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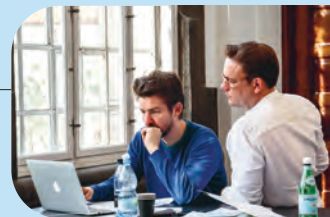
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● **Future Library Competencies**

In this issue we are attempting to look ahead at the professional skills required to perform a library job in the future – Future Library Competencies. What competencies describe the contributing factors that enable employees to function in their role?

In libraries the role has normally been librarian, library assistant or library director. In many libraries this has changed.

Libraries are so much more than a place where you go to borrow books and library employees need to have a diverse set of skills. To possess accurate competencies to do the job successfully is important. How this will be achieved in the future, only time will tell, but some of our articles aptly discuss the topic.

The next, and sadly the last, issue of SLQ will reach you by mid-December.



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The COMPETENT library

Is a library competent? Not really, library staff are competent and the subject of *Competencies in the library* is of great importance for leaders and for members of staff.

Every organization wants competent staff, who are able to solve many different tasks, and who together possess the necessary competencies.

Whichever professional occupation you are involved in, there will be certain conditions applicable to just that type of organization, and this certainly holds true also in the library field.

This issue of *Scandinavian Library Quarterly* gives an insight into how diverse and far-reaching the library's tasks are, and how many different competencies are in fact required for working in a library now and in the future.

Specialist or generalist?

Throughout the years, discussions have been going on about whether staff should be subject-specific library trained, supplemented with other professional competences, or generalists, whose professional capabilities were supplemented with in-house training targeted the individual type of library institution based on local needs, whether it be a public or a research library.

This discussion is still going on, and this issue offers contributions from the Norwegian and the Danish Library

Unions, who argue that competencies should be based on the public's needs and that these vary from library to library.

Many libraries are fully aware that the educational background is one thing, and that the exact competencies might well be something else, and consideration as to a new recruitment will be a match between formal education, experience and personal competencies as well as the more indefinable factor, which we in Denmark call chemistry between candidate and work place.

New challenges

Most of us learn that what we originally trained as has changed considerably, and the libraries, which previously focused particularly on collections: building, registration and purchase, have now be allotted new roles – not least due to the technological development, where libraries were very quick to embrace IT and also train the citizens to be able to manage in a digital world.

At the moment, discussions are going on as to how the libraries will tackle the task of learning, and where the borderline is drawn in relation to for example guidance, which has been a regular

library task. Just how far should the libraries go? What about the interplay with the educational institutions?

New competencies to future users

In the future, too, the role of library staff will change and new competencies will be in demand. This is reflected in the tasks, functions and titles of the staff: librarian, information communicator, project manager, event maker, information broker etc.

Consequently, competence development will be an essential element in the development of the libraries. Whether the staff's present and future competencies are acquired via formal education and/or experience is perhaps not all that important – the crucial point is that the libraries continue to educate their staff, so that they are prepared to meet the users' needs whatever type of institution.



Tine Vind

Tine Vind
Head of Division for Libraries
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LIBRARIES, LIBRARIANS, SKILLS and COMPETENCIES



Monica Deildok

The debate about the skills and competencies needed in a library, and the degree to which these are matched by the skill sets of librarians often appears to be based on a mishmash of personal needs, general trend analyses, professional infighting and ambiguous demands on the education sector. This is a pity, because it makes it difficult to launch a much-needed discussion about the competencies needed in libraries and the future development of librarian training courses.

This is an attempt to tidy up the field.

Librarians are not libraries, and libraries are not librarians. This is an important premise. It means that the skill set offered by librarians does not always match the library's skills requirements, and it means that the librarian's competencies may be, and are, useful in areas beyond the library sector. Nevertheless, most librarians do work in libraries; which makes it meaningful to discuss the skills and competencies of librarians in the light of the development of libraries.

However, libraries can be many things. Different types of libraries demand different types of competence, just as different library jobs require different types of library competence. Demands put forward for a widening of the library profession's field of competence, even on its behalf, will therefore not necessarily be wrong if they are based on your own library and/or your own role in a library, but they will most certainly be inaccurate.

Librarians and their training

The main librarianship degree course in Norway is the BA in Library Studies offered by Oslo and Akershus University College (HiOA). This course provides the professional grounding for county librarians, school librarians, library managers, college librarians, Statoil's knowledge management officers, advisors at our county libraries, and university librarians, to mention but a few different roles.

It is obvious that this one course cannot fully prepare librarians for all of them! Their training and education give librarians a good grounding in key academic areas, problems and work practices – but can never provide detailed work procedures or approaches for specific types of libraries or specific roles inhabited by librarians.

Whether the course takes the right approach, and whether it has the right length, are of course matters that warrant

debate. For example, it is a fact that the duration of the course is lagging behind compared to other courses which have traditionally been used for comparison, such as teacher training courses.

Relevant strategic considerations

In my opinion, the question of how the course adjusts to developments seen in libraries and in society is general, deserves continual attention and discussion. This is not necessarily because the current course fails to adjust appropriately, but because the library sector should, to a greater extent than is currently the case, be invited to engage with, or at least be granted insight into, the relevant strategic considerations.

To me, any criticism of the training course which is solely based on a perception that it fails to meet the specific needs of a specific library or library role, is clearly biased and inaccurate.



In-service training offering a minimum of skills enhancement is the responsibility of professional leadership. Foto: Norden. org

In-service training

The librarian training course should and must provide a basic grounding, a core set of library competencies. Based on this foundation, each individual librarian must develop further as they encounter the library and its users, their colleagues and their professional circle. A positive workplace atmosphere amongst colleagues is essential for the development of necessary skills and competencies at work.

It is not until our knowledge is tested in an encounter with reality that we become real librarians. Learning from colleagues and developing our own competencies, as well as those of others, within a professional workplace community, is not however restricted to rookie graduates. The hallmark of good workplace communities is the on-going professional development they offer in the form of experience transfer, testing and professional discussion in the workplace.

We all know the benefits of a workplace which encourages learning, which allows scope for your own professional development and shows care and concern for that of others. We also know that a capacity to adjust to changes and demands for new services as well as the uptake of new skills, are essential qualities when working in dynamic institutions such as libraries.

Management responsibilities

In-service training is therefore a well-known premise for building a positive workplace, and a necessary requirement for being good at your job. Nevertheless, I have the impression that there is little talk of training plans and skills development in Norwegian libraries. Plans for in-service training and experience exchange are rarely featured in the day-to-day work regime, and many library managers have virtually no dealings with the skills development of their staff.

It is a disconcerting trend that managers within the library sector, rather than working systematically with staff training and skills development plans, prefer to take on new staff with a different set of skills and competencies.

I am not of the opinion that it is wrong to hire new staff with different skills, or that it is wrong to hire staff with skills and competencies other than those of a librarian. I do however hold the opinion that if you ask for a certain type of competence when recruiting new staff, without first having considered whether existing staff might be able to undertake the same tasks given a minimum of skills enhancement, then this demonstrates poor leadership.

In order to encourage a positive debate about the skills and competencies of libra-

rians, which I believe we need, we ought to base our conversation on the understanding that the competence of a librarian is not the same as the skills and knowledge needed in a specific library or to do a specific library job.

Skills from other professions needed

Moreover, the librarianship degree programme must improve its communication with the profession about the training they offer and the considerations on which the development of the course are based. It is important that all librarians recognise the fact that libraries may need the skills offered by other professions, and that this does not demonstrate a failing on the part of the library profession, but simply that there is a need to employ people that offer complementary skills.

This must not take place at the expense of librarians being afforded opportunities to develop new skills and competencies. It is the management's responsibility to provide a workplace that offers a good learning environment and provides opportunities for staff to enhance their skills.

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Wilhelm Widmark at the Stockholm University Library. Photo: Annika Hjerpe

THE FUTURE IS HERE



Annika Hjerpe

When Wilhelm Widmark became the Director of the Stockholm University Library, five years ago, he decided that all new recruitments should be assessed and determined by the entire management team because all recruitments need to be strategic. This strategic thinking has led to changes within the staff at the library. Those with the skills and expertise needed for the future have already been hired.

“Our basic philosophy is that all recruitments are strategic recruitments, and we therefore have a joint budget for personnel, and make joint decisions in the executive committee. No recruitments should be perfunctory,” Wilhelm Widmark explains.

Library staff used to consist of librarians and library assistants, but this is changing, and at the Stockholm University Library the change has already taken place. During the past year; the library has needed to recruit several experts from other professions.

