access and security as the solution at Silkeborg Libraries.

More time for the users

In Gjern more than 50% of the loans take place in the hours of self-service. And the loan figures are rising in all the places that have introduced the concept. The innovative technology has thus not only made it easier to visit the library, but has also given the staff the opportunity to redefine their own work tasks during the manned opening hours.

And that has i.a. meant more time for arranging events and other social and experimental tasks which will continue to form an important part of the general library profile.

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OPENING THE LIBRARY

People entering the Vestre Toten Public Library in Norway are inspired to read and to explore the library's collections. The library entrance makes them stop and look, even when they really meant to pass by. Busy people soon find something of interest, while others stay much longer - and that was precisely our intention. Ideas from the British interior display concept 'Opening the Book' have been put to good use.

The library's identity

The Vestre Toten Public Library provides library services to a population of some 12,500 in the municipality of Vestre Toten which lies roughly two hours by road from Oslo. The main library is situated in Raufoss, a community with considerable agricultural activity in addition to industrial plants employing highly-skilled workers. The library building, which dates from 1978, has high ceilings and a total area of some 450 sq.m. Its situation as part of a cultural centre means that we naturally tend to place the emphasis on the culture-related aspects of library activities. We are obliged to make a choice with regard to profile and collections within the confines of the space available. Consequently we give priority to active, outward promotion and our collections consist mainly of fiction, films, comics and music.

Library identity was our starting point, when in 2006 we began to plan the rebuilding of the library. One precondition was that attention should be paid to the principle of 'univer-

sal design', ensuring access to all, regardless of disablement or limited mobility. Other aspects of importance included greater awareness of user behaviour, a purposeful development of our collections and a strong desire to promote the library's contents. We were already familiar with the English concept known as 'Opening the Book' and with its founder Rachel van Riel. Her ideas concerning patterns of user behaviour were particularly helpful when it came to planning the library interior. During the planning stage we considered choices based loosely on user categories we had formulated for ourselves. These included the busy borrower, the routine borrower, the book lover, the sceptic, those who know exactly what they are looking for - and those who do not. Research shows that this latter category represents the largest group of borrowers and is increasing all the time.

This was a situation we hoped to rectify.

Entrance area and reception

The entrance area is the library's most important feature as far as fittings and design are concerned. This is also the area most influenced by the British concept 'Opening the Book'. The library entrance must appeal to all categories of users and make them feel welcome. It should provide a tempting impression of what the library has to offer, giving a clear picture of the nature and breadth of its contents and surprising visitors in a positive manner. The entrance area should also contain several display points where selected samples of the library's contents can be presented and where the visitor in a hurry may perhaps find something of interest.

Display furniture

The display fittings in the entrance area function well in attracting the attention of visitors. They are of a convenient height, accommodate an acceptable number of books and offer a good general view. The angle and height are such as to invite visitors to take hold of a book - and this is often enough to achieve the desired result. Since this furniture is designed to be sales-promoting, it is left to the library to decide exactly what to promote and to make active use of the potential. Displays are completely changed every fortnight, or even sooner, in order to offer visitors new suggestions and ideas. The books must be arranged so that the front covers fit well together and the title and author are clearly visible. There is a great difference between book covers in England and those in Norway. Paperbacks and

bright colours are normal over there, whereas in Norway the majority of books are still hardback with their covers in subdued colours. Therefore we deliberately display the books with as much colour contrast as possible. We could say that we have developed our own 'Norwegian method', using bright splashes of colour to display the books in relation to each other.

New books are not to be found in the entrance area. They have their own place further on in the library. The display racks serve to present books already on our shelves, books which are easily forgotten once the initial excitement surrounding their publication has died down. Classic novels are also well suited to being promoted in this way. Films and music are displayed separately near the entrance, the aim being to underline the breadth of the library's collections even before visitors have really entered. This first impression may well decide whether or not they go any further.

Categorisation

This task began with a study tour where we drew inspiration from others, the Asker Library deserving particular mention. We have chosen a more extensive categorisation than before on the basis of our newly-acquired knowledge that the majority of borrowers are not really sure what they are looking for. Both the 'borrower in a hurry' and the 'routine borrower' appreciate this categorisation.

In addition to non-fiction, categorisation has now been extended to certain areas of fiction and we have put together a separate display of selected classical works, both new and old. This initiative took place at the same time as a wide-spread debate on our literary heritage in the Norwegian press and the selection has been made with the help of 'The Western Canon' by Harald Bloom, the American critic and professor of literature. The result can of course be discussed – and we are happy to do so! Similar categories have been drawn up to cover light reading and crime novels. Together with the improved display system, this makes works of fiction more easily accessible to the majority of users.

Collection development and discarding

Our book collection had to be considerably reduced, both because it was full of dead and obsolete material and because we needed space for the new method of display. In advance of the rebuilding we therefore carried out an extensive programme of elimination according to the method formulated by Niels Ole Pors, professor at the Danish School of Library and Information. This is a systematic, quantitative method of discarding which aims to ensure that the books on the shelves are attractive to library users, while at the same time giving consideration to breadth, quality and the wishes of the public.

While this discarding process was being carried out, the need to improve our collection of classical works led to our trawling through antique bookshops to find the older literature we lacked. This process has resulted in a more active attitude towards our collections among the library staff.

Children and young people

The children's section was the first to start discarding material according to the Pors method and also here we carried out an extensive categorisation of works of fiction. Since the rebuilding left the children's section with less space, it has been redefined as only for children up to ten years old. Older children will feel more at home in the rest of the library.

We have no specific department for young people. Instead the whole library is available to them. Of course, wherever they find comics, an audio chair, some magazines and books for teenagers, that is where they tend to gather.

Colour and design - listen to the professionals!

Colours were chosen in close cooperation with the architect and the interior designer. Apart from the design of the entrance area, we felt obliged to respect the building's original style. The vision was clear enough but not the means to achieve it. Many of the colours we now find most satisfying would never have been chosen without professional advice. Do not make such decisions on your own. Listen to the experts!

Results

The number of visitors has risen by 25%. We also have the impression that many people spend more time in the library than before, although we have no statistics to support this belief. From random tests we do know, however, that categorisation has had an effect. In the classical category borrowers often take out books which previously stood untouched on the shelves. The local people are proud of their library, which in turn gives higher status to reading. Now our only problem rests with the waiting lists.

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Opening the library with new, untraditional furniture. Hjørring Library. Denmark

GARAGET - ALL THIS AND BOOKS TOO

Garaget, or in English - the Garage, is a 100 year old former industrial depot at the intersection of three city districts in Malmö. Situated just outside of the City centre but close to that invisible line between the inner city and the suburbs this is a part of Malmö that is exciting and challenging to work in. You can hear over a hundred different languages spoken here and you can meet young students, newly arrived refugees and Danish commuters. Comparatively high-income quarters are situated close to some of Malmö's most socially and economically deprived areas.

The project idea

- development through dialogue

The doors of Garaget opened on the 8th of February, 2009 but the process leading up to the opening had been going on for some considerable time. The project's steering group represents a cooperative effort between five municipal departments – three City Districts and the City Departments for Culture and Service.

The steering group defined four main aims for Garaget:

- To provide local library service.
- To play an active role in shaping and evaluating various urban development projects in Malmö.
- To be a resource for visitor participation and creativity.
- To be a place where dialogue skills are taught and practised.

Inspired by the success of London's 'Idea Stores', focus groups consisting of Garaget's future patrons were invited to the empty factory to take part in a dialogue. The make-up of the groups reflected their members' different ages, gender and cultural backgrounds and consisted of citizens, members of local non-profit associations, representatives for local businesses, politicians and council employees. The potential use of the area was discussed from the point of view of the activities that were to take place there. The result of these discussions is collected in a document that is one of Garaget's most important steering policies.

As project leader I regard this material as Garaget's 'moral conscience'; a compass showing the direction of the process. Not an immutable canon, but a starting point which can be continually developed by dialogue with patrons, a dialogue that can be kept alive by 'open meetings' where all and anyone are welcome to participate in discussions about the future development of Garaget.

When Garaget opened it was more or less empty. The idea being that it should develop naturally and not be presented as a finished product. It was important to show that there was real substance to claims that Garaget would be a continually ongoing process. This has subsequently been demonstrated by continual efforts devoted to meeting the requests and needs of patrons.

Activities and events

Garaget's premises are a good example of how activities have developed in dialogue with users. The objective was to make Garaget flexible, open to change, have the ability to host larger events and, at the same time, be regarded as homely and inviting.

The library was provided with bookshelves on wheels so that they could be easily moved. Part of the premises has floors of sprung parquet for dancing, gymnastics and other physical activities. Movable walls in the form of screens on wheels and flexible curtain walls make the creation of rooms within rooms possible without stopping the production of larger events. Antique furniture creates a cozy feeling and also meets requirements for sustainable development.

The desire for an 'open, creative workshop' was met by allowing a part of Garaget to be used for handicrafts and other light activi-

ties. Tools, equipment and space are made available and our patrons supply materials and ideas. Garaget has even invested in technical solutions such as a film projector and sound and lighting systems.

These are just a few examples of how the premises are under continuous development. The focus is on increased usability and flexibility based on the real needs of users.

Another central component of Garaget's activities was to create a participatory arena for Malmö residents. Anyone wanting to do something in Garaget has entirely free hands. Furniture can be freely moved as long as it is put back afterwards, and all of our equipment is at the disposal of users.

Garaget costs nothing to use and in certain cases we can even assist with event financing if the activity in question is relevant for other patrons.

Garaget employees can provide support when needed but, with rare exceptions, do not themselves organize events. Many activities in Garaget take place outside of ordinary opening hours and the organizers are responsible for the premises. This means Garaget is accessible 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Library service

Like all activities libraries must change to keep pace with the world around them.

But there is considerable uncertainty as to the nature of these changes. What expectations do patrons have? What changes will affect their lives positively?

The dialogue process that has characterized Garaget's development has revealed something interesting, namely that users do not always have the answers either. The results I received from the above-mentioned process could easily have been applicable to a library from the 1970s – with the addition of a couple of computers.

It is obvious that there has to be a pedagogical process which allows libraries to relate to the world they operate in. Library and library patron must define the meaning of the library of the future together.

Right from the beginning the role of Garaget's library was an open question in the process. It could have been anything – from a traditional library to a library without books. The role-defining process was to be carried out in close association with Garaget's visitors and I quickly realized that the first thing to be done was to establish a representation of a library. If visitors do not see something that says 'library' then initiating a dialogue will be difficult as will communicating and understanding the question at hand. A number of bookshelves and a total of around 3 500 items, a minimum that is Garaget's maximum.

The ambition is not to have all subjects and all items in the collection; rather the focus is on meeting patrons' demands and interests. So far it has been rare for individual titles to be requested. The tendency is towards different subjects and categories: current fiction for example, language courses, 'exciting' art books or books about different types of hobbies. This is where the patron's wishes meet the librarian's competence in book selection.

The mere presence of patrons on the premises is a form of 'silent' dialogue. Initially there were not so many young people visiting us and this was reflected in the collection where there were fewer items for this age group. Now we have a large number of young people among our patrons and the collection has quadrupled.

Besides a streamlined collection the most important factor is the marketing of the options the library system offers. Even though the collection is relatively limited, Garaget has, by way of local requisitions and inter-urban loans, access to Malmö City's entire collection within 24 hours, and the whole of Sweden within a few days. And of course direct contact with the librarian is a central part of the service; the librarian's role as intermediary and guide is central.

Hyper modern technology plays an important and central role. Computers, wi-fi, printers, photocopiers, etc. are self-evident in a modern public library and Garaget will continue to provide increased patron access to



The Garage in Malmö, Sweden. Photo: Malmö Stadsbibliotek

interesting technological innovations. For me it is self-evident that, within reason, visitors to Garaget have access to the same technological facilities that they have at home.

In the near future Garaget plans to dramatically expand its range of technological services. An increased number of public computers (laptops), experiments with lending USB memory sticks and perhaps even chargers for various types of mobile devices.