“In the past, librarians used to do everything here, but I think it is important that libraries in the future include personnel from different professions with different areas of knowledge, who can move around in various sectors and perform a host of tasks. Today, the whole labour market is much more mobile than it used to be, and this creates a sharing of knowledge,” Wilhelm Widmark observes.

More IT competence

Wilhelm Widmark sees libraries as being more and more about storing data and making data easier to access. This, in turn requires personnel with the proper IT expertise.

“We have recruited systems and IT personnel, and we now have pure programmers with an interest in the development of library systems. We will also need more competence within metadata and I don’t mean just cataloguing, but rather, metadata in a broader perspective. In other words, we want metadata experts instead of cataloguers, because we have to improve the way we work with research data.”

As the Stockholm University Library is a research library, it is important for its staffs to keep up with developments in research data, so researchers can be provided with data management plans, and be able to give advice on how to store data and think ahead.

“We have recruited statisticians and lawyers, so we can support researchers dealing with Open Access issues, and help them track their publications, and find and visualize the right statistics. This is really research intelligence. What type of statistics do researchers need? What kind of bibliometrics? How does ranking work, and what should be collected? It is our job to support the researchers.”

Need support 24-7

In 2012, Stockholm University Press, an open access publisher of peer-reviewed academic journals and books, was founded. It is based at the Stockholm University Library, and this has influenced the library’s need for expertise.

“We have hired editors, and I am happy to say that editors from several well-known publishers have applied for jobs here,” says Wilhelm Widmark, who asserts that social and pedagogic competence and innovative ability are becoming increasingly important for all libraries. In a research library, social and pedagogic competence are important factors in working with researchers and students. He also views it as important to be able to support the students’ needs of different types of media, such as chat or e-mail, in order to provide them with the information the library wishes to deliver.

“We conducted a survey to find out how the students want the library to provide them with services, and found that many students need this support on a 24-7 basis. Naturally we can’t staff the library day and night, but we can create easily accessible information videos that students can access on our web page.”

The survey also showed that the library needs to get better at helping the students help themselves, for example when it comes to assisting them in their search for information.

“We need to become better at being supportive, and we need to hire experts in

User Experience (UX) who can work with light and design at the library in order to facilitate the experience for our users. This is something we must work more with in the future,” Wilhelm Widmark says.

Everything will change

He thinks that in-service training is important, as is having a plan, and following up developments in order to know which skills and expertise will be needed, going forward. This is about straightforward business intelligence and competence planning. However, he warns against attempting to predict the future.

“It is foolish to predict the future. If you believe you can, you will assume that you know how things will end up. It’s better to work in shorter cycles and look at where you are heading.”

He has observed enormous changes in only the past five years.

“Who would have thought, just a few years ago, that we would not only use our mobile phones as communication devices, but also have almost all data stored in them? Everything will change, I don’t doubt that, and we will need more skills and expertise in libraries than what librarians generally have. This is no prediction of the future – this is happening *now*.”

Theoretical education

Since Wilhelm Widmark became the Director of the Stockholm University Library, he has seen a greater need for communication skills and has thus increased the library’s number of communicators. They are working with the library’s communication functions in a host of ways, from helping with PowerPoint presentations, texts and images to creating printed material, web design, and providing librarians with support as to how to write in a way that will reach out to the users.

“We have focused on how we should work with our users. After all, we are a library that should serve our users to the

best of our ability, and all of us are here to serve our users, whether we work on the floor or elsewhere.”

Wilhelm Widmark sees the educational preparation of future librarians as theoretical education and not as vocational training.

“However, even though theoretical education provides a framework, we must not forget that training to become a librarian takes place in the library. It is here one becomes a librarian.”

He can see that the education has changed over time, but thinks that more change might be necessary and that more

dialogue would be beneficial. The biggest change that has taken place within the librarian’s profession is the greater demand for social skills.

Need good leaders

Although Wilhelm Widmark sees a need to employ professionals other than librarians, at his library one can never attain the title of Librarian without the proper educational credentials in library science. Naturally, he expects a newly-qualified librarian to be up-to-date, conversant with the latest developments in open access and publishing, familiar with business

intelligence on library issues, and able to think outside the box and work innovatively to improve services for the users.

One thing that Wilhelm Widmark is willing to predict is that the libraries of the future will need good leaders.

“To recruit leaders who are motivated and good at what they do, libraries will need to work with management supply,” he concludes.

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Press and
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University of Stockholm. Photo: Holger Elgaard. Wikipedia/commons CC

STOCKHOLM UNIVERSITY LIBRARY IN NUMBERS

The University of Stockholm has 70,000 students, 1,800 doctoral students and 5,000 members of staff.

The Stockholm University Library has about 1.8 million visitors per year, which comes to about 5,000 per day. The library has 2,000 study places that soon will be increased by another 200. It is open 78 hours per week during semesters, and 44 hours per week during the summer.

Full-time employees, besides the usual library staff, which consists of 56 librarians, 16 library assistants, a library director and a deputy library director, the library has four people working with accounting and human resources, a lawyer, a research coordinator, a publishing editor, a co-ordinator, four researchers, two communicators, seven managers of different areas and 12 specialists in IT, web design and operation.

The library’s holdings consist of 2,641,596 physical items and the 698,402 items on electronic media (December 2015).

There were 1,218,883 initial and renewed loans of physical items, and 4,112,435 loans of items on electronic media, resulting in a total of 5,331,318 loans (2015).

Future competence needs

Tine Jørgensen is chairwoman of the Danish Union of Librarians (BF), she has a Master's degree in Library and Information Science and has i.a. worked for IBM. I met her for a conversation about competencies of the future.



Photo: Jakob Boserup

Which competencies do you think are needed most in the library right now?

"I have been inspired by *21st century skills* that may also be used in a library context. The four areas particularly under discussion are: Collaboration, Critical thinking, Information literacy and Global awareness. It makes perfect sense to keep up-to-date in a wider context, because we have to address what society and its citizens need. The four areas accord very well with the library idea and the libraries are already supporting all the areas – for example by collaborations with volunteers and partnerships and by increasingly including critical thinking in learning and cultural initiatives."

In your experience, does the library world have similar expectations?

"Absolutely. Over the past couple of years, there has been an increased focus on learning tracks in the library sector. *21st century skills* will meet with sympathy among leaders and members of staff, as they are familiar areas to us – only without being termed that way. What should be understood by the word *learning* is also a question of passing on the capabilities of

the librarian, for example information searching and source criticism. Much emphasis is placed on that e.g. in projects with school collaborations."

What does the concept 'learning' mean to the library profession?

"The discussions have been in relation to a library context and to what it means to be a librarian. What do we, for example, understand by library didactics and pedagogics? The librarians have over the years done various things in order to encourage reading for pleasure, but there is room for improvement and being more specific. I am sure it would be of great benefit to our profession to be able to more clearly express our understanding of learning, which also would result in a professionalization."

How does BF work with competencies of the future?

"At BF we attach great importance to focusing more on the offbeat angles and getting wiser. In relation to the world around us, it is very much a question of making the members' competencies visible and selling them to our stakeholders and interested parties. I have, for example, visited the Minister for Education and explained the role of librarians and libraries, i.a. in order to bring into play the dynamics in relation to other professional groups."

Considering the major societal tendencies, do you feel that some competencies will be more sought-after than others in the future?

"The librarian's core product is to use information systems and teach information searching. That is extremely important. But many people are by now able to manage by themselves, so we are probably

looking at more general competencies. In recent years, the sector has moved slightly away from the role of specialist.

But along with a changed consumption of culture, the specialized domains have again become important, for example a librarian with specialist knowledge of children and reading, or about music and literature, who can provide the optimal service and guidance to the consumer of culture. Hence, both generalist and specialist knowledge is important.

The users are capable of many things today, but they don't necessarily have access to the specialised knowledge they need. The libraries should work with new competence models in order to provide a feeling of confidence and inclusion for their members of staff in relation to the changes that are happening at the moment. Further education is important, just as it is important to move outside our own context to learn something new."

Which competencies do you need to have available in your local library?

"I would like to meet a professional person, who knows something about a specific subject, and who can help me to find something I have not been able to find myself. I should like to be inspired and challenged. My digital library consumption is primary *Filmstriben* via recommendations and inspiration at *Litteratursiden* and social media, where librarians mediate and recommend, for example via #bogsnak."



Gitte Smed

Gitte Smed
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<http://edglossary.org/21st-century-skills>

INVENTING oneself in the research library profession



Charlotte Wien



Bertil F. Dorch

“I want to be a research librarian”, a newly minted graduate of philosophy told us a couple of months ago. She sees research libraries as being in a process of tremendous change and as a place where she might carve an exciting career for herself. We have reached the conclusion that her wish is genuine and heartfelt. So how are we going to help her?

Until 2000 the answer would have been to ask her to apply for a vacancy in connection with a subject specialist’s retirement and then to enrol at the Royal School of Library and Information Science to do a Master of Library Science degree.

The MLS course was meant for newly employed research librarians, who already had a domain specific Master’s degree.

The idea was that by way of this supplementary programme a graduate would be able to put his/her original domain specific capacity into a Library and Information Science LIS perspective. Thus focus was on the librarian’s traditional practical functions: Choice of materials, classification and systematization, reference work, documentation literature and online search, user service and collection care.

Consequently, you would be able to meet the research libraries’ needs by combining the heavy domain specific education theory and methods with the librarian’s more traditional practical functions. At that time, the general perception was probably that more prestige was associated with being a research librarian (specialist and theorist), rather than being a librarian (generalist and practitioner). This is illustrated in the value compass figure 1.

The vertical axis reflects the anticipated level of education in relation to handling the different functions in the library. The horizontal axis is more difficult to label, but it reflects the degree of idealism vis a vis pragmatism in relation to handling the tasks in the library.



University of Copenhagen, Photo: Christian Filis

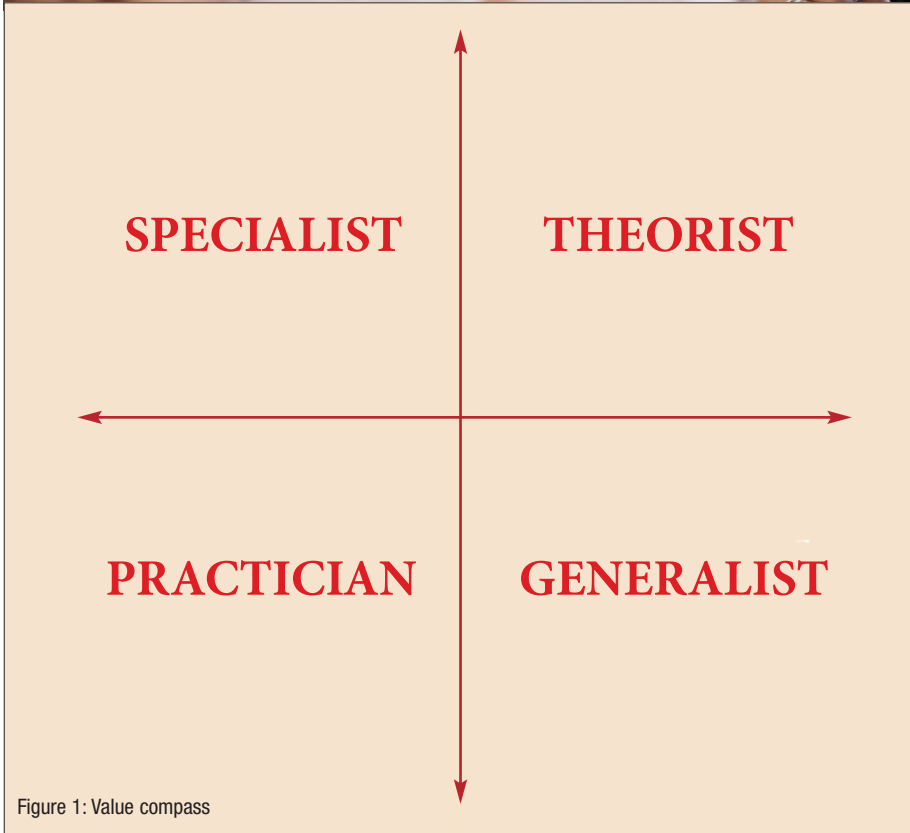


Figure 1: Value compass

The thesis here is that probably the traditional research librarian would often find himself in the upper part of the compass, while the rest of the library staff (including the librarians) would be placed in the lower part. Obviously, this created the basis for potential tension between the research librarians and ‘the others’ (i.a. the librarians).

Not a new issue

This tension is not new. It appears from i.a. Catherine Arnott Smith’s rendition of a conference on education of specialists at the University of Washington in 1967, where ALA’s ‘education officer’ Lester Asheim offered a classic argumentation: “Asheim denied that a specialist education was any business of the library school”.

Smith further argued: “The generalist’s argument is, then, that because specializations are the proper domain of subject experts, and subject experts are practitioners, and practitioners by definition cannot be full-time faculty members because they are busy practicing, then no full-time faculty member can teach specialist courses, and, therefore, all education located in a library school must necessarily be the education of generalists”.

Bourdieu

A useful tool in understanding and explaining this field of tension is Bourdieu’s *Field Theory*. The *Field Theory* explains the structures in a given social world (like for example a library), including the power struggles which individuals and social groupings engage in against each other: What the struggles are actually about is to obtain the position(s) in the field that gives you the most prestige.

In our value compass the vertical axis represents the volume of cultural capital, which according to Bourdieu more often than not is based on the volume (and length) of education: The more education, the more cultural capital and consequently prestige. It is therefore obvious that more prestige is obtainable as research librarian in a research library when prestige is tied up with the length of the education.

But a field is never static, as there is naturally always a struggle for the power to decide exactly what is associated with power and what is not. Moreover, here the



University of Copenhagen. Photo: Christian Friis



Photo: schmidt hammer lassen architects

authors perceive that the research librarians are under massive pressure: The library world is probably one of the places where traces from the transition from industrial society to knowledge society are most clearly evident. Almost nothing is like before.

Lift of the library profession

The library profession has therefore had to upgrade itself in order to keep up with developments. Numerous new disciplines have been incorporated. Today it is for example necessary for a librarian to be very familiar with information technology, statistics, cultural mediation, scientific study methods, communication and pedagogics, just to mention a few examples.

Being a librarian is today a highly specialized area with its own Master's and Ph.D. degree. Putting books on shelves, cataloguing and systematization are now just a small part of the modern librarian's tasks.

The educational lift of the library profession has meant that the librarian now moves above the horizontal axis, thereby also challenging the research librarian's position in the field. This is for example reflected in the research libraries' annual reporting to Statistics Denmark, which shows that the percentage of staff in the research libraries that comprises the research librarians in 2015 was 9% compared with 11% in 2009.

More academics

At the same time, librarians and other academic staff made up almost 50% in 2015 compared with 45% in 2009.

Over the entire period the number of employees in all categories decreased by about 7%, while the figure concerning research librarians decreased by 21% in 2015. Simultaneously, the number of librarians stays more or less stable, and the number of other academic staff has increased slightly.

The statistics illustrate the tendency over the past few years in several research libraries: The classic specialised research librarians are being replaced by more generalist information specialists with an academic background.

Research librarian's position challenged

At the same time – and probably partly contributing to this – developments within the academic world have brought about an undermining of the role of the research librarian: The subject areas of researchers are steadily getting more specialized and the competition for research funding and jobs has intensified.

Consequently, it has become much harder for the research librarians to keep abreast of developments within the *entire* subject area. So while the focus of research narrows, the domain specific field, which the research librarian is supposed to cover, is broadening. The traditional task of the research librarian is therefore more or less unsolvable today.

Must choose competencies

The point is that the research librarian's traditional prestigious position in the field is challenged – yes, in fact threatened. Which brings us back to the original question: How will a young person be able to

make a career as a research librarian? When the old education sandwich consisting of a domain specific basis education, with the addition of a supplementary training, no longer provides prestige, what then? Which competencies should a young adult, who wants to make a career in a research library, then concentrate on?

This is actually such a good question that we are unable to come up with an unequivocal answer. But paradoxically, it is the missing answer that provides the answer.

Choose the right weapons

The fact is that the positions in the value compass change very quickly, because the research libraries are in a rapid state of flux. As we are talking in terms of an almost constant change, it is not clear what provides the maximum prestige in a modern research library and thus what leads to a career: Is it being able to plan a study start event, write a textbook on information search, schedule teaching for researchers et cetera. Or is it being able to focus on breadth or on depth – is it to be practitioner or theorist – generalist or specialist?

The point is that the research librarian must choose her weapons, because no one can be everything and all functions are important and therefore contain an inherent potential for giving prestige.

Therefore, we do not think that a single streamlined educational offer is the answer to how we can help our young friend. She must – so to speak – invent herself and choose her own way into the system by choosing a palette of different competencies. The only guidance we can offer is to advise her to make sure that she under-



Photo: schmidt hammer lassen architects

stands and has competencies within all four positions in the compass.