We were also investigating the possibility of replacing Windows with Linux as the operative system on the public computers. It is a question of democracy. An open, free, user-operated system replaces a closed, commercial and owner-operated. 2.0 replaces 1.0

Garaget is an interesting environment for a public library to operate in. The library shares the premises with people who have come to mend their bikes, play basketball or drink coffee, and this allows interesting synergistic effects.

Opportunities for interaction with patrons are excellent: all kinds of meetings – between individuals, cultures and different capabilities. It is the real world, happening now and the library is there, actively or passively.

To be able to actively participate it is important that there are no structural barriers between the library and other activities in Garaget. Movable shelves that the arrangers of events can use as they wish; books and newspapers spread throughout the premises. More like a book café with different types of games spread out among the tables. No rules or prohibitive signs. Coffee and books can be taken anywhere on the premises.

Finally I would like to mention an interesting aspect of working at Garaget – the traditional role of librarians as intermediaries for information and culture has been given a new dimension.

Working at Garaget gives one the competence to take on the role as social intermediary.

I can use Garaget's considerable local network to assist patrons we may be unable to help by referring them to other premises or partners.

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FROM BACKGROUND TO CENTRE STAGE

You surely know of a good local grocery store. Apples and cherries look enticing; your hand never touches a rotten orange. The lettuces are not wilted and the fresh herbs provide inspiration for your dinner plans. The readily available selection is perfect: not too much, not too little. The shopkeeper is up-to-date, knows what his or her customers want and anticipates changes. Perch filets can be found at the service counter and organic bread in a paper bag can be found on the bread shelves. You can ask for advice about how to fry a steak or finish your shopping trip in just a few minutes.

So how do you recognize a good library? Periodicals and books entice you, no fear of outdated travel guides. The materials are clean, new arrivals and surprises plucked from the depths of the collection inspire you. The readily available selection is perfect: not too much, not too little.

The library director is always up-to-date and ready to continually develop both the collections and activities. The staff is enthusiastic and knowledgeable.

At the information counter, no inquirer is left wondering about classification or words to search for information. Together with a staff member, the inquirer can look for the needed information and receive consultation.

If necessary, the staff will call a specialist or tell you how you can send an old picture to relatives in Botswana. You can ask anything you want and grab the latest reading material to read on your trip.

Pohjois-Haaga Library was deemed to be hopeless as a place to house a library; it was not originally intended to be a library. A store had been planned on the ground floor of the apartment building; the library was put there temporarily. This temporary arrangement has lasted over 20 years. While waiting for the new premises and for the libraries to be joined together, the collection mushroomed, the various parts of the library deteriorated, mini-blinds were left hanging, shelves were added and it became difficult to clean, time stood still... The locale indeed became impossible.

Until we saw the possibilities: The door opened straight out to the street. The windows that were covered by the mini-blinds were big. There was certainly passers-by and visibility, if we wanted to be seen. We did want to be seen, and we wanted to make a good library. We decided to renovate the library.

Architecture and Design Firm Talli was responsible for the interior design. The lighting and flooring were renovated. All of the fixtures, shelves, tables, chairs, self-service machines, patron computers and the service desk were renewed. The blinds were removed from the windows, the design of the outside lights and logo was changed, and one third of the collection was discarded.

On the opening day, the library's regular patrons simply would not believe that we had not acquired more surface area. The area was exactly the same, but it was a different library. One man stepped in and asked how long this had been a library. We told him, "For twenty years", and he said, "I have been walking these streets for ten years, but I never noticed it before".

And now, more than two years after the renovation? Book loans have increased and the number of visitors, especially, has gone up. Our small, dapper library has functioned as a venue for visiting authors, an elf path at Christmas time, as well as a location for absentee voting during elections. The goal was to make the library and its activities visible from the street, to people pas-

sing by on buses, and to those on their way to work. The library visitors inside the library are like an advertisement for the library; ‘that old lady is sitting in front of a computer, so why can’t I?’

When library visitors have been drawn in, this is when our work begins. Every day there are expectations to meet. Attractive premises and a trimmed collection is not enough. A locale and collection can be updated and tuned up, whatever it may be. But if the staff, i.e. those working in the locale, are not knowledgeable and enthusiastic, even a beautiful locale is like an empty scene. We know this, and this is why it works.

Back at the local grocery store: On the vegetable shelves, a guacamole package catches your eye. Not just some jar of green mush, but the necessary ingredients for making real guacamole: avocado, lemon, fresh chili, garlic, and tomatoes. The shopkeeper has happily surprised you again! How could the idea be applied to our library?

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Lots of open space at Drammen Library, Norway
Photo: Anders Ericson

PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES IN THE LIBRARIES

THE PHYSICAL LIBRARY

Every day many people make their way to the library – some to borrow material, others to search on the Internet, use e-resources, participate in arrangements, courses, book clubs, homework assistance or other activities.

Several libraries have already launched extensive programme activities in order to cut a profile and in that way brand the library in the local community. They want to show that the library means more than information on the Internet; they aim to demonstrate the diversity of their services and their involvement and dedication and also that libraries are democratic places for real people where lifelong learning, education and cultural experiences are happening here and now.

Libraries play an active role in local, regional and national societal development. They make plans and stage cultural activities and arrangements for every age group and they participate actively in the upgrading of the citizens' IT skills so as to meet the needs of both the individual and of society as a whole.

In connection with the latest Danish library act in 2000 the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media launched a competence development project which were to ensure that library staff improved their skills in applying new technology.

The project 'Competence development in four networks' has evolved over the years and has now found a form that guarantees a continuous competence development of the staff and an upgrading of the citizens' use of IT and Web 2.0. A network of coordinators have organised competence development of library

staff by arranging courses, workshops, joint marketing etc.; those who have been trained, instruct their colleagues who then subsequently arrange courses for the public.

The report *Public use of the Internet 2008* reveals that in 2008 85% of the public had access to the Internet, and 90% under sixty had access to PC and Internet. A report from the Danish IT and Telecom Agency shows, however, that not all citizens can exploit the technology to the full, similar reports from Norway and Sweden show the same tendency.

In 2007 the Agency for Libraries and Media and the IT and Telecom Agency signed a cooperation agreement on mediation of the Internet portal Borger.dk (citizen.dk), which is a common access to public digital self-service solutions for Danish library users. The aim is for the citizens as far as possible to use public digital self-service solutions.

All Danish public libraries are involved in the effort to encourage citizens to use Borger.dk via training of staff, arranging workshops and through nationwide PR campaigns. In the 98 Danish municipalities a network of Borger.dk contacts in the libraries are responsible for the organisation of competence development of colleagues and training activities in Borger.dk. for the public.

LEARN MORE ABOUT IT is another initiative which has been launched and financed by the Danish Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. On the basis of the annually recurrent investigation into the Danes' IT skills, the ministry has set aside financial means for the upgrading of the citizens' competences in relation to IT.

The IT and Telecom Agency, the Agency for Libraries and Media as well as a large number of education associations, unions, interest groups, Local Government Denmark etc. cooperate on the training of 60 IT-facilitators, who are to instruct the public in the use of IT, i.e. Internet, e-mail and digital self-service solutions.

The IT-facilitators are recruited from the participating partners' own ranks and half of them come from various Danish public libraries. They have been trained in making the IT-instruction easily accessible in order to meet the needs of citizens with few or no IT qualifications. Like the contact persons to Borger.dk, the IT-facilitators must pass on their knowledge to colleagues in their own library or other libraries.

Inspired by the nationwide initiatives several libraries have joined together in developing regional projects like for example Netting, which is a self-tuition programme built around five simple basic phases, like Google, Citizen on the Net, Web 2.0 in the form of small video films or podcast.

Similar initiatives have been taken in both Norway and Sweden. In Norway ABM-utvikling (Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority) has in their project Digikombi taken the initiative to develop a national model for digital competence enhancement of the citizens. Four model libraries have been selected, which have received funding for developing learning arenas for digital competence. The objective in developing a national model for digital competence enhancement in the public library is to help increase the public's IT competences, to create a close connection between the public libraries and other suppliers and players in the local community and finally to create a common framework around a task that several public libraries are already carrying out.

BILDANÄTVERK in Sweden is a project for library staff, who wish to develop the public libraries as linguistic, digital and democratic bridges for learning. The project consists of five sub-projects that form the core of the project: Language cafés, Överbrygga digitala klyftor (Bridging digital divides), Vuxna i lärande (Adult learning), Idea Store and the Democracy Project. ITK-lyft is a 2-year national project, starting in the autumn of 2009 and is intended as a follow-up to the sub-project 'Överbrygga digitala klyftor'. The aim is in time to turn the Internet and digital information into a tool for every citizen in his daily life.

'23 things' swept like a wave from the US across the libraries in Europe. Many libraries in the Nordic countries have used the concept for an upgrading of the staff in the use of social technologies through e-learning. In the project 'Ud på Nettet' (Onto the net) a number of Danish libraries have joined forces in developing e-learning programmes for the public based on 23 things.

It applies to all the projects that the target group is adult citizens with no or little IT experience. Generally speaking, it is free-of-charge for the citizens to participate in IT upgrading courses in the Nordic countries.

In the Nordic countries the public library is often singled out as being the obvious place for the public to be instructed in the use of IT, and there is no doubt that the libraries have seized this unique opportunity to take on a prominent role in the information society.

Another example of the libraries' important roles in the local community is the possibility of making their mark in local cultural life. The public libraries have a long tradition of staging cultural events for children and adults in the form of films, theatre and literature. The arrangements help to profile and market the libraries as cultural ambassadors in society. Over the past few years the arrangements have developed from isolated events to actual programme activity with focus on certain themes. An example is the Deichmann Library in Oslo, which offers reading circles in the same way as the libraries in Denmark.

Together with www.litteratursiden.dk and Radio Denmark, the libraries are now encouraging the citizens to join book clubs. The public libraries have emphatically underlined the fact that literature is something one discusses in the local library. Once a month from December till May Danish readers gather together in book clubs in the libraries. Six new novels are introduced and over a cup of coffee 8-10 enthusiastic readers meet to discuss a book. The novels have all been nominated for the Danish Radio Fiction Prize. In recent years about 100 libraries have been running book clubs, and each month one of the clubs is selected for having the debate recorded and broadcast on the air. The interest has been keen and the activities have engineered the establishment of more book clubs. Often the book club is run by a librarian. In other words, the library has once more become a place where fictional literature is discussed and the place where readers can meet interesting and topical authors.

Realising that many people have not got the time to meet on an evening, www.litteratusiden.dk established a couple of years ago a large number of online book clubs. All you need is access to the net, to sign on and that you feel like debating with people who are not actually in the same room.

Book clubs for children are also beginning to emerge. The concept is the same as for adults – that children meet every fortnight/every month and talk about the books. A children's librarian is generally present.

Other learning-oriented programme activities are for example homework cafés. With the Danish Ministry of Refugees, Immigration and Integration Affairs and the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media as primus motors it became possible in 2007 to apply for the means to establish homework cafés in the library. More than 100 libraries jumped at the opportunity to offer homework cafés for school children who can then get

help with their home assignments. Several of the cafés are intended for children of another ethnic background than Danish. The quite exceptional thing about homework cafés is that the assistants are young volunteers who are organised via a voluntary organisation like e.g. Save the Children. The library's role is to be the facilitator for the activity and to support and market this offer.

- www.it-formidler.dk
- digikombi.biblioteknett.no
- www.bildanetverk.se

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GAMING IN THE LIBRARIES

Public libraries the world over have gasped, protested, cried and rejoiced every time they have been required to add a new medium to their collections. Debates have raged about the moral aspect of lending out romantic novels to young ladies, making blasphemous comics available to the public and even including films, audio books and music in library collections.

The *Norwegian Library Act* stipulates: “Public libraries shall be responsible for promoting knowledge, education and other cultural activities by providing access to information and by making available books and other suitable material, free of charge, to everyone residing in Norway.

Each library shall in its services to children and adults stress the importance of providing high-quality, comprehensive and up-to-date material.

Library activities shall be directed towards the public and the services shall be publicized.”

Computer games have been a popular leisure pastime for more than 30 years. Almost three generations have grown up with them and they are no longer the sole province of teenagers. The average age for a gamer today is 35 and both young children and senior citizens play as never before. More and more public libraries organise computer games evenings for various age groups. Golf in the library is an excellent alternative for the newly-pensioned lawyer or nurse, while global conflict games like *Global Conflict: Palestine* give us the opportunity to experience and participate

vicariously in the conflicts of today. Serious, pedagogical games open the door to new ways of learning and make material more easily accessible than before.

In the course of the last three decades computer games have developed on an enormous scale. The period since the first game (*Spacewar*) in 1962 and the launching of the latest MMO-game (*Massive Multiplayer Online*) has also seen a rapid growth in commercialisation. Games have been developed for many different platforms, but it would now appear that the vast majority of sales are games to be played on PlayStation, Xbox and Wii. In April 2009 PlayStation reported sales of 605,000 consoles for PS2.

One may well suggest that public libraries already have more than enough to do. Should we really take on another new medium? I can only repeat, like a mantra, the text of the library act, which must be acted upon for all it is worth in the increasingly more commercialised situation of today: “In the services offered to both children and adults each individual library shall give priority to quality, variety and topicality. Library activities shall be directed outwards and library services made widely known.”

If libraries are to stay true to this image, they must make a very important decision. We believe that the choice of supporting our users and meeting their wishes and needs represents the very core of the library system’s social responsibilities.

It is interesting to see that more and more libraries are taking this challenge seriously by installing consoles and acquiring games which seem to meet the demands of their users. This is a necessary skill which cannot, however, be taken for granted with regard to those who obtained their librarian qualifications some 30 years ago or who have never played a computer game or installed a console.

The fact that librarians are trained in the organisation and dissemination of knowledge and in the acquisition of information means that they are well-informed and up-to-date with the latest media developments. The unique challenge with regard to computer games in libraries lies in the fact that this particular medium has been largely the province of the younger generation, while the average age of librarians is still relatively high. The positive aspect is that the library sector appears to be led by intelligent people abreast of developments and with a strong

wish to see libraries looking to the future and embracing learning, entertainment, culture and education, regardless of the type of medium employed.

Creating wider interest

The Combined Library of Drammen holds regular computer game evenings and has arranged all-night sessions on four occasions. Initially there were 40 participants but by the fourth evening the number had risen to 120. The arrangement had sold out within a week and without any publicity whatsoever. Every Thursday now a session takes place from 4-7 pm with adults present as organisers. Games are viewed on a large screen, usually Wii-games, since these appeal as much to girls as to boys.

In Drammen there are also plans to introduce computer games to the older generation and to look at the possibility of arranging courses where participants can learn to create simple games of their own.

As time goes by we see games being created based on books and films, also films and books inspired by computer games. This development opens up the unique possibility for librarians to approach the public in new ways by using three different types of media to present the same content.

Guidance and expertise

The expertise of librarians and the wide variety of library services on offer are of great value to the community and presumably the main incentive for people to visit and use libraries. However, when it comes to evaluating the quality of computer games, many librarians feel inadequate.

In Denmark they have launched spilogmedier.dk, a cooperation between libraries and library staff. This website is developed and run by a collaboration of several libraries throughout the country, including those in the municipality of Frederiksberg in Copenhagen and the towns of Roskilde, Herning, Odense and Vejle, all working in cooperation with the Danish Library Centre. With its articles on computer games as a genre, as a cul-

tural phenomenon and as an experience, this website functions extremely well, offering a quality service for those interested in looking beyond the bestseller shelves in the shops. Library staff lacking expertise or any interest in computer games will also find this website a useful aid.

The possibility has been announced of lending out games by downloading to a personal computer. This initiative really puts libraries on the map with regard to the distribution of content, culture and experiences to a new generation.

The philanthropist and chocolate pioneer, Milton S. Hershey, once said, "Give people quality. There is no better advertisement". Quality, self-assurance, expertise and new experiences represent the libraries' path to survival in the media world of today.

Computer games day 2009

The last three years have seen initiatives in some libraries to set up sections devoted to computer games, to arrange associated events and to create a demand for these services. On the 14th November 2009 a national computer games day was held in Norway for the first time.

Norwegian libraries have been provided with extra momentum in this area by a government report in 2008 concerning computer games and a further report in the summer of 2009 with regard to libraries. These reports contain a proposal to look into the possibility of establishing a purchasing and lending programme for Norwegian computer games. With this encouragement the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority, working in collaboration with the Stavanger Cultural Centre (Sølvberget), the Combined Library of Drammen and the Norwegian School of Information Technology (NITH), launched an initiative to kick-start a computer games campaign in Norwegian libraries. A specific day was selected on which to offer a nationwide invitation to both young and old, thereby making it possible to focus at one and the same time on library services,



New trends for the children in the physical library.
Top: Hjørring Library, Denmark. Photo: Laura Stamer
Bottom: Lomma Library, Sweden

computer games and the library as a meeting place. On the appointed day more than 30 libraries throughout the country, together with one in Denmark, arranged for the public to participate in a programme of computer games.

We hope and trust that next year we can cooperate on an all-Scandinavian day on which to invite computer games enthusiasts of all ages into our libraries.

Why play computer games in a library?

For many, many years the library has been a centre for learning, reading and information. The key to this has been active encouragement to the public to read for pleasure and enjoy the experience. Today one of the ways of extending this activity is through the medium of entertaining, absorbing and challenging computer games.

The library is still the place to enjoy and experience these new worlds.

These days we are witness to an explosive development in the types of media available to the man in the street. New technology offers access to information and culture and entertainment at the touch of a button or just five minutes walk away. Internet access has fundamentally changed the process of searching for and acquiring information. Whether we like it or not, the Internet has made it possible to download anything and everything libraries possess. The difference is that libraries offer quality. They have the expertise necessary to select and to disseminate material, thereby presenting a wide range of media within a suitable context.

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THE DEMOTEK RESHUFFLING THE MINDSET!

Demoteket was a project that was run by Reaktor Southeast from 2003 to 2008. Reaktor Southeast is a powerhouse of film and youth culture in Kronoberg, Kalmar and Blekinge Counties. The Demotek's partners were the National Council for Culture, Länsbibliotek southeast, Region Library in Kalmar, the Kalmar Union of Regions, Regions Association Södra Småland and Blekinge Region.

The basic idea behind the Demotek was to find new ways to work alongside young people at the libraries. Initially the idea was to give adolescents and young adults the opportunity to submit their own products for lending. Since then the concept was expanded with concerts, workshops, training sessions in digital media for staff and much more.

The first Demotek started in Ronneby in 2003 and when the project ended, there were 63 Demoteks. Since then another 20 have been added.

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Participation, youth cultures and applying new ways of thinking is a fun way to work. It is not always easy, partly because there are so many different ways in which you can do it. Demoteket, the project I have worked on together with close to seventy libraries, is one way. A shelf that is so much more than a shelf.

Demoteket was a project run by us at Reaktor Southeast, a resource centre for film and young communication in the Swedish counties of Kronoberg, Kalmar and Blekinge, during 2003 to 2008. Without our partners the Swedish Arts Council, Länsbibliotek Southeast, Region Library in Kalmar, Regional Council Southern Småland and Blekinge Region it would have been difficult to implement such a large project, and we are eternally grateful to them. But without all these great libraries that wanted to be included it would of course never have happened and we could never have imagined the scope of the project ahead of us as we once started out so long ago, if not for simply testing the first Demotek in Ronneby.

You who have or have had a Demotek through our project, or have heard us lecturing about it, will recognize the term 'the first rung of the ladder', which was a mindset that permeated the project. The first rungs of the ladder was therefore to allow adolescents and young adults to submit their own cultural products to be borrowed at libraries. Since then many cases have been built on various concepts at libraries, film screenings, concerts, workshops, inspiration meetings, training sessions in digital media and much more.

During the spring of 2009 we at Reaktor Southeast presented a book of inspiration about the Demotek as a conclusion to the project. One of the project's basic foundations is that there must be a driving force, cooperation and a sensitivity to what, in this case, the young people in the region demand. As for the young audience, I have often been involved in sittings, guessing or sighing over our failure to find out what they want. That it is hard to take but you can take advantage of something that is still going on and connect it to the library, so it is very much worth the effort. It is clear that you cannot make dance films at the library every day (or maybe you can?) But it strengthens the self-esteem – in both the young and in the libraries – something tremendously when you arrive at a successful collaboration. Then it is not just about attracting more work to the shelves by offering free t-shirts, but about something even bigger. Namely, to seize on its own power, courage and a willingness to do something together. I cannot emphasize enough, and there are many

good examples of when the Demotek has been used as a springboard to find new ways of working with youth cultures to attain participation in the library.

There are many different answers as to how a Demotek has transformed a library, both physically and virtually. The Demotek was a project which we were very careful to make sure that each library felt was its own. They were and are free to use their Demotek exactly as they wish. The reason for this was, of course, that libraries would dare step outside their comfort zone (you know, the one that we all have, a bit scary to do but exciting nevertheless), and to give some serious thought to what possibilities there are in visiting their particular town, with its particular Demotek. The fact that the cooperation between Dunkers Culture House, Film and Helsingborg City Library just in Helsingborg worked well, does not necessarily mean that it is a concept for success everywhere. Or to have a group of young Demoteksambassadörer in Rimforsa, and so on. All this is really about how to set up the parameters as to what kind of participatory culture you want. And to dare make the effort, and daring to make the wrong decisions.

An example of how the Demotek concept as a libraries' 'own' thing might appear was the Västerås City Library, and especially our own personified heart and soul of the Demotek, Ingemar Johansson, who literally single-handedly organized a category for the Demotek in the digital media jukebox. Many libraries in the project have taken the very idea of the Demotek shelf and had grand openings with pomp and circumstance, and in some places they have taken the opportunity and revamped (or even created) a young department. In this way, the Demotek has really been an instigator of ideas regarding the physical library space design. Our shelf has really refurbished the business in several ways. "You might have a slightly more enclosed, cozy area so young people can withdraw if they so wish?". "Or should the shelf stand outside the entrance to the library to attract the curious?". "Perhaps it is foolish to have the information desk in the middle of the road as you enter so that the new visitors to the library feel unwelcome and registered?". "Shall we not try organize a training course in computer games so that we do not have

to take a chance and buy something that is not good?". To say nothing of the discussions on library web sites, to be or not be in social networking, blogging, twittering, how to market library services, discussions about interface and ease of use, libraries without books. I can only say that an awful lot has happened over the years as we have been running the Demotek. And it's a very exciting process to follow!

The vast majority of libraries in the project still retain their Demoteks, a few have thought it was too difficult to find material and therefore closed the project. However, we constantly get wind of new Demoteks starting up on their own, even if the project has now been completed and we are content to assist in distributing the remainder of our materials. It is also very rewarding to see that The Demotek has attracted attention and the concept has to some extent also spread to the other Nordic countries.

I do not believe that the Demotek is the only way or even the best way to work with local culture, youth and young adults. But our project has shown that it works very well as a kind of springboard towards a change. It has also proven to be a door opener for many libraries enabling them to discuss more actively the future of libraries, potential collaborations, perceptions towards different audiences, digital literacy, and many more important topics. It is not always easy to orient oneself in a changing society where almost everything is not what it appears. You need to fill it with new ideas, inspiration and maybe even help to see opportunities rather than obstacles. This is something I am very proud of and pleased to have had the privilege to work with throughout this project. There is no doubt that there is a lot happening in our library world that I would truly call the true spirit of the Demotek. Perhaps more so than ever before.