She will still have to have a certain comprehensive view of her domain specific field, as her entire *raison d'être* for working in a research library is her *specific* specialist knowledge. But she will also have to acquire some insight into important topical theories within the Library, Documentation and Information field. Here she must focus and select amongst a myriad of fields.

Let us take an example and assume that she is interested in bibliometrics, then bibliometric theory will also be very important to her. She will also need to have some *practical* knowledge: She will have to have some knowledge of how a series of complicated databases and IT tools work, as well as solid insight into quantitative method. She must be enough of a *generalist* to understand the big differences that exist between publishing traditions of the main fields and the libraries' role in the knowledge society.

A flexible master education

The point is that today's competence needs are individualised, because the field is under reconstruction. But this is exactly *why* a bright young person through careful planning can establish a career by consciously seeking to cover all positions in the diagram within her chosen field.

This is why we can only offer her an education framework within which she must – so to speak – invent herself.

In order to create such a framework, SDUB has started a collaboration with Institute for Design and Communication under SDU in Kolding in Jutland, which runs the bachelor degree course in Library Science and Knowledge Communication. The plan is to develop a flexible master education together, where the student together with a career advisor and a study board composes her specialist portfolio.

The flexible Master's course includes 60 ECTS and can take as long as six years. The study board can stipulate that the course should, for example, combine both

theoretical and practical subjects of a certain weight, that the course should be completed with a Master's dissertation, but otherwise it is in principle completely up to the student and her supervisor which specialist subject to focus on: Bibliometrics? Project management? Management? There are numerous and useful possibilities for a modern research library.

We expect that the first students can enrol for the flexible Master's programme starting autumn 2017.

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Photos from study environment at
University of Southern Denmark:
schmidt hammer lassen architects



Photo: schmidt hammer lassen architects

Learning by **DOING**

“The combination of professional competence enhancement gained from the courses and the financial resources to put into practice what we learned, was a crucial criterion for the success of the project,” says project participant Nina Stenbro about her experience of the development project *It happens in the library*.



Hege Solli

The project, which was allocated NOK1.2 million (approx. 130,000 Euro) in funding from the National Library of Norway, was implemented in the Agder counties of Southern Norway in the period 2014-2016. Its main purpose was to develop the libraries of Aust-Agder and Vest-Agder counties into attractive meeting places offering the general public a wide range of culture and activities.

Before the start of the project, libraries' experience of arranging events and activities varied. One of the mantras throughout the project was that the libraries should do something they had never done before, and based on this perspective, the libraries took their own starting point as a basis and developed further from there.

Competence in events management

One of the main components of the development project was to provide the libraries with competence in events management in order to develop them into competent, professional and mindful events managers. The type of experience of events that the libraries had, and the level of competence that the employees felt they

had in holding events, were mapped in advance of the project.

In the first year of the project, the focus was therefore on competence enhancement. A three-day course was held to provide specialist updating. The first meeting was an inspiration day, when we invited librarians in Asker and Stavanger to tell us how they worked to develop the libraries into cultural arenas. We also conducted a brainstorming session to provide the libraries in Agder with input on what they could implement themselves.

The topic of the next course was the A-Z of events management competence and marketing. This course also included a practical course day with training in sound engineering, lighting and stage-rigging. The final course in the first project year dealt with the role of host, master of ceremonies, dialogue partner for authors, and chair of debates.

Immediate experiential learning

It was essential for the project to forge a close link between learning and practical experience. Each participating library received up to NOK25,000 (approx. 2,700

Euro) to hold one or more events at that library. The theoretical knowledge was thereby transformed into skills immediately after the acquisition of new competence on the courses. Several of the project participants have expressed that this was crucial to preventing the new knowledge from the courses being parked when they returned to their normal workday.

The distinctive character of each library

One of the ideas behind the project was that we should work to extend the library's normal parameters and help to think innovatively and non-traditionally about how libraries are to develop. We wanted the libraries to surprise, but were eager for the individual libraries to take their own starting point as a basis for development. Following several previous joint projects which have included more than 50 libraries in both counties of Agder, we found that the libraries still wanted a joint project, but with a greater latitude to develop each library's distinctive character.

The development work was refocused on enabling the libraries to identify their own distinctive features and develop their pro-



From the exhibition Snow, produced by Arendal library and Glød/Tussilago Produksjoner. Photo: Kristine Norberg

gramme profile based on these features. This resulted in a new prioritization of particular target groups, artistic production in the library, libraries that assumed the role of producer to develop exhibitions, as well as some traditional events.

Long-term programme planning

In the second project year, the libraries focused on learning long-term, holistic programme planning, and they were given the task of developing a spring programme for 2016, for which they received NOK 40 000 (approx. 4,300 Euro) to carry out the events. Each library received individual guidance from the county libraries in Aust-Agder and Vest-Agder as they designed their programmes.

In connection with a knowledge exchange conference for the project in May 2016, many of the participants stated that long-term planning and collaboration with other actors were aspects that they would continue to work on after conclusion of the project.

Tangential priority areas

The development project has led to se-

veral competence-enhancement courses that form part of the regular courses offered by the county libraries being tangential to the project's priority areas. Examples of this are the debate-chairing course and the advanced course in rigging of premises. The latter is based on the kinds of opportunities offered by the site-specific premises to make the event unique and feasible.

A small library that previously thought it only had space for 20 listeners was helped to see how the simple moving of shelves and relocation of the stage could extend the space to accommodate 60 children at children's performances. When the National Library of Norway announced its arena development funds, including for procurement of light and sound equipment, many libraries in the Agder counties were able to purchase technical equipment, which contributes to the professionalism of events in the libraries.

Some of the project participants have clearly stated that the link between project funds and arena development funds has been crucial in making it both easier and enjoyable to hold events in the library.

The road ahead

The fact that the local population has expressed a wish for more events has constituted an important learning experience from the project. The importance of applying for external funding for events, establishing sound, long-term partnerships with other actors in the local community, as well as the importance of long-term planning, are highlighted when the chief librarians are asked about how they will work to develop the libraries as cultural arenas after conclusion of the project.

According to the project group's evaluation of the development project, it was precisely this link between professional competence enhancement and financial resources that enabled the libraries to test out what they learned on the courses, and this contributed to the success of the project for the libraries in the Agder counties.

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Special libraries — special skills

Finland's functional library network is based on cooperation among all libraries. The establishment of the Council for the Special Libraries in 2003 launched a more structured cooperation between special libraries and with other library sectors.



Soile Manninen

Special libraries are focused on a particular field, user group, area or type of publication in their collections and services. Such libraries are typically found in public administration, organisations and companies.

Several different estimates exist on the number of special libraries in Finland. At the moment, the Network of Special Libraries and Information Services features representatives from approximately 70 organisations. Once special collections maintained by companies and private entities are included, however, this number goes up significantly.

Special libraries have another cooperation group under the Finnish Research Library Association, which organizes seminars and library visits.

Special libraries closed

In Finland, library services have been developed through network cooperation, which means that many special libraries have nationally-defined responsibilities for collections in specific fields of science. Some of the special libraries' services are intended for organisation-internal use exclusively, but most are open to the public.

During the past few years, several special libraries have been unceremoniously closed down or pushed to the background of the organisation's activities – but many

libraries have also been merged, so the situation is not entirely bleak.

The worst cases result in staff terminations; which means that in addition to professional competence, we lose an overall understanding of available information resources, which reduces public access to the material. Digital material must also be compiled by someone, and search engines cannot find everything. This is a waste of resources, pure and simple.

Difficulties began years ago

In many ways, special libraries are the pioneers of the library world, even though they may not have state-of-the-art library systems or more than one representative of information service staff, as is the case in many organisations. The years 2015 and 2016 have been characterised by cooperation negotiations in all library sectors, but for people involved in special libraries, the difficult times began years ago.

Cutting or shutting down collections means that the focus of the work shifts to other duties – which is not necessarily a negative. Library and information service staff has gained responsibilities relating to communications and online services, and information service can also serve as IT support.

Library and information service staff are

also active in general administrative duties and carrying out training sessions. This is the everyday work for me, and many other special library employees, and it may signal the future of libraries in other sectors. We would do well to share our skills across organisations and sectors more actively before this becomes a reality.

Intellectual property rights

My work in the IPR University Centre, which is operated by six Finnish universities, takes many forms. Our primary duty is to produce and disseminate information on a topic very familiar to most library people, intellectual property rights (IPR). Copyrights, trademarks, patents, copyright of design and other fields of intellectual property rights are everywhere, and will only grow in significance as the future becomes more and more intangible.

Understanding intellectual property rights requires understanding technology, finance and culture in addition to legal issues.