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Information Centre at Kongsvinger Library, Norway
Photo: Stein Sole



2.0
THE LIBRARY MOVES
WITH THE PEOPLE

LIBRARIES WHEREVER THERE ARE PEOPLE

What is required of the new library? What needs in the modern knowledge society can be met by libraries? How can they offer satisfactory services to users whose habits are changing and yet at the same time fulfil their ambition of reaching all sections of the population?

In recent years we in the Nordic countries have often discussed the social role of the library and the demands likely to be made on us by the new knowledge society now growing and developing. The library system faces the challenge of a new media and information environment. At the same time we must deal with profound changes in our learning processes, not only in the schools and in higher education but also in business and industry. These developments present an opportunity for a renewal of the public library system.

Libraries are experiencing from the outside world a significant pressure for change and they are already showing a readiness to think along new lines, as shown by the introduction of digital reference services to replace the traditional system, together with many large and small digital projects. Steps are being taken to achieve closer contact with library users, to widen tuition in the use of Internet-based services and information search and to bring library services out to all inhabitants of the local community. Library activities have always been based on cooperation within a network, both internally in the library system itself and with outside partners.

User behaviour in the library

It would be difficult to say what the library of the future could or should be without consi-

dering what is happening at this moment with library users, both inside and outside the library. What is the nature of the demand for library services in the local community of today and what kind of demand can we create?

Surveys have been carried out to define the way in which libraries are used and to determine to what extent the pattern differs from customer use in other fields of activity. Do the books borrowed from libraries mainly consist of titles different from those at the top of the booksellers' charts? How does a library really function as a social meeting place? In what way do public library users differ from people whose interests lie in other fields of culture and knowledge? Are those who often visit libraries the same people as those who make good use of sports facilities, cafés, parks and the cinema? Or is the user profile completely different?

'User behaviour in Norwegian city libraries' was a project aimed at finding out who exactly visits libraries, what they are looking for and how they use the services available. Going beyond statistics and the standard user surveys, the objective was to gain a closer insight into the actual nature of library use. Only 46% of visitors borrowed books, so what did the remainder do? Why did they spend such a long time in the library? A study was made of the library as an arena of learning and as a meeting place offering direct contact with other people. The results showed that differences in interior layout, the library's physical situation in the city and variations in the type of media on loan led to differing patterns of use.

The hunt for non-users

Libraries are concerned that the population in general is unaware of what the modern public library has to offer and there is wide recognition of the need for better publicity.

'The hunt for non-users' was the well-chosen name for a project devised by the Stavanger public library. The aim of the project was to find out why certain sections of the public make no use of libraries. By now we know a great deal about the people who regularly visit a library, but what about those who do not? Why do they stay away and what must be done to change their habits in this respect? The project set out to develop contacts with prospective partners in the local community and to spread the word

that excellent library services were available. The main argument among non-users for not taking advantage of the library was that they simply forget that it exists. The message was 'If you just remind us that you are there, we will use you more.' The project leader is now on the permanent staff of the Stavanger library, working to keep the library in the minds of the public.

New types of library

Recent years have seen the growth of new library concepts based on closer contact with users. Where a local library has been forced to close, other solutions have been tried in order to reach the inhabitants. Where the number of library visitors has fallen away, steps have been taken to revive interest and to reach new, potential users. These attempts include library services in shops, self-service libraries and mobile libraries which drive to places and events where people gather. These initiatives are important in local communities where resources are limited, but where the library wishes to adjust to the needs of the public.

Libraries have also strengthened and extended their repertoire as multi-media arenas and as centres providing inhabitants with information and assistance beyond the range of standard library services.

Getting out of the library

Libraries are present wherever there are people; on the Internet, in homes, in schools and at social and leisure gatherings. This development makes a demand on the librarian for new ways of thinking and working. Successful physical services become web-based as sources of reference and supportive projects for study and homework.

The majority of examples of cooperation, and perhaps the best, are to be found in the promotion of literature for children and young people. There is good collaboration with radio in this field, with kindergartens and language teachers to stimulate language and reading activities for the very young and also with sports organisations to encourage young athletes to read books and thereby strengthen their ability to concentrate.

Clearly the effects of such projects to promote the library in the local community and the possibility of reaching new target groups are extremely important when it comes to investing in initiatives which take the librarian out of the physical library and into the arenas of others.

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Rauma Culture Centre with library, Norway
Photo: Thomas Dahle

PARTNERSHIPS GENERATE INNOVATIVE LIBRARIES

FROM PRODUCT ORIENTATION TO USER ORIENTATION

The readjustment of library services in the knowledge society can be seen as a readjustment from collection orientation to a far more differentiated user orientation.

In the collection orientation work preparation, organisation and corporate culture are all defined by internal processes. The point of departure is always the product, which is uniform and free for all.

In the user-oriented activity, the point of departure is always to be found in the user's needs, which are systematically being examined and defined. The product is differentiated and adapted to the different user requirements. This process of development has taken place in numerous companies and can probably be termed a constituent ingredient in the transition from industrial to knowledge society.

Systematic building of partnerships between the library and other institutions, organisations and stakeholders can be seen as a central method of creating alliances with various user groups. Another important reason for working systematically with partnerships in the libraries is that at any rate the Nordic public libraries have been and still are characterized by a mono-culture where employee competences are extremely homogeneous. We know that mono-cultures generally experience greater difficulty in creating innovation than more complex cultures where many different professions are working together. In its extreme consequence one could maintain that without partnerships the library would be considerably impaired.

As an institution the library has always favoured cooperation, but the challenge has intensified in the knowledge society. It is primarily a question of creating alliances which help to reach new users, and alliances that guarantee development of services and competences. This means a more methodical and stringent approach to partnership agreements.

All the Nordic countries enjoy close cooperation at government level between memory institutions such as archives, museums and libraries. In Norway these institutions are even brought together in one institution under government administration.

Different types of partnerships

In practice partnerships can be formed with all kinds of partners: the market, the public, civic society.

The public would for example be educational institutions, kindergartens, all kinds of cultural institutions, and the municipal administration.

Civic society includes associations, NGO's, interest groups – or simply volunteers.

The market is the least cultivated area of cooperation. It may be the commercial cultural life, organisations that operate within the experience economy, but also all types of businesses which the library can service, and businesses which can enhance their profile through an alliance with the library.

The models for partnerships are also manifold ranging from very precise agreements to casual framework agreements or declarations of intent. From adhoc cooperations to strategic alliances.

The permanent strategic alliance is particularly relevant with partners who to a great extent favour the same goals as the library, e.g. other cultural institutions and all kinds of educational institutions, while adhoc cooperation would typically presuppose a reason. In the strategic partnership you work towards a common goal: to create more competent readers, get more people to participate in local community activities, overcome the digital divide. Common to all the models is that they aim to add more value. This can be in the shape of reaching more users and customers, improving a product in terms of quality, creating an innovation by adding new competences or simply by bringing together different cultures.

Sharing premises

Long-standing and traditional, but still relevant, partnerships can be seen in shared premises where the library is part of a cultural centre, or a sports centre, a school, a public swimming baths. Where the idea is simply for more people to visit and become aware of other, relevant offers. This applies right from the close cooperation between library and cultural centre to the library being placed in a shopping centre.

An often seen model is that plans for a new shopping centre include a library, which is then established by the commercial player with the municipality/library as tenant. Næstved and Hjørring are successful examples of this. Here the partnership has resulted in new libraries which would not have been built with public funding.

A good example of a completely consistent policy in terms of shared premises we find in the municipality of Esbo in the Helsinki area, where libraries are consistently placed in shopping centres. One library is for example placed in a shopping centre in a part of town with a high proportion of multi-cultural inhabitants, single parents and people on low incomes. Here the library represents a meeting place with staff who can advise and offer help in 13 languages and where counters have been abolished.

An example of how service can be improved when sharing premises is the library in the public swimming baths in Aalborg. Here an old branch library with a large collection of older materials was closed down. Instead a library with a smaller collection, but with a more clearly defined profile, was established at the swimming baths.

The profile included materials with an orientation towards news, culture, sports, combined with attractive PC work stations and a wide selection of newspapers and journals. It was decided to have a shared reception for the swimming baths and the library and that it should be open from early morning until evening every day, but without librarian services at the very beginning

and end of the day. This in fact led to a considerable extension of opening hours and an increase in usage of 30% within the same budget and to a marked increase in user satisfaction.

The library in Kolding shares premises with a hotel. The café, which is run by the hotel, is actually an integrated part of the library and consequently helps to make the library environment more attractive. The library provides newspapers for reading in the café, and you can collect the books you have ordered in the hotel reception after closing time.

Partnerships on dissemination – the library on TV

One of the most challenging library partnerships in Denmark at this time is the one between libraries and radio/TV channels. They are all about dissemination of content in innovative ways.

The most far-reaching is the cooperation on the children's library channel, Ramasjang live, which every weekday broadcasts live from a television studio, situated in the children's library in Aalborg. The broadcasts may be just about anything that goes on in children's lives. They may consist of story-telling, competitions, performance, but there is always an audience of children who fill up the studio and the library.

The cooperation is based on the idea of creating 'cross-over' between various platforms: broadcasting, web and the physical library space. The activities are planned around a number of themes, chosen by the stakeholders, which include Denmark's children's librarians. The librarians produce ideas for dissemination, which is wrapped in universes performing both in TV broadcasts, on the new children's web site, which is established in Denmark – and in activities, in principle, in all children's libraries in Denmark.

The themes are fairly broad with a potential for many stories: 'nerds', 'horror', 'underground', 'agents'. The concept is a kind of story-telling with many contributors to the story who all the time refer to each other's platforms.

The concept of interaction between platforms is also being cultivated by the public libraries' joint web site *Litteratursiden.dk*, which cooperates with the television channel DK4 on productions such as for example author interviews that are broadcast both on television and on 'Litteratursiden'. *Litteratursiden.dk* is in itself a major partnership project, started and run by libraries, but today also featuring contributions from literary figures, authors, literature students. 'Litteratursiden' is packed with discussions, reading clubs and lots of presentations and is the largest literary web site in Denmark by far. A similar cooperation exists in Finland with a private television channel on the net. The Book and Library channel, which is directed at libraries, schools, book market and readers who produce author interviews, informs about books and other media.

A third example – which also interacts with *Litteratursiden.dk*, is fiction reading clubs, which meet at and are organised by the libraries, but excerpts of which are broadcast on both radio and TV, and where the discussions continue on *Litteratursiden.dk*. The fiction reading clubs each year read six of the latest Danish novels of the season and select the best as book of the year. Fiction reading clubs exist in more or less all Danish towns. Such a broad discussion of new Danish literature has never taken place before as the one now unfolding in the interplay between radio, library clubs and *Litteratursiden.dk*

The number of reading clubs is growing fast with clubs choosing various profiles. The crime club is particularly popular, where the idea of choosing 'the crime novel of the decade' is being developed. The concept is for the individual library to nominate one or a few titles following a discussion and voting among its borrowers. The nominations are then presented on the web and the radio. Plans are also afoot to take the daily television programme 'The Danes' Academy', which is a broad general education programme produced in cooperation between Danish Universities and Danish Radio, into the libraries with lectures, talks, questions in the library space with an audience. Such thematic cooperations

with other knowledge-producing and -dissemination institutions look very much like becoming a core task in the library of the future. Apart from the profiled reading clubs, which have radio channel and web site, many towns have hundreds of reading clubs where the library provides the titles to be read, and where readers meet regularly to discuss the book.

Another interesting example of mediation partnerships is a new collaboration between Aalborg University and Aalborg Public Libraries on pro-active mediation of research activities and results; and the National IT and Telecom Agency's efforts to develop the public's IT competences has led to a collaboration on educating trainers in the libraries, who will then offer a broad selection of learning activities under the heading 'IT for everyone'.

One spectacular partnership project, which may well set an example, is the Norwegian project 'DigiTales', which is a web service established for the purpose of creating a service that disseminates 'cultural memories' (in Norwegian: kultur minner) in a simplistic fashion. The service is open to everyone who has something to narrate: individuals, voluntary associations from all over Norway have together with libraries, archives and museums contributed with over 1,000 stories in 2009. During the same period the web site counted 180,000 unique users.

Partnerships with civic society and the public sector

A good example of partnerships with civic society is the homework cafés run by Danish public libraries. Such cafés are also to be found in the schools, but in the public libraries they are an option and the helpers are not the teachers from school, but volunteers who are typically organised by the Red Cross or other NGOs. Here you find a pleasant room, good atmosphere and helpers, typically students and retired teachers who help children and the young to tackle the syllabus.

Homework cafés are popular – particularly among girls. We are now developing a supplement with an online homework café, with volunteers ready to chat. Along

the lines of the homework café we have the ‘career library’, also called ‘borrow a person’. At one library in Copenhagen volunteers with 130 different professions have made themselves available for a personal talk with young people who are trying to work out in which direction to move in educational terms. Ask the butcher what his work really consists in, the bricklayer, the kindergarten teacher, the nurse. This is information work which is extremely close to a quite specific user need.

The type of support offered in the homework café and the career library is being systematically developed in a number of libraries in exposed residential areas, where the large majority of the inhabitants are immigrants whose first language is not Danish. Here we have a partnership between the library and the public authorities on creating a neutral space for guidance and learning. Here you can get help to understand communications from school and authorities, help to find a job and write an application, join IT-courses, get health orientation or instruction in Danish. The point of reference is yet again the user’s needs. The community-centre library helps people to manage and understand, both in terms of individual questions, of instruction and learning and mentor schemes.

The libraries in Sweden and Norway have developed a special mentor scheme directed at anyone who experiences difficulties in reading. In Norway the offer is branded as ‘reader seeks book’. The offer is organised by 176 libraries, which under the motto ‘books for all’, have committed themselves to making a particular effort to help minority-language people, dyslexics, people with ADHD or just people who are not very able readers. The volunteers read aloud in institutions, for example. In all there are 750 active reader-mentors in the projects.

Cooperation with commercial players

An example with great perspectives is a partnership between the libraries and a commercial player, resulting in common enhancement of web sites. The cooperation is with the publishers Gyldendal on merging the Great Danish Encyclopaedia with the national union catalogue, bibliotek.dk, so that via relevant search words you gain access to full-text entries in the encyclopaedia. Conversely, from reading an article in the Encyclopaedia you gain quick access to searching for more information. The Encyclopaedia is freely accessible on the net via advertising means, and an attractive fact for the advertisers is that bibliotek.dk is the fourth most used Danish public web site. That means that the cooperation with bibliotek.dk makes it more attractive to advertise on the Encyclopaedia’s web site.

The type of cooperation on unilaterally strengthening web sites is a fairly uncultivated area in the libraries, but it has obvious potential, for example for integrating the ‘Ask-a-librarian’ service in web sites where help of this kind might be needed.

Common to all the examples is that they represent agreements that lead to new services to the public and which are the result of the partners’ cooperation – and without actual financial burdens. They involve innovation, value-adding and enhancement of institutions for free, and they create and illustrate what we encapsulate in the concept ‘the new library’ as the central knowledge institution in the knowledge society.

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Homework Café at Farum Library, Denmark. Photo: Bjarke Ørsted

READING DADS AS ROLE MODELS: TWO OUTREACH PROJECTS

New trends in library development have tended to focus on new technology and the new forms of communication that this technology engenders.

A result of this trend is that outreach activities have perhaps not had the highest priority. However, new technology has actually improved access to culture and information and enabled fuller participation for people who are dependent on outreach activities.

It is now important to see that this information reaches everybody who needs it. Complete success cannot be claimed until everyone in the classroom, old age home, hospital or those with reduced reading and writing skills can say that they know how to access literature and information compatible to their own abilities.

There have actually been projects that have drawn attention to outreach activities even outside of professional library spheres. Two such projects are 'Read Me A Story Dad' (Initiated by Swedish publisher A Book For Everyone and administered together with LO, The Swedish Trade Union Confederation) and 'Bedtime Stories from the Inside' (initiated by the Malmö City Library and administered together with the Swedish Prison and Probation Service). A continuation of the 'Read Me A Story Dad' project has now been started in Norway by the !Les Association.

"Read Me A Story Dad" is a schoolbook example of an activity that although not directly aimed at children does influence their situation. The project is very useful as an example of what is meant by "children's perspective". (*The United Nations' Convention on*

the Rights of the Child differentiates between children's own perspectives and perspectives about children. The purpose of 'Read Me A Story Dad' is to get male union members to read more books.

Men from working class backgrounds tend to read less than white-collar workers. This can mean that their sons lack a role-model for reading. Boys tend to read less than girls and can be inclined to identify reading as a typically female occupation. This is why it is important to demonstrate to boys that reading can in fact be a masculine attribute. There is a democratic principle at work here as well: boys without access to language, reading and writing may have difficulties coping later on. Evidence of this can be found in the international survey *Pirls* which demonstrates that children's literacy suffers if they do not read extended texts (books). Unfortunately even reading among girls is on the decline. Perhaps it is time to reconstitute the project as 'Read Me A Story Mum and Dad'.

Fathers who have participated in the project have displayed a new attitude regarding their own reading. In an interview in the national newspaper, *Svenska Dagbladet* in 2007, metalworker Lenn Olsson had this to say:

"I've never read a book or even been interested in reading. It just wasn't part of my childhood background and I never saw my own Mum or Dad even holding a book". Now Lenn reads for his own son every evening.

"Bedtime Stories from the Inside" is a project with the same kind of theme as "Read Me A Story Dad".

Imprisoned parents are given the opportunity of recording a story or fairy tale on a CD and having it sent home to their children. The idea is to stimulate the parent/child relationship and counteract traumatic feelings caused by enforced separation. The project gives the inmates a chance to work in different ways: they learn about children's literature, they improve their own reading and writing skills, they train storytelling techniques and they learn to edit their own material. The two projects, 'Bedtime Stories from the Inside' and 'Read Me A Story Dad' have many positive side effects such as increasing self-confidence, stimulating interest in reading and improving their children's chances later in life. The idea originates from England where it is now both well-established and well known.

So far only male inmates from the Fosie Prison in Malmö have participated, but hopefully the project can be extended. According to project leader Karin Johansson, children who have been separated from their mothers are in an even worse situation than those separated from their fathers. The children are often from split homes and they end up in foster homes or in other situations characterised by family upheaval. The Swedish Arts Council has granted funds for scientific

evaluation of the project, the goal of which is to establish a long term working methodology within the Swedish Prison and Probation Service. It is not often one hears of a project so deserving of the funding it receives.

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'Dad'-substitute reading for children in Herlev Library, Denmark. Photo: Bjarke Ørsted

ENTRESSE LIBRARY

A LIBRARY IN RUNNING SHOES

The library opens up, bright and colourful. Large and small, dark and light people wander in the open space, and sit in armchairs, on the sofas, read newspapers, leaf through books and work at computers. Kids lie on the soft rugs with books in their hands and mothers fix their sagging scarves, talking to each other, with shopping bags at their feet.

The buzz of people chatting, laughter and the music of cell phones create a living soundscape and a path for library visitors. The library's big screen displays a slide show, while the other screen has sports. Young, laid-back library workers in uniforms make rounds in the library, creating order and a comfortable atmosphere. The books, with their covers on display, entice visitors to browse the material and discover something new. This is the shopper's library. Entresse Library is a relaxed library for city-dwellers.

Entresse Library is located in Espoo, Finland's second largest city. It is located on the third floor of a shopping centre in a part of town where many immigrants, children, single-parent families and low-income families live. The area's socio-economic structure differs from that of other cities and the area has a dearth of open, public spaces intended for everyone. The library is Espoo's third shopping-centre library and their loan rates have usually been high. The shopping centre brings visitors to the library and the library brings customers to the shopping centre. The shopping-centre library, by its nature, cannot be as

intimately cosy as a small, local library. However, just as residents have chosen large shopping centres over small, local shops, they have also chosen large, lively libraries.

We wanted the library to become a public space in this section of town, like a living room for the people, with traffic, noise and activity, and active people – nice, but not formal; a place where you can experience things. A diverse range of programs and classes brings people to the library – people who need help, who want to learn new things, or who just want to spend some time there.

Entresse Library is also a traditional library that loans out books and other material. An interesting and fresh selection of books, music, movies and periodicals draws people to the library, although information and the means by which it is conveyed and the ways it is used are constantly changing. To retain its position and duty in the future, the library must live with this change. The most important thing in the library is the people, i.e. library users, but also the library staff, 15 % of which have immigrant backgrounds, over one-half are men and we have many young staff members. Our staff speaks 13 languages and has extensive knowledge of different cultures and literatures from different countries. A perfect mastery of the Finnish language, culture or literature is not the most important thing; rather, it is the service attitude. A living person, a library employee, is what makes the library different from Google.

We also do a lot of youth work at the library, because a large portion of our patrons comprises children and youth. Half of the library's nearly 3,000 square meters is dedicated to young people, and three of our staff are specialized in working with youth. We do not close the door on young people; we try to take responsibility for their presence in our library by talking, playing and experiencing things together. We have computers and games for youth, but we also offer them our attention and stories. In the summer, we put up a tent in the yard and it offers young people a place for games, playing and hanging out. The library provides the company and support of adults.

At Entresse Library, established library work means that the library staff and library users live together in the same space. The

library's information service is there where the library users are – between the shelves, in armchairs, in the library's corridors. We provide instruction to people right on the library floor area to make the threshold for participation as low as possible. We keep the loan machines functioning and the shelves inviting, so using the library independently is as easy as possible. We do not build walls around us, approaching us for help is therefore easy. Wandering between the shelves, a library visitor more easily disregards traditional ways to ask and behave in a library, and we, the staff, also forget the traditional ways to answer questions in a library. If a library visitor needs friends in the yard for a basketball game, we are on our way. If a library visitor needs help using a laptop, we will help. We are nearby whenever someone needs help. By working and being in the library, we create a comfortable and safe atmosphere.

Entresse Library has also established itself on the Internet. We have learned about the new ways for people to be on the Internet, the new ways to publish and communicate, the new forms of communities and new ways to gather information from the Internet. Entresse Library has several bases in the world of social media: Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, YouTube, Second Life, blogs. And when we learn to 'live' in new places, we can convey our skills to library users. Being in the world of social media is not the most important thing for the library; it is being able to help library users to get onto the Internet and work there safely.

A library should have things which are important to it and where its strength lies. At Entresse Library, working with young people and supporting information technology and the use of the Internet are precisely that. These things are a part of the story of Entresse Library. They are important, because we work in an area with many young people and a lot of people who need support in learning the skills of an information society. We have older people who are learning a new life with their first computers. We have recent immigrants to Finland, whom we can provide with an area for stu-



Serving the 'customers'. Photo: Jorma Waldén

dying Finnish and computers for maintaining old contacts and for building a new life.

Entresse Library is a lively library where a person can behave naturally. This means cell phones, loud laughter and happy, running children. The symbiosis of different people in a lively library requires the presence of the staff. We are not frightening library police, but we have written rules for the library premises. We are 'performers' in the library, as are library visitors, but it is also our job to direct the show, so that as many library visitors as possible will feel comfortable there. If I cannot work in the library, how can library visitors work there? If I do not feel comfortable in the library, how can the library visitors feel comfortable there? An established library employee, in his/her uniform, creates safety in the library.

This is the story of Entresse Library, which opened in April 2009. If it does not correspond to reality, we will have to change reality. If this story does not work, we will have to re-write it. We want to live with the times. Our times involve being present, both in the library and on the Internet, to use the Internet to tell the story, to meet and be met. That is real library work.

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COMMUNITY CENTRES

LIBRARY ADVICE AND INFORMAL LEARNING UNDER THE SAME ROOF

The Danish government wishes to strengthen the personal resources of disadvantaged children, the young and their parents. The aim is to enable them to exploit the possibilities in society and create a good life with personal responsibilities. So in connection with the approval of the National Budget in 2008 the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media received special financial means for an experimental project for the establishment of community centres in disadvantaged residential areas.