We supplement the services of university libraries, and other special libraries supplement our services. Information services on our topic are also available from the Finnish Patent and Registration Office and the Finnish Copyright Society Library. We are based next door to the Li-



Illustration: Dreamstime/OPS

brary of Parliament, which houses Finland's finest legal collections, and if we need older resources, which are otherwise unavailable, we contact the National Repository Library.

Better than Google

Future competence needs are very similar in special libraries as they are in other library sectors. The basic skills and duties will remain the same, but methods and tools will change. Library work and document management are becoming closer to one another, and managing library resources increasingly entails data management. Libraries are producing less and less content description themselves, but the significance of metadata is on the rise.

During my studies in the early 2000s, bibliometrics was ignored by most, but the situation is completely different now. I am eager to see whether another area of information studies will soon see a similar golden age.

On a practical level, open science and data will become familiar to everyone working in research. This generates demand for legal and technological skills, but at all points it should be understood why, for whom and how such services are produced. Currently this concept is better known as service design.

Interest in learning new things is surely the most important characteristic for anyone working in information services. It requires the ability to jump into new things even if we do not have all the information or skills beforehand.

More duties in job description

To train others, we must train ourselves and take on the role of the learner. Duties relating to the analysis and foresight of information will probably find their ways to more and more job descriptions in the future, and if the organisation also produces publications, fact checking duties as well.

The value of information specialists in special libraries will increase as they gain years of experience and deeper expertise. The goal is to make the work and information seeking of our clients as easy as possible, so we must understand the content and the operating environment. If we can make our skills visible, we will not lack for clients who will see our technological or substance expertise as a gift from the heavens.

Succeeding in our work can yield the highest compliment of our field in this age: "You're better than Google!"

Soile Manninen
Information Specialist
IPR University Center
The author is the chair of
the Council for the Special Libraries

Extensive expertise, curiosity and capacity to collaborate



Susanne Ahlroth

In the future, what are the most critical questions of a library's HR manager? I met Saara Ihamäki, deputy library director of the Helsinki City Library, and we discussed future library work and expertise for a little while.

Ihamäki is director of the library and patron services department in an organization where there are 37 libraries, two bookmobiles, 10 outreach libraries and about 500 employees. Ihamäki managed a committee that reformed the Helsinki City Library HR scheme which was introduced this year and will be followed until 2019.

Libraries are amidst change. What factors influence the staff's needs for expertise, duties and professional roles the most?

"Our HR scheme recognizes different trends in the operational environment that affect those issues. These trends include, for example, changes in the concept of general education, emphasis on well-being, increase in inequality and the integration of technology in everyday life. Factors of change also include urban growth and fluctuations in demographic structure and the library network.

In my opinion, a major factor is the way people acquire information, culture and entertainment – it has a radical impact on the way people use the library. For instance, the number of loans for music ma-

terial has crashed, and the number of loans for movies is headed in the same direction. Loans for literature have yet to follow this trend, but will they in the future? The share of online access through mobile devices is also clearly increasing."

Which duties will remain, which will be eliminated and which will be introduced?

"Nowadays, highly educated staff does too much routine work. The work has also centered too much on collections and logistics.

A decrease in logistics work will affect processes and especially the duties of the librarian. Less time will be needed to work at the service counter, process reservations for material, prepare material for use, place material on shelves and select material. The unleashed time is increasingly needed for creating content for mobile and online services, teaching and consultation, working with partners, generating ideas for events and organizing them as well as working with children and youth.

Patrons have great expectations – they expect expertise in literature and book re-

commendations. We have expertise; it's just a question of how to divulge it for better use by the patrons, for their pleasure and benefit."

What type of expertise is needed in the future?

"The Scandinavian democratic society is crumbling and segregation is increasing. Libraries should wake up to this change and make sure they remain libraries for everyone, as a place and service that everyone can use, a place where different people meet. Libraries should also set themselves along people's everyday routes. It determines the direction in which libraries are developed and this calls for knowledge; assumptions are not enough. We have data, but we must know how to analyze it and utilize it better to create goals for services and activities based on it.

The duty of the library is to maintain literacy. We need staff that possesses higher education and a broad civil foundation as well as solid expertise in literature and culture. This benefits society at a time when sustaining literacy is a vanishing endeavour. Staff in libraries should also



Saara Ihamäki.
Photo: Susanne Ahlroth

know how to guide people on how to cope in a digitized, self-service society. In a way, the library is like a lighthouse where patrons have the opportunity to participate in society's other services."

How should expertise be accumulated?

"The Helsinki City Library has introduced job rotation. The entire staff gradually goes to work in another library for three months. The staff's experiences have been extremely positive. The work and being able to perceive things through one's own thinking processes is the best way to learn. Going to another library and seeing how others do things arouses insight. At the same time, the distance makes it possible to break away from your own job which allows you to reflect more easily on it. What elements does my job comprise?"

When recruiting staff, what types of expertise and characteristics do you observe?

"Above all, I usually expect a view of the mission of the library and the applicant's own contribution to it. I also pay attention to whether the applicant's way of thinking is patron-oriented, whether s(he) is prepared to encounter people, which is a necessity for us. However knowledgeable the applicant is, it's not enough if s(he) cannot communicate with different types of people.

This is a critical question. Often job announcements have unrealistic lists of the characteristics applicants should have. However, expertise on the level of the individual is only part of the job, because it must be seen on the level of the team, work community and organization.

There's one more characteristic I wish

everyone would have and that's curiosity towards the world, people and colleagues. Substantive expertise is complemented by constant curiosity."

In three words, how do you describe a library professional?

"Curious, educated, collaborator."

Susanne Ahlroth
Senior Adviser
Regional State Administrative Agencies
Finland



Photo: Susanna Hagman

Reading Dogs

A struggling reader's best friend!

During my early years as a teacher I read an anthology called *Please Mrs Butler*. The poem, “Slow Reader”, written as struggling readers read: “I – am – in – the – slow- read-ers group...” moved me to tears then and still does today. This child’s siblings had found fame in school in the football team or the Christmas play, but this little one’s claim to fame was being in the group for slow readers. The last line, “...I-hate-it”, is the line that goes straight to my heart.

**Elspeth Randelin**

Sadly I believe the situation is the same today as it was thirty years ago. There are always children who find it difficult to become fluent readers – those who for one reason or another struggle to make sense of the black squiggles on white paper while others, who may be the same age or younger, seem to float through the learning-to-read process with enviable ease.

No matter how professional the teacher and no matter how sensitive all may be to the situation, the child still knows that he has difficulty, knows too that you know he has difficulty and often there is no attempt to hide the disdain he holds for books – “I hate reading!” Of course he hates it.

This isn’t an unusual state of affairs and one school librarians face every day. Our boundless enthusiasm and never ending attempts to find the right book to casually present at exactly the right moment – the one that may prove to be the book that ‘wasn’t bad’ or better still the one that would prompt the magic words “this was OK – do you have another one like this one?”

It doesn’t always work, in fact more often than not it doesn’t. Many times we find the pile of carefully selected titles so eagerly handed over to a child so that he has a little pile to choose from, hidden under a cushion on the sofa. Not a single one had appealed. Not one. The child had left the library bookless. I should have known... he hates reading.

It is however not about hate but love – the special kind of love that we who work with children long to instill in our young charges and the devotional kind that dogs do best. I am however not speaking of reading dogs in general – I am thinking of *our* reading dog Alma who has been a loved colleague at Ytternäs School in Mariehamn on Åland for the past five years.

Alma, a pumi, and her mistress Yrsa Finne are very important cogs in our learn-



ing-to-read-wheel. They are the ones who make it fun for the very children who had previously had it so tough. The ones who hate books and despise the very thought of reading aloud in front of anyone else.

Dear colleagues: I need a dog!

As with so many other great discoveries throughout history my discovery of the wonders of a reading dog happened by accident during a visit to the Sello library in Espoo, Finland, in 2011. Sello, a municipal library was at that time home to now famous Börje whom together with his mistress Raisa Alameri held regular Reading Dog sessions with enormous success, for both children and adults.

I needed a dog in our school and it proved to be surprisingly easy to organize. First of all I sat on the boat from Helsinki to Mariehamn and sent a plea to my colleagues “I need a dog”! Within a very short space of time I had a likely candidate.

It is important to remember that it is not only a dog that is coming into the school it is also an adult – master or mistress of this said dog – and it is very important that this person is also suited to a school environment and all that it involves.

Yrsa brought Alma for the job interview with our Principal in January 2012. From the beginning Alma did her internship with us with a vest that said Trainee before she graduated later that year and could proudly wear a Reading Dog vest.