A community centre is an informal cross-sectorial advice, learning and activity centre that acts as an extended citizen service. The library shares a location with other municipal services – possibly combined with volunteer organizations, various associations and individual resource persons.

The library contributes with a wealth of resources: a ‘free’ meeting place, the most recent information technology, knowledge, a feeling of ownership and mutual trust among local citizens as well as a relationship of trust between people.

Community centres engage in a wide range of activities from creating open learning centres for information technology to bridging ‘the digital divide’, to providing homework assistance for local children from ethnic minorities. The library services are for instance combined with counselling tasks, health

work, support for job applications and volunteer work in relation to support for homework and reading aloud for children – all within the same building.

One of the strengths of a community centre is that its physical location is where the target group lives and it is an offer without membership or registration that can affect the dignity of the individual.

Collectively, the services of a community centre can help citizens to play a proactive role in local democratic processes. In shaping and adjusting their services in response to local needs and in close collaboration with citizens, community centres can thus be seen as examples of user-driven innovation.

Community centres can also contribute to the development of integration and empowerment strategies in vulnerable urban areas. Empowerment is understood as a process that enables people to counteract powerlessness and lack of control over their living conditions. Sustainable empowerment strategies range from individual self-confidence to the ability at (local) community level to influence the direction of society’s development over a longer period of time.

The new roles of libraries in community development is inspired by the Idea Stores in Tower Hamlets in London, Queens library in New York, Toronto Public Library and the development of public libraries in Chicago over the past decade. In Chicago the libraries have turned an ominous development into a success story. The secret behind the success is the exploitation of the library’s potential as catalyst for social networks in the local community.

In Denmark these ideas of a more holistic service to the citizens were first adopted and implemented by the libraries in two of the largest cities Århus (Community Centre Gellerup) and Odense (Vollsmose Library).

The experiences of these two libraries now serve as models for other libraries in Denmark. The models can be used no matter whether the library is situated in a village or a larger city. Most important is the working relations which the library enters into or has the opportunity to establish.

After the Danish Agency for libraries and Media received the special financial support for the establishment of community centres, seven libraries have applied for and received the means to take up the challenge (October 2009). The community centres are mainly placed in larger cities and in areas where there are many immigrants or descendants of immigrants from the Third World. Within the programme period (2008-2012) the goal is to establish 20 community centres.

The community centre programme is being evaluated by a researcher from the Department of Environmental, Social and Spatial Change at Roskilde University.

As support activities for the programme select staff members in the community centres of Gellerup (Århus) and Vollsmose (Odense) provide expert advice to support these activities of the programme. The service consists of a number of offers, ranging from guidance during the preliminary phase to subsequently participating in staff meetings and seminars.

Once a year there is a seminar that serves as a forum of inspiration and pool of experience. The second seminar took place in September 2009 and revealed that the major challenges in setting up a community centre consist in the handling of partnerships and involving of users – volunteers being among these.

Another challenge derives from the fact that public institution budgeting and administrative processes are not always geared to support cross-sectorial and community-inclusive innovations like community centres. In order to establish a success for a community centre it is also of major importance that the municipal decisionmakers support the idea by cooperating themselves across sectors. The municipality of Århus is a brilliant example of this, and, in addition to Community Centre Gellerup, Århus is now going to establish another community centre in the suburb of Hasle.

The hope is that community centres may provide new standards for user-inclusive management and innovation of public activities, resulting in a situation where they are no longer seen as exceptions, but as common tools or strategies in the development of local communities.

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Community centre at Vollsmose Library, Denmark. Photo: Tobias Toyberg

PLANTING SEEDS OF READING IN NEW ARENAS

Library out-reach activities result in new partners and new users. Families with young children represent an important target group for libraries, since society nowadays has a strong focus on early development of language skills and on children's use of literature. Several library projects are operating in new arenas and exploring fresh methods to reach families and their young children at as early a stage as possible.

The two Norwegian projects BOKTRAS (The Role of Books in Early Registration of Speech Development) and Lesefrø (Planting the seeds of reading) and also the Danish initiative Børnehavebiblioteker (Nursery School Libraries) have led to libraries moving part of their collections out of the library in order to reach children, parents and nursery school employees. In another Danish project, Bogstart (Book Start), libraries visit families in their homes. The central idea in all these initiatives is to introduce more and more children to books and literature with a view to stimulating an interest in reading and thereby improving their language skills. The consequent effects on the children taking part in the projects have proved to be many and positive.

Meeting children in their own environment

BOKTRAS and Lesefrø in Norway, together with Børnehavebiblioteker in Denmark, have shown how libraries and nursery schools can work together to provide children and their families with greater access to literature. The libraries present the nursery schools with a

selection of books and introduce the literature to the staff, the children and their parents. Not only is the nursery school library used in a variety of reading activities but both children and parents can borrow books to take home.

In the project BOKTRAS, which began in 2005 and lasted for three years, working methods were developed to ensure that all the children were read to in the course of each day. The project Lesefrø succeeded BOKTRAS in 2008 and is planned to continue until 2010. Lesefrø uses the same methods as BOKTRAS but is directed specifically towards nursery schools with a high percentage of children from minority language groups.

The Danish project, Børnehavebiblioteker, places the emphasis on busy families with small children, introducing parents to the latest children's books which reflect modern reality. In addition this project aims to support teachers in their pedagogic work and to help nursery school staff reach the goals with regard to language and culture which are set out in the teaching programmes all institutions are committed to developing.

These three projects all share the common aims of broadening access to new and topical children's literature, promoting good reading habits both in nursery schools and at home, and making nursery school staff more aware of the positive effect of reading and speech stimulation upon the children and their everyday lives. Particular focus has been directed towards studying what connection there may be between the purposeful use of books and reading activities in nursery schools and the language skills of the children.

Nursery schools undertake to spend much of their time with reading, listening, conversing and carrying out projects based on reading. They have established a practice to ensure that all the children are read to every day. Children learn language through interplay with others and in situations where speech and action have a mutual function. It is therefore vital that the nursery schools arrange for activities and arenas which promote linguistic interplay. The books provided by the libraries are used in a variety of ways, both in the nursery schools and in the children's homes. Librarians also take part in arranging various activities designed to stimulate interest in reading.

Altogether five municipalities have participated in BOKTRAS and Lesefrø. Public libraries and nursery schools have cooperated closely at local level, while the initiation of the projects and subsequent overall control have been the responsibility of the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority together with the National Centre for Reading Education and Research at the University of Stavanger.

In Denmark a count taken in the autumn of 2009 showed that 26 municipalities had applied for grants to establish altogether a total of 77 libraries in nursery schools. Economic support is provided from a 3-year public investment fund which is financed by the Ministry of Culture, the Ministry of Social and Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Education as part of a wider programme to improve reading skills. Funding will cease in 2010.

The Danish project Bogstart was initiated in 2009. The aim is to give small children and their families living in less prosperous housing areas some experience of children's literature in order to assist their development of good language skills before they reach school age.

The activities in Bogstart are carried out by the libraries and librarians in the local community. The role of the librarians is proactive and out-reaching since they bring packages of books directly to the children and their parents in their homes and in day-care centres. These packages provide the basis for talks about children, books and language. During the first four years of its life, a child receives a book package each year. Librarians visit the families at home when the child is six months old and again at 12 months. When the child reaches 18 months the families are invited to the library. Book packages are also given to 3-year-olds in their nursery schools.

The aim of the project is to arouse in children a desire to learn to read by sharing the reading experience with their families, also to attract them into the universe of children's literature and, by playing language games,

also into a world of ideas and concepts. The libraries' outreach role leads to a contact with parents which could hardly be achieved in any other way. The librarians cooperate with other local bodies to carry out various supplementary arrangements which help to stimulate the children's language skills.

Bogstart is planned to continue until 2012. 15 municipalities have been invited to participate in the project, while overall responsibility rests with the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media.

Early action gives equal opportunity

Children acquire their language skills in many different arenas and the earliest years of life are extremely important in laying a foundation for later speech development. Stimulus received in a variety of arenas can play a vital role in developing a child's abilities and research shows that children who learn to speak and read both at home and in a nursery school acquire better language skills than otherwise.

All children should have the opportunity to develop their reading and writing skills, if they are to participate satisfactorily in society. In today's world a sufficient understanding of written texts is vital to the acquisition of knowledge.

Good language development depends on early practice. It has been shown that exposure and access to books are vital factors in explaining differences in reading skills and comprehension among school children. In this respect libraries, working together with nursery schools and teaching schools, are central, significant partners.

Bogstart, Børnehavbiblioteker, BOKTRAS and Lesefrø are all initiatives to stimulate a love of reading. The strength of these projects lies in the fact that the libraries leave their normal premises and actively take steps to bring books and literary knowledge into families and nursery schools, reaching out to new groups of children and adults. The real winners in this outward-looking

project are precisely those children who never go to the library and who are never read to at home; the very group it is most difficult for libraries to reach. By making contact with families privately or through health clinics and nursery schools, libraries find new target groups. Parents visit their children's nursery schools almost daily and are in regular contact with the staff. This visiting role of libraries fits well into the various national initiatives aimed at creating equal opportunities for children regardless of family background or situation.

Bogstart is part of the Danish government's programme 'Equal opportunities – strengthening personal resources and social cohesion'. This plan calls for a greater effort to assist children and young people who have experienced a difficult start in life, the idea being that strengthening the individual resources of vulnerable youngsters will make them better equipped to explore the possibilities available to them later in their lives. Bogstart is part of this national programme, coming under the heading of 'Focus on capabilities and early learning'.

BOKTRAS, LeseFrø and Børnehavebiblioteker are also projects aimed at giving children a common language platform by reason of their participating in shared reading activities. In LeseFrø a deliberate choice has been made of nursery schools with a high percentage of children from minority language groups in order to see what effect these activities may have on their speech development. Boktras and LeseFrø are both products of the national strategic plan 'Make Space for Reading'. Several government reports have emphasised the importance of children acquiring good speech habits before they start school and the need for language teaching to be tailored to their needs. In this respect nursery schools represent a vital springboard for learning in later life. Studies show that the longer a child has attended nursery school the better his reading and language skills. The plan for the teaching of Norwegian in nursery schools is laid out in *Government Report No. 23, Language builds bridges*.

Results from the four projects

The National Centre for Reading Education and Research documents the progress of the two projects BOKTRAS and LeseFrø. The children are observed in different ways. Some of the children from BOKTRAS were selected for a follow-up study after the project was completed in order to ascertain how the focus on reading activities in their nursery school had influenced their use of language, particularly their storytelling abilities. All the 4-year-olds in the LeseFrø nursery schools are being monitored during the period of the project to determine how an emphasis on reading activities can affect each individual child's passive vocabulary.

In the Norwegian nursery schools the adult staff keep a written record of everyday storytelling as documentation of reading activities, together with their thoughts and comments on the children's language proficiency. The results so far give a clear indication that the presence of libraries in the nursery schools leads to a greater awareness and enjoyment of books among the children, a better mastery of language and an interest in reading which may well provide the foundation for good reading habits in later life and a close relationship with libraries.

The model for Børnehavebiblioteker was evaluated before an earlier reading-for-pleasure campaign in 2008 was merged into a separate programme incorporating the most successful elements. The evaluation identified certain challenges which nursery school libraries need to recognise. Danish children, boys in particular, learn to read later than children in many other countries. Voluntary participation in reading and a one-sided focus on books alone as a medium for reading attract fewer boys than girls. Parents may have difficulty in finding the time or the energy to make as much use of a nursery school library as perhaps they would like. Furthermore the parents' own reading habits tend to influence a child's interest in books.