I have been asked many times, particularly by my Swedish colleagues, how it is possible to have a dog in a school? “Don’t you have any allergies?” “Aren’t any of your pupils afraid of dogs?” These are of course important and highly relevant questions and not ones that can be ignored.

Parents/guardians were informed of our plans and our health sister was brought into the discussions to check the allergy

situation. As it happens – so far at least – we haven’t had children or staff members who are allergic.

We have however had children who are very nervous around dogs and this we treat with the utmost respect. No one is ever forced to read to Alma nor need they go alone. It can take two or three visits with Alma before everyone – Alma included – is happy and relaxed. A nervous child does not read well and Alma is extremely astute in picking up negative vibrations and it can take a while for everyone to settle.

Yrsa’s patience with these little ones is vital. She is responsible for Alma’s behaviour and, as the only adult in the room; she is also responsible for the readers. The whole experience must be a positive one and the success of the venture is based upon the reluctant reader building a relationship with Alma and vice-versa. It is built on mutual trust and affection and this takes time and cannot be hurried.

“It is fun to read to Alma”

This is what it is all about. It isn’t fun to read to someone who corrects, offers unasked for help or gives the slightest indication that “you’re not very good at this”. At its very worst it can even go back generations when the reading assistant has listened to these children’s parents or elder siblings. “Your father couldn’t read well either” is a tough one and creates an insurmountable barrier for a reader to overcome. Assistants are, after all, only human.

It is common that struggling readers choose books that are too difficult for them. Yrsa manages to get around this by gently saying “Alma is having difficulty understanding this book. Do you think you could choose a book with shorter sentences so she is able to follow?” Simple, necessary and unbelievably effective!

Alma never corrects a mispronunciation or a missed word but Yrsa can say some-

thing along the lines of “how well you pronounced” such and such a word, thereby allowing the child to hear it correctly. Alma’s tail is the key to success here. A stroke or a scratch behind the ear produces a wag of the tail and this, for the reader, is all it takes to make it possible to believe that I have read well and that Alma enjoyed it. Once one believes that it is possible to read well the battle is almost won. “I can and therefore I will”.

Love and common sense

The direct opposite to “I can’t therefore I won’t”. Once you are reading aloud the improvement is often fast and dramatic. Children start practicing at home by reading to their toy dog, cat or to their gerbil or rabbit. The reading aloud at home gives confidence and the wagging tail does the rest. It isn’t magic. It is love and plain common sense. Take away the stress and the anxiety of reading aloud, make it fun, the child reads more and we’re there.

“I’m just going to read to Alma” shouts one little boy with a book held high, “she wants to know how the story ends and she wants me to read it”. I am fairly sure that he’s right. Alma does want to hear the end! They settle on the sofa, the story continues with Almas head on his lap and the tail starts to wag!

Elsbeth Randelin is school librarian at Ytternäs skola in Mariehamn, Finland. She is well known as a passionate promoter of a wide variety of ideas designed to inspire children and young people to read. She lectures often in Finland and Sweden and has been awarded several prizes and scholarships for her work.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

“Rocking the boat is also a necessity”

Researcher Jutta Haider is one of the people the Swedish government turns to when they want to know more about the future information landscape. This pundit from the Alpine city of Villach answers with concern about democracy.



Karin Persson

Birds have filled their nest with hatchlings just outside information researcher Jutta Haider’s study. On our way from the LUX campus reception and up the four flights of stairs to the Department of Arts and Cultural Sciences, she manages to talk hastily about the setup of the Lund University Library and a great deal more that I would have needed to record to correctly relate. She knows a lot about a lot. But whether it’s magpies, crows or some other birds cawing loudly enough outside to make it difficult to hold a conversation in her study she can’t say.



“I know nothing about birds,” she says and firmly closes the window.

No, ornithology doesn’t interest her. Had the matter

concerned how search engines affect our attitudes towards birds, however, then it’s more likely that she would’ve spent a great deal of time and effort to find out. Jutta’s calling – and greatest interest – is instead society and, more specifically, the study of what the altered conditions for information brought about by digital culture can entail, should entail and shouldn’t entail. For the past eight years, she’s practised this role here, at Lund University.

“I have a sociomaterial approach to information and how it’s expressed in different activities and in different instances, perhaps...” she says, in an attempt to explain exactly what it is she does.

Popular search terms

We concretise. At the moment, information about the environment is very much on Jutta’s mind. She’s in the process of finishing an article on how Google’s filter enables certain results and searches and as such creates an image of what eco-friendly living entails.

Waste sorting is a search term that Swedes hold dear. In 2013, it was the third most popular search in the Google Trends category ‘how’: How do you sort waste? The following year, many instead asked why we sort waste.

“Why is there such a great need to google about sorting waste here? And what do people find when they search? There’s a whole network of bureaucracy surrounding waste sorting. A gigantic information complex behind the act of throwing a packet in the right container. It’s an illustrative, quite light-hearted example of how algorithms work and influence. Though maybe not particularly controversial. Unlike the vaccine debate.”

What’s most controversial?

“Right now, I’d say immigration. That’s where you can make most political gains.”

Jutta grew up in Austria and her accent is easily discerned, although she speaks rapid and fluent Swedish. When she writes academic papers in Swedish, however, she always does so together with someone else. Earlier this spring, together with her research colleague Olof Sundin, who is also her husband, she published the report *Algoritmer i samhället (Algorithms in Society)* on behalf of the Swedish government’s Secretariat for Strategic Development.

Concentration of power

Algorithms are necessary if we’re to find the information we’re looking for in the sea of material. On the other hand, a lack of awareness about how they function – like the lack of alternatives – is a problem, she states. It seems as if the information we are presented with follows some kind of logical order in which the best appears first, but the ranking is actually determined for the most part by people’s cultural values and commercial interests.

“There are increasingly fewer owners behind social media, fewer suppliers of e-books and fewer scientific publishers governing how scientific papers are communicated. There’s an ongoing concentration of power that society is simply ill prepared to manage.”

Social media follow a similar principle. The news we are presented with is governed to a certain extent by what our friends

share and like. Some people say that we ourselves choose which 'filter bubble' we want to be a part of. But other factors, which in principle are impossible to decipher, also come into play.

"There are advantages to receiving the news you're interested in and being able to participate in dialogues that engage you. But if those are the only dialogues that are held then we have a serious problem. It becomes difficult to have dialogues that lead to pluralism rather than polarisation."

Libraries important

According to Jutta, it's as though we're locked into the system and must act from within. She asks how we can offer a non-commercial alternative while needing to use these media and filters to get anywhere or to reach out to anyone. Today, everyone adapts, even libraries and public service, to this filter, this dominant 'information gatekeeper'.

Contradictory to those who claim that libraries are becoming pointless since everyone can gain access to most information on the internet, she says that the role of the library is increasing in importance in the digital information age.

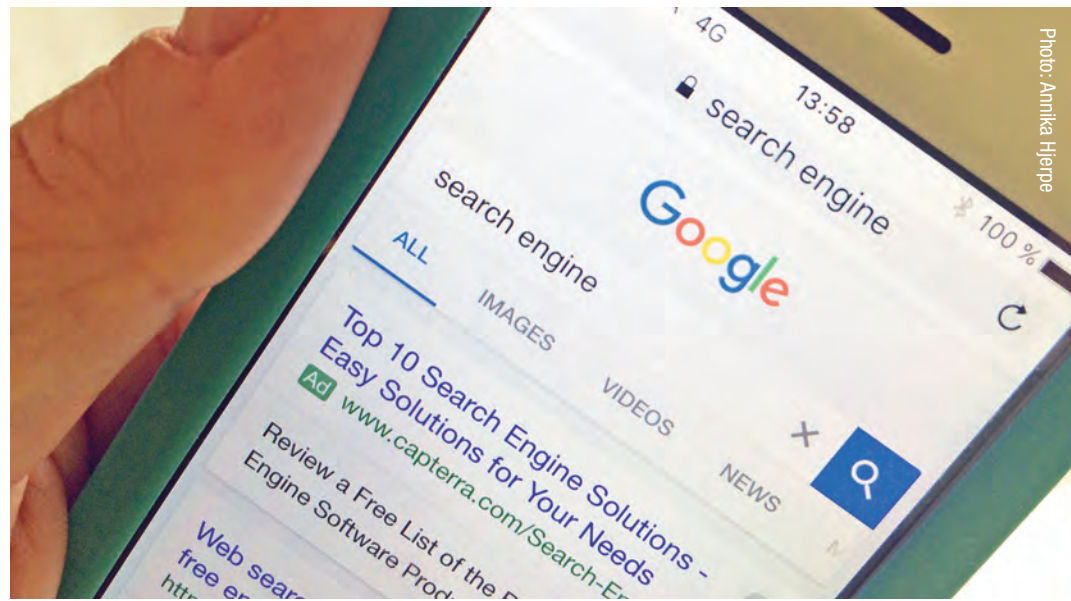
"It's there, if anywhere, one ought to have access to a somewhat non-commercial dialogue governed by something other than popularity logic."