Bogstart has only recently got under way in Denmark but the project will be monitored with a view to

gaining greater knowledge about library out-reach dissemination of literature for children. The project is inspired by the programme 'Bookstart' which has been running in England since 1992. Systematic research shows that Bookstart-children have considerably better reading skills than children outside the programme. Surveys also indicate that a programme such as Bookstart helps to break down any negative social inheritance and gives vulnerable children a better chance later in life. The programme has proved to be an effective way of making contact with particular groups of parents with small children which libraries seldom reach through their traditional channels.

New arenas and new alliances give libraries new strength

Libraries can make an important contribution to easing a child's transition to a school environment. Cooperation with other local bodies and with families can be seen as a step towards improved communication independent of national/municipal institutions. Many municipalities work purposefully towards better collaboration between nursery schools and teaching schools in order to ensure the smoothest possible transition for children when that time comes. Several public libraries have set up nursery school libraries on their own initiative.

In the spring of 2008 the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority carried out a survey among public libraries to see how they cooperate with nursery schools and what kind of service they offer. One of the

main reasons for conducting this survey was a desire to find out how many public libraries already operate in nursery schools and to what extent Norwegian libraries are at all interested in starting an initiative of this kind.

The survey revealed that 24 municipalities have established branch libraries in nursery schools. Their experience is that they achieve a great deal through these initiatives, both within the libraries themselves and in relation to the children's language skills and interest in books. Nursery school libraries have also a positive effect upon the library system with regard to improved competence, a wider network, closer contact with teachers and new challenges for library staff. After the establishment of a library in a nursery school, the main library also notices a change in the library habits of families with small children. The number of visitors noticeably increases, also for various cultural arrangements, and this in turn generates higher lending figures. The libraries taking part in the survey also stress the value of becoming more visible in the local community. There is every reason to believe that a similar survey among those nursery schools with their own libraries would show equally positive results.

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WITH YOU THROUGH ALL OF LIFE'S UPS AND DOWNS

Bookmobile activities in Finland have been developed since the beginning of the 1960s as a flexible, inexpensive and diverse library service. The 1970s and -80s were peak years for bookmobile activities, a time when there were over 200 bookmobiles in Finland. However, changes in the population, financial hardships for municipalities and the aging of the bookmobile fleet have led to fewer buses.

A total of 25-50 percent of state grants, based on the annually established state grant scale, can be rendered to public libraries to purchase bookmobiles. The majority of main libraries and bookmobiles in Finland are funded by state grants. The rapid popularity of bookmobiles in Finland has been unique. Indeed, bookmobiles are one of the success stories of the Finnish library institution.

Upstanding customer service is most important

In recent years, the technology and service selection of the bookmobiles have developed rapidly. The service possibilities of bookmobiles have also improved with a more expansive material selection. Nowadays, many new buses have changeable shelf modules, meaning the material can change as the demand changes. As with all vehicles, bookmobiles mean technology, i.e. the interior of the buses are beginning to house more and more technology such as information networks, cell phone services, patron terminals and so on. There is always a person on the bookmobile, too, a library professional there to serve, whose help and expertise cannot be

replaced with any technology. One of the absolute strengths of bookmobile activities includes staff members who are firmly devoted to their profession and their job. The bookmobile staff works with a warm heart!

Services for areas with low population density

Finland has 160 bookmobiles and one 'book-boat', with over 13,000 stops. As many as 7.5 million book loans were made last year from bookmobiles! Of all the material loans from public libraries in the province of Lapland, 15 percent were made from bookmobiles. In all, bookmobiles in Lapland loaned out over 520,000 units of material. The share of bookmobile loans nationwide was 7.6 per cent. Due to a widely dispersed population and long distances, the importance of bookmobile services in Lapland is particularly great, but the bookmobile is also the only service that is left in many small villages of southern municipalities. The bookmobile is the only lifeline for many lonely people.

Finland has areas in which only the shared usage of the bookmobiles guarantees library services to the sparsely populated areas of municipalities. The organization of cooperation has several models, which have been used in different parts of the country.

In the 'purchase-service' model, one municipality purchases an agreed amount of bookmobile services from another municipality. In the 'shared-bus' model, municipalities purchase a bookmobile together and maintain it by agreeing on the division of the costs and how the bus will be used. According to experience, the purchase-service model has proven practical when a municipality needs extra library services for a relatively small area. The shared-bus solution is best suited as a long-term solution for library services for an entire municipality where there is a low population density.

The first bookmobile that was shared between municipalities began running in 1979 in Enontekiö and Muonio. Today the bus services also extend to Sweden and Norway. The second international bookmobile began its service in 1989 in the municipality of Utsjoki. Cooperation will be further expanded both regionally and across municipal administrative borders. Regional bookmobile services, which cross municipal borders, have been added in recent years. In 2008, nearly 50 municipalities purchased bookmobile services from a neighbouring municipality.



Mobile library today: 'The libraries moveswith the people' has a special meaning in Finland, where numerous mobile libraries form a network of services throughout the country. Seinäjoki bookmobile at Provinssirock, summer 2009. Photo: Jouni Hirn



Boat library in Finland. Photo: Päivi Jokitalo



Mobile library on the road in North Karelia in the 1980s

Bookmobiles promote children's reading skills and reading as a hobby

The bus service is exceptionally well suited to sparsely populated rural areas and cities alike. It allows us to reach residents in areas where there is a low population density, the elderly in small villages, children in day-cares, residents in service homes, families, etc. The bookmobile is also responsible for the school library services of many municipalities. According to the new school curricula, a modern learning environment comprises organized library services, which the school can offer together with the library.

Day-care children and school children are regular patrons of bookmobiles. The schools have active teachers who engage in excellent cooperation work with library professionals. In addition to the usual loans, schools and daycares borrow theme and reading packages from the bookmobiles. Story-time and author visits are also held in the buses. Active village associations have also participated in these gatherings for the promotion of reading as a hobby.

"The bookmobile is a mobile library comparative to small local libraries where those people who do not have the opportunity to use the local library can receive many of the same services as they would if they could visit it." *Antero Kyöstiö, bookmobile department director at Tampere City Library.*

Multi-service bus in Leppävirta

Leppävirta library's multi-service bus provides library services and services tailored particularly for elderly people living in villages. The needs of the elderly were determined in an extensive questionnaire and survey. Based on the questionnaire, the most significant elements were the opportunities the information service offered, medical care and postal services. People hoped to be able to get information about social welfare and health care services and different benefits collectively from one place. The new bookmobile has a patron terminal with an Internet connection and a lift for wheel-

chairs and rollators. The front section of the bus can be isolated separately for health care services and nurse reception, for Internet use or even for voting. Three separate bus routes have been designed for these purposes, making health-care professionals available when needed. The bookmobile is stocked with familiar prescription drugs and the necessities for treatment, a service that has been developed together with the pharmacy. A blood pressure gauge, among other things, was purchased for independent monitoring. We are currently in the process of applying for a licence to keep a medicine cabinet on the bus.

The bus also transports shopping and laundry bags, and a couple of passengers can even hitch a ride if the bus is going their way. No fees are collected for travelling or for transporting things; the patron agrees with other service providers about the method of payment. There are also postal services on the bus.

At festivals, on beaches and at parks

Helsinki City Library's Kesädösä drives around parks, beaches and camps of the capital region, wherever there are young people. The summer bus has material to borrow, games and information about library services. There is also information about summer events arranged for youth. Staff from Helsinki and Espoo specialized in youth library work and youth workers from the Youth Department of the City of Helsinki work in shifts in the bus.

The Seinäjoki Public Library – Provincial Library enriched the selection of festival activities by bringing its YKÄ bookmobile to Provinssirock on 13 June 2009. Newspaper readers, those looking for bargains on books and those who wanted to listen to Grimm fairytales visited the bus. Jouni Hynynen, from the heavy metal band Kotiteollisuus, also stopped by to talk with other bookmobile visitors. In front of the bus, the Lappeenranta rocker took a moment to tell about his next publication, a collection of poetry, and about the Ukonhauta recordings, a compilation of his works, Ukonhauta – kenelle banjot soivat?

Drivers receive training

The Finnish Library Association's bookmobile work group, the State Provincial Office of Western Finland and Jalasjärvi's adult education centre (JAKK) have organized continuing education for maintaining the professional qualifications of the bookmobile drivers. According to the EU's professional driver directive, drivers must take additional training for both goods and passenger transport every five years. The directive also requires that all professional drivers continue to have vocational training. Some training days have already been arranged and they have been an unqualified suc-

cess. During the training, drivers learn about economical driving and driving on slippery roads, are given training in first-aid and customer service and are instructed in matters of occupational safety.

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HOMework SUPPORT ONLINE

All over the world good reading and writing skills have become a social survival condition because all education and jobs are based on writing. In subjects at school, learning is depending on pupils' reading skills, and seen from Denmark's point of view it is therefore disheartening to read the latest PISA-study from 2006 (Egelund, 2006). 57 countries have participated in the study which shows that the proportion of pupils without functional reading skills in Denmark is 16%. By way of comparison the figure is 5% in Finland, 15% in Sweden, 22% in Norway and 20% in Iceland.

Of pupils with non-western background and with Danish as their second language 53% are without functional reading skills (Egelund, and Tranæs, 2005). About half of the young pupils with Danish as their second language are thus not sufficiently skilled in reading to accomplish an education after elementary school.

The Danish government's target is that at least 95 pct. of all young people either should leave school with an upper secondary level or have completed vocational training. An extraordinary effort is needed to reach this goal.

Traditional homework support can contribute in a positive way to improve young people's professional and social competences, but

some of the older boys do not feel very comfortable presenting themselves in an actual physical homework café, and it is therefore necessary to find alternative methods in order to 'get to' them.

So in connection with the approval of the National Budget in 2008 the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media received special financial means for an experimental project for the establishment of online homework support for pupils in disadvantaged residential areas. Online homework support is a joint project with the Ministry of Integration and the Ministry of Education. Approximately 1 mil. Euros have been set aside for the project for the period 2008-2011.

Online homework is a net-based offer of homework support for the eldest pupils in elementary school (children aged 12-15). Via a net portal the pupils can get in direct touch with a homework assistant. The homework assistant and pupil communicate via webcam, microphone and a chat program. There is also an electronic board where both can work in the same document. It is possible to help the pupils with their questions according to experiences from a previous pilot project. The project also showed that it has been possible to develop the appropriate software. It is still necessary though to try to make sure that both sound, picture and sharing of documents take place in 'real time'. It has turned out to be one of the most difficult aspects in relation to the IT-part of the project and more hard work has to be put into solving this. Use of mobile phones also has to be considered.

Experiences indicate that the pupils' and homework assistants' IT-competences are at a much lower level than expected. Homework assistants should work in call-centres and need both training and support during the initial phase. A success depends on a considerable central effort to coordinate and keep track of the homework assistants in relation to the pupils. On the bright side the pupils can easily use the service both from decentralized 'pupil centres' (e.g. schools and libraries) and from their homes. The public has paid great attention to online homework support and the results of this support.

At the moment the project is in the planning phase, but will include sub-projects dealing with pupils and homework

assistants, technology, marketing and communication. Some of the main points are development of software, recruitment and training of homework assistants, internal and external communication material, and profiling of the scheme.

The project is expected to start in February 2010, and the vision is to create Europe's (the world's) leading homework support portal!

- www.lektier-online.dk

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THE LOCKER ROOM LIBRARIAN:

THE MARADONA OF LITERATURE DISSEMINATION

For most libraries and librarians the school system has up to now provided the only avenue for promoting literature among children and young people. The project 'Sports and Reading' is different, arising from the realisation that many youngsters spend much of their spare time training or playing for their local team or sports club and that this can provide an arena for the locker-room librarian, the Diego Maradona of reading.

Twenty two years ago in the World Soccer Championship in Mexico England plays Argentina in the quarter final. Five minutes into the second half it happens. Diego Maradona is catching up with a cross which is about to land inside the penalty line. He is alone with the English goalkeeper. The big, in every sense of the word, Peter Shilton appears to be in control as he rushes out to knock the ball away from little Diego. But something happens in the moment that little Diego jumps up to head the ball. A sort of ... miracle ...

Shilton's hand hits only empty space. And the ball apparently hits little Diego's head, and he steers the ball into the empty goal. Little Diego runs towards the corner flag, with both arms outstretched in triumph. He throws a barely discernible glance at the referee. The score is 1-0 for Diego Maradona. Against England.

What nobody noticed, apart from Shilton and

an alert photographer positioned behind the goal, was that little Diego himself had knocked the ball into the goal. Even when looking at a replay of the scoring this is impossible to see to this day. Afterwards, when questioned whether this shouldn't be seen as a rather dirty and unsporty trick, or even as downright foul play, little Diego answered, quite truthfully, that the scoring was not made by his own hand. On the contrary, it was the Hand of God. So no reproaches please... The rest of the soccer world was appalled, but forgot that in Argentinian soccer foul play is accepted as long as it is done in style. As long as the cheating bears the signature of the street-smart trickster, everything is OK. And as long as you can get away with it, the applause is yours.

What can little Diego teach us about the promotion of literature? I will return to this point. First, however, I would like to tell you about the project 'Sports and Reading'. This project is run by the Association for Promotion of Reading, and is financed by the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority and the Arts Council Norway among others. The locker-room librarian is a key figure in this project. 'Sports and Reading' targets sports groups at the elite as well as mass level. Put simply, a locker-room librarian is a librarian who promotes literature directly to young people in the context of sport, within a wide range of athletic disciplines and clubs. In support, the librarian and the club receive a book bag containing approximately fifty titles. Each book bag contains a core of titles, and the selection is further adapted to the age level and wishes of each club. These are provided, loaned, read and exchanged along the way.

When athletes are asked by the media to state their favourite book, more often than we like the response is that they do not read books, and the last time they did so was in school. This serves to establish two sets of prejudices concerning reading and literature. First: Athletes do not read. Second: Literature is boring, and is only connected to homework and other imposed obligations. 'Sports and Reading' aims to dispel these prejudices. It is just not true that athletes do not read, and there is a greater diversity here than we believe. In addition to large amounts of training top-notch athletes need rest and recreation, and many turn out to be readers, because they have experienced the recreation to be gained from immersing themselves in a book. The part of the project that targets elite sports comprises, for example, the web-



Youth corner at Ordrup Library, Denmark. Photo: Tobias Toyberg

site www.bokpallen.no (The Book Rostrum), where famous athletes recommend literature. The idea is that many young people admire star athletes, and the presentation of these as readers will consequently influence the notions of reading as an activity among young people.

Prejudices or not: A locker-room librarian often finds himself far removed from the safe haven of his own bookshelves. Furthermore, the locker-room librarian often visits the lion's den known by most of us as 'boys and reading'. And on top of everything he must also relate to a group that few, if any, promoters of literature have dared to meet. In such situations, the participants in the project may feel the need to invoke higher powers.

Prior to all my visits to locker rooms I think of little Diego because he taught me how to be brave. He dared to go for it while the whole world was watching, and to do something nobody held to be possible. This qualifies him to be the patron saint of all locker-room librarians. Little Diego requests us to defy the rules.

How can a locker-room librarian defy the rules? By shedding some of the excessive respect for the book as a medium. This gives courage to go beyond the text in our literary mission, and to be less true to the original. Being true to the original involves an endless recounting of the content. This rendering of the content represents a kind of 'fair play' with a book. Being true to the original means looking for the message that the author wishes to impart. Looking for the 'theme' represents another type of 'fair play' with the book. These methods make for poor literary communication. What I want to impart when I stand in front of a group of thirteen-year-olds, who wonder what I am doing in their locker room, is the emotional experience. If there is no emotional impact, communication will collapse. With the book as my ball I am allowed to be reflectively occupied with excitement, thrills, laughter and joy, pain, pleasure and bodily experiences of all kinds, even

sex, when I communicate a book. Everything can be put in relation to sensory experience.

Defying the rules also implies that one should not underestimate the target group. The first evaluations of 'Sports and Reading' showed that many of the librarians held the selection of books in the book bag to be too sophisticated, or not adapted to the target group. The target group itself, as well as the trainers, claimed that the level was chosen well. I believe that these diverging opinions, in addition to a fair amount of underrating, also testify to the fact that athletes know full well that an effort is required in order to gain achievements. More than half the titles in the book bag usually consist of so-called 'adult literature'. This is in fact one of my pet obsessions: Young people can read 'adult literature'.

Young people need to be challenged. I am not sure whether such challenges can be derived from typical 'youth literature'. At least not in Norway. It is unfair to say that Norwegian books for youth do not deal with challenging topics, because they often do. However, somewhere there is a stifling doctrine that says that everything should be in appropriate amounts. If a book is challenging you, it must do so in an appropriate manner. If a book is about sex, it should be in appropriate amounts. If a book is brutal, it must be appropriately so. If a book treats the topic of drugs, this must be done to an appropriate extent. And what I like least about books for youth: They must have 'a hopeful twist'. They are rarely left with an open ending, and they must communicate hope.

In my opinion this is contrary to how we usually discover the world of books. In any case it is contrary to the spirit of sport. In sport, do we claim that the best place to be is in the middle of the ranking? This can be transferred to the world of books. Do we wish to read 'mid-ranked' books? In sport being ranked in the middle is the worst position of all. There is nothing to fight for. Only the battle against relegation to a lower league, or the fight for medals, will make you feel alive.

Little Diego would never have become the world's best soccer player if he had not experienced emotional highs as well as lows. He put these emotions into the ball. A locker-room librarian can transfer these emotions to books and literature to bring his communication in harmony with the call heard from both the stands and the locker room: you must suffer for the team shirt. This is the effort required to experience the golden moment when the boy or girl who had never bothered to read anything comes up to you to say that he or she would really like to read some of the books you have brought. At that moment you know that you have succeeded in communicating something new and unexpected to a coming reader. At that moment, you have contact with

the 'Hand of God' of literature. And at that moment, you can send a thought of sincere gratitude to Diego Maradona – the master of imaginative soccer. And the patron saint of all locker-room librarians.

This is a revised version of a presentation made at the IFLA conference in Canada in 2008 by the author and librarian Stig Elvis Furset.

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Translated by Eric Deverill

MARKETING A PUBLIC LIBRARY

Horsens public library has over the years been striving to gain greater visibility, primarily locally – in a local community of about 82,000 citizens – but also to some extent outside that community.

The library does not employ a professional marketing consultant, but two library staff members have participated in a brief competence development course in the marketing of public libraries, arranged by the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media. The course has provided a good input to enable us to focus more stringently on which of the library's offers should be marketed and what kind of methods to use.

Events and projects

The library's marketing initiative is to a great extent based on 'the good story' or the event, first and foremost through events in connection with arrangements and projects. In our experience, events also provide a suitable angle for promoting the library's services generally. Our 'story' arouses a natural curiosity and captures the attention of the recipient, if the timing is right.

Marketing of events is a good way of getting the media interested in the message you want to convey, but it takes a long time to build up this kind of relation. One example is the annual Crime Fair in Horsens (horsensbibliotek.dk/krimiblog), which is directed at crime novel aficionados all over Denmark. The Crime Fair started modestly, but has over the years developed into a major event which now attracts more than 3,500 people during one weekend. The vast public interest has also

made it very interesting to the media, and the Crime Fair now gets generous profiling in newspapers as well as on television. The Fair has thus helped provide a marketing lift to all Danish public libraries' dissemination of crime fiction.

Another project, which has invoked considerable media interest, has been the cooperation between the library and local places of employment, which means that the employees at a bakery and a transport firm in the municipality can order, have delivered and return library materials at work. This 'story' has generated a lot of attention – on TV as well as in the newspapers.

The library's strategy

However, marketing does not only consist of stories about events; it is to a great extent a means to working on the library's strategy and practice in a form that can be communicated, and it requires management involvement and responsibility and a great deal of staff involvement, too.

The marketing must be based on the general and the local market for the library's services: What about the development of the services on offer? Who offer the same kind of services (maybe better services than the library)? Which products does the library offer and how keen are the users? One must be prepared to prioritize or to downsize part of the service in order to create a clear focus on the areas to be marketed.

Users

Likewise it is important for the local library to know who its customers are: Who use the library, and who do not? And what do they use us for exactly? How much and what do they know about the library? Here in Horsens we have used focus group interviews to great advantage, interviewing users and non-users of different ages and belonging to different groups. For example a group of 15-year old girls who rarely used the library and who considered reading books a bit 'nerdy', and a completely different group of people over 60, who used the library a lot and could hardly find any faults with the service.

It is not easy to choose the target group for marketing campaigns; ideally it would be rather attractive to stage a campaign aimed at non-users. But the group is very non-homogeneous and

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'News-library' in central Herning, Denmark. Focus on international news channels and situated at the same address as Herning Newspaper - a new marketing opportunity. Photo: Martin Dam Kristensen

difficult to establishment contact with, so the strategy of 'picking the low-hanging fruits' have appealed more to us, i.e. approaching both present and potential users and simply tell them more about the library and its services.

A happy association

In all marketing efforts it is important to secure partners – not necessarily sponsors – to get the message across the footlights. The library has a very good 'brand' and many want to be associated with it; but naturally one has to consider just who would 'fit the bill' and be able to contribute to the positive effect. If the partner does not straight away invoke a happy association, the situation could well backfire.

User involvement and the exploitation of staff competences and contact networks make a good starting point for creating vibrant cooperations and 'communities'. The library opens the door to a number of net-based communities: blogs with recommendations of the library's services, Facebook groups for the library's arrangements and WIKIs (local history and crime fiction).

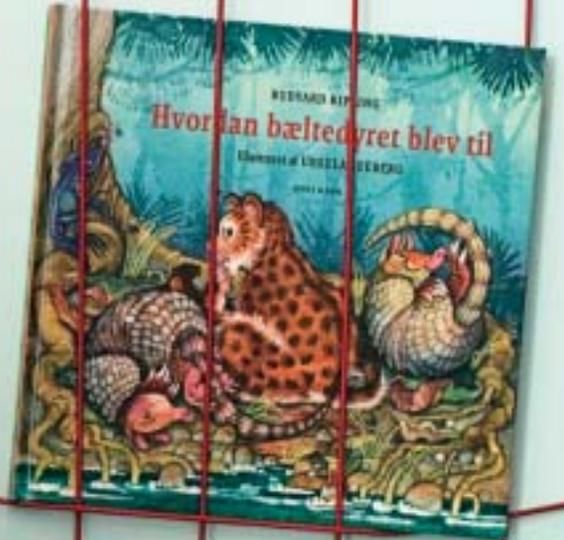
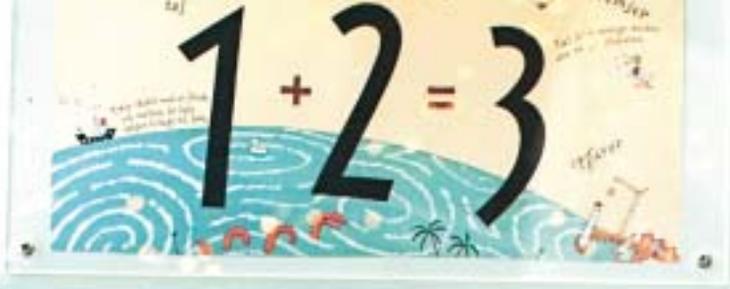
Experience shows that these networks have to be cultivated and supported in order to live an 'active life', and it can be quite hard for an institution to live up to the close contact expected in such networks.

We also stake a great deal on reputation marketing – i.e. that the library projects the image of an attractive and modern institution with lots of exciting offers for children and adults, and of an institution which underpins the municipality's overall strategy, for example in terms of educating the public to use the net as well as creating services that attract users and generate cultural activity. In that context it has been very important for us to make the politicians part of the good story about the libraries.

Don't reveal everything about the library's offers – select and use your knowledge of the market to prioritize!

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