How is the political apparatus responding to this development?

"There are, at least, the beginnings of a dialogue in the shape of ethics committees at EU level and directives aimed at providing some protection. The fact that the Government Offices of Sweden hired us to write about algorithms shows that there's a desire to understand what is going on and how to handle it. But this was a very late awakening."

It would require massive globally coordinated efforts to challenge the prevailing concentration of power. But this is unlikely to happen, according to Jutta. This makes increased awareness the better path to follow.

"Today, you're considered a bit of a tin foil hat wearer if you don't use Google. Having a critical approach must become more normal."



This is where Jutta believes that libraries can play a crucial role. Perhaps by understanding how dominant algorithms work and contributing to normalising a critical approach. It's about finding a balance between on the one hand seeing the exciting aspects of technological development and on the other hand questioning things.

Not all bad

But we also need a more stable social foundation to stand on, says Jutta. An agreed value system that we teach and that we do not question.

"What good is knowing that the anti-immigration debate on the internet is reinforced by Facebook's visibility norm, which ensures that controversial topics appear high up and so on, if we don't know in which direction society wants to head? At the moment, society's norm system is a little shaky. We can criticise this, that and the other, but if we don't have certain base values that society has agreed upon then it's easy to stumble into relativism." It's not all bad. Naturally, the internet has also boosted democracy in several ways. One is that everyone can be their own publicist today. At the same time, if no one reads what we write, it's like talking to a closed, empty room.

"It becomes a bit of a chimera, a nice idea. There are certainly many opportunities to initiate dialogues, meetings and movements that didn't exist before, but it feels as though they're becoming fewer in number."

So how is democracy doing? Is it getting better or worse?

"I'm not Hans Rosling, who knows the truth, but just now things do not seem to

be improving. But it involves interaction between many different things; you can't simply say that it's the internet's fault."

Jutta's study is small, but she's happy to at least have a room of her own. Happy that they haven't followed the trend at so many other workplaces, with open-plan office space and activity-based workstations.

"What would I do with all my books and papers?"

Googles all the time

No, she doesn't live in a completely digitised world. She reads scientific papers on her tablet and some digital periodicals, but when it comes to books she prefers the real thing. The bookcase houses works such as *Open Access and the Humanities* by Martin Paul Eve and on the desk is a printout of an article with the thought-provoking title "The McDonaldization of Academic Libraries and the Values of Transformational Change."

Otherwise Jutta, like most other people, is online most hours of the day, but says that her field of study hasn't affected her internet behaviour to any significant extent.

"Just because you question the system doesn't mean that you aren't a part of it. I'm not particularly paranoid. I google all the time."

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The original Swedish text was previously published in *Biblioteksbladet*, a Swedish trade publication for librarians and information scientists.

Straightforward service all together



Merja Pihlajamäki

Iso Omena Service Centre in Matinkylä, Espoo, located in southern Finland, is an all-new venue offering public services. The purpose of the centre is to facilitate visitors' everyday life and offer the opportunity to take care of various errands all in one place.

The service providers at the centre work together for the good of the visitors. Here you will find a public library, cultural services, youth services, child health clinic, general health clinic as well as mental health, substance abuse and KELA social services, citizen services, HUS laboratory and imaging services and Kohtaamo art and cultural service centre.

As an example, a family with an appointment for a vaccination at the child health clinic can wait for their turn in the library reading or doing some other activity and after their appointment go to the HUS laboratory or charge their travel card at the

citizen services desk. Likewise, senior citizens can begin their day at the shopping centre, take care of a pension-related errand, take part in an exercise class and once they are finished go and borrow a book to take home from the library.

Omena is unique

The Service Centre has been designed in close collaboration with the service providers. The voice of the visitors has also been heard throughout various stages of its development. Together we have worked through visitor experiences and considered what they and the local community

want from us and what added value we can offer them.

All of the employees at the Service Centre possess basic knowledge of the various services offered in the centre and are able to advise visitors on where to find the services they are looking for. The centre's multi-professional community makes it possible for visitors to find help for their dilemmas all in one visit.

Examples of collaboration

Multi-professional collaboration takes place when professionals at the child health clinic and speech therapists work

Facts about the Service Centre

- Opened 11.8.2016
- Area: c. 6,000 m², of which the library has c. 3,000 m²
- Visitor expectancy: c. 1 mil. visitors/year
- Staff: c. 140 people
- Location: Espoo, Iso Omena shopping centre

Iso Omena (Finnish for Big Apple) is a shopping centre in Matinkylä, Espoo, Finland. Iso Omena includes many centralised municipal and private services. The building has three floors, a parking lot on the bottom floor and a separate parking building and an office tower. The name Iso Omena comes from the nickname The Big Apple of New York City, USA.





together to help a child with a reading disability to learn to read and support the child's reading hobby, or when adult social workers are on duty at the library to provide consultation concerning problems with financial support. Various peer groups meet in the conference rooms, the city's sports services department organizes exercise classes for senior citizens or the cultural services department offers events in culture and art at the shopping centre.

Experts at the health centre and mental health services department provide consultation on how to promote mental health and a representative at the library

recommends literature pertaining to the topic. The library's Paja workshop is a place to do things and learn together, a natural meeting place for people of different ages and cultural backgrounds. The library strengthens all of these encounters by offering a broad and diverse collection of literature and magazines.

How this is possible

The planning for the realm of services began in collaborative workshops in 2012. We surveyed the needs of the residents and existing services in the Matinkylä area and introduced joint pilot projects after

which we executed the best practices. The service providers learned about each other's corporate culture and ways of working right from the beginning of the project, which was especially important.

Understanding different corporate cultures and finding ways to join them together is an essential element in the success of the service concept. During the past year, the employees from different service providers have got to know each other through various activities – from choosing furniture to participation in joint parties!



Merja Pihlajamäki
Regional Chief Librarian
Library Apple, Espoo City Library
Photos: Oliver Andersson

Library-promoted learning

Learning holds a central position in Danish public libraries and in conceptions of the library of the future. But what kind of competencies are required in libraries in order to deal with learning?



Henrik Steen Jensen

According to the Danish Public Libraries Act, the aim of the public libraries is “to further enlightenment, education and cultural activity by making available (...) suitable materials”. One might imagine that the interest in learning had been focused on educational aids in the libraries’ collection, or on organizing and mediating education resources, but it is to a larger extent concentrated on activities and campaigns.

Some examples will in the following offer an outline of how the Danish libraries tackle the task, and what it requires.

To motivate and guide

Language is an all-important cultural tool and an obvious focus area for the libraries.

The national project, *Book Start*, mediates literature to toddlers in marginalised residential areas. Seen in a learning perspective, the focus is on the children’s language development, not on actual literary materials.

Via the *Book Start* libraries, children, who might otherwise not be confronted with literature, get experience of the written language, which i.a. can strengthen their capabilities for ‘learning to read’ at school.

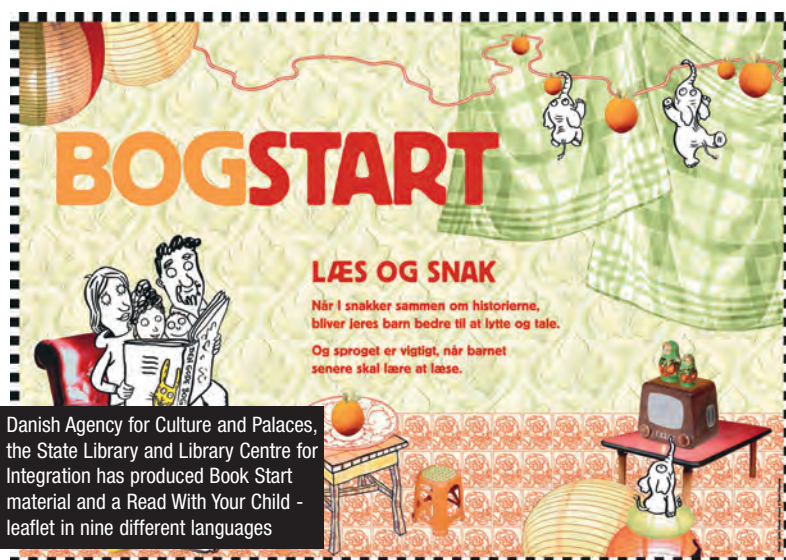
But in a way, the children’s parents are *Book Start*’s primary target group. They are the ones who have to (learn to) read with the children, while the library’s task is to facilitate reading as a social activity in families with young children. This does

happen by making available suitable materials, but particularly by outreaching, motivating and guiding.

Digital citizens and digital culture

As in the case of language, IT is a cultural tool, which you must master. Not least because of the public focus on digitisation and self-service solutions, has it become a societal requirement that citizens learn to use IT. The libraries have supported learning by housing joint public campaigns and IT-café’s and by offering IT courses for beginners.

The offers of team training have challenged professional identity. Pedagogically speaking, the courses are professionalised through a standard concept for IT-in-



Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces, the State Library and Library Centre for Integration has produced Book Start material and a Read With Your Child - leaflet in nine different languages



struction; but one might well ask oneself about the wisdom of directing the skills development of staff towards creating volume via reproduction of a teaching model, rather than by developing broader didactic competencies.

Develop technical competencies

The focus on increasing the public's familiarity with IT is broader than the focus on public digitisation, and it is constantly developing, for example by testing content-related boundaries. The project *Bibliotech* in Horsens in Jutland has experimented with exhibiting and mediating technology and gadgets in the library. Like *Book Start*, the idea is for the libraries to offer people the chance to get in contact with cultural tools and get to know them better.

The experiences from Horsens tell us amongst other things that the libraries cannot solve the task purely by making available the materials – outreach and relational work is necessary in order to mediate the materials, and for a larger part of the staff to develop their technical compe-

tencies, if the library as an institution shall be able to fulfil the role as tech-guide.

The library and learning at school

Over the past few years, a school reform has actualised the state schools' collaboration with external actors and the question of what the public libraries have to offer. The theme is expanded in inspiration catalogues, county library courses, development projects etc. The state school bases its work on learning targets and is very aware of the effect. That can in itself prove very useful to the libraries.

As was the case with IT, the collaboration with the schools makes it imperative for the libraries to clarify their profile in this collaboration. Which of the school's learning activities will the library support and how? In connection with the school collaboration, the Silkeborg project *New Learning* has tried to identify an actual library didactics for substantiating what exactly are the library's functions, and why reality is what it is, as well as establishing how the functions can be carried out.

Sustainable work with learning

A broad spectrum of professional and didactic competencies is necessary in the public libraries' work with supporting learning. The category 'suitable materials' is extended radically with, for example, Bibliotech's gadgets, FabLabs and archetypes of 'The Human Library'. Even so, the switch from materials to campaigns and activities is characteristic and calls for a keener eye for the motivation dimension of learning.

More generally speaking, there is a need for a deeper insight and understanding of the libraries' learning activities and environments in order to develop the didactic imagination through experiments and evaluation.

Henrik Steen Jensen
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3D workshop
at Horsens Library.
Photo: Horsens Library

DENMARK

THE PRICE OF UNCLAIMED RESERVATIONS

According to the Danish library act, reserving materials is free of charge for the users. This is obviously good for equal access. But when more than 300 000 reservations were not picked up in Copenhagen alone last year, it means the staff are doing unnecessary work and materials in high demand remain on the shelf when they could be forwarded to the next user in line. Three of the largest city libraries, Copenhagen, Aarhus and Odense, are seeking to overturn the restriction and test the effect of charging a fee for unclaimed reservations.

Danmarks Biblioteker website

E-DEPOT HELPS WEEDING IN LIBRARIES

It is a well-known fact, that librarians sometimes have a hard time letting go of books. In Denmark, the E-depot service aims to make weeding easier for the staff. The E-depot is a cooperation between the State Library in Aarhus, system vendors and public libraries around the country. The web service supports the weeding process of monographs by automatically creating an entry in the State Library database for any discarded materials which are a) the last copy of a title at the local library and b) meet the requirements for inclusion in the depot library collection.

The State Library website

SUPPORT FOR OPEN SCIENCE

In accordance with the recently published strategy of Denmark's Electronic Research Library, research, education and special libraries can apply for grants that support the development of open science and access to research-based knowledge in high schools, universities and research institutes. The title of the strategy, *Transparency, access and sharing*, refers to five key areas of Access to digital scientific knowledge, Open Science, social media and linked data, Knowledge dissemination, research analysis and bibliometrics, Consolidation – better utilization of systems, processes, data and resources

across institutions and finally, The virtual library for high schools. The new pool of grants will help implement the focus areas.

DEFF website



Photo: Real Danes

LIBRARIES KNOW THEIR MUSIC

During the past few years, the borrowing of music CDs and DVDs has been on the decline in libraries in Denmark and elsewhere. This doesn't mean music libraries would be extinct; on the contrary, many libraries have taken an active role in disseminating information about music, even when the users rely on Spotify, iTunes or other online services for listening. Roskilde, home of the famous international rock festival of the same name, has opened Ragnarock, a museum for pop, rock and youth culture, located in the Musicon district also housing artists' workshops, a dance theatre and band rehearsal spaces. The new museum and the local libraries will be cooperating closely.

The exciting-looking building of Ragnarock was also the scene for a library conference on public libraries and their role in music in the autumn: How is music being disseminated in public libraries in the digital age? How do you form strategic partnerships in the local area? How does music contribute to cohesion and community spirit? On a national level, the Danish Agency for Culture and Palaces has allocated 1 million crowns (135.000 euros) to the work.

Danmarks Biblioteker 3/2016

FINLAND

COMPILED THANK YOUS AND SELECTED COMPLAINTS

The Student Union of the University of Jyväskylä has for several years organized separate weeks for positive and negative, or rather, corrective feedback. The Smiles Week takes place in the autumn, and the idea is to gather positive feedback from the students. During the Complaints Week in the spring term, the students are invited to vent their complaints and frustration over any university institution or service.

The collected praise and complaints are then forwarded to those responsible. This year, most of the more negative feedback on library services concerned e-books (the number of different platforms and licensing terms), opening hours (longer opening hours during week-ends) and library premises (too much noise, poor ergonomics, more computers needed). The university library answers the users' comments in their blog.

Jyväskylä University Library blog



Photo: Poster from Oulu Comics Centre

CARTOONRY, CARTOON LIBRARY

Oulu City Library and Oulu Comics Centre proudly present the first Finnish cartoon library, The Cartoonry (Sarjasto), opening in November during the local cartoon festival. Cartoonry can be found next to the music department in the main library. The new service brings together the cartoon collections of the city library and the Comics Centre and will offer workshops, exhibitions and artist visits on the new stage. The exhibitions will take up current issues, present different genres and spread information on comics and graphic novels in general.

Libraries.fi website

MATERIAL ON GAMING HARVESTED IN DIGITAL LEGAL DEPOSIT ARCHIVE

The National Library, in cooperation with museums and researchers in gaming, organised a thematic harvesting of digital materials on online games to complement the annual automatic harvesting of online contents. The last harvesting on game-related websites was carried out in 2010.

This time, the National Library contacted gamers to find the forums of online multiplayer games and worked together with the Game Museum, the Museum of Technology, the University of Turku and the Aalto University Media Lab in mapping the websites, forums, news sites, blogs and vlogs to be covered. 1.3 terabytes of web content and 3960 video files were gathered.

The National Library website

SPEAKING OF GAMES

Finnish and other Scandinavian public and research libraries – as well as libraries around the globe – have taken part in the Pokémon GO frenzy. Libraries have been transformed into pokestops, setting up lures and gathering large crowds. In Pirkkala, the oldest user interested in gaming was an 80-year-old who wanted her own Pokémon gym badge the library had made for all gamers.

Aamulehti website



Photo: Eduardo Woo/Flickr CC BY-SA

ICELAND

FAMILY LIBRARIES

Kopavogur Public Library renovated their main library in Hamraborg earlier this year. The library closed for two weeks and the staff worked day and night to create a new and bright experience for their guests in the building from 2002. As in many other Scandinavian libraries, the aim has been to make library visits enjoyable for the whole family with more seating, reading space for students and a larger children's section.

The focus on families and the concept of the library as a culture house is a common one in Iceland. In Kopavogur, the same modern look was extended to all communications material, printed as well as social media.

Kopavogur Public Library Facebook page



Akureyri Public Library. Photo JasonParis Flickr CC BY

100 YEARS OF WOMEN'S SUFFRAGE

The We are us installation has toured Icelandic libraries, e.g. Reykjavik and Akureyri, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of women's right to vote. The installation presents new voices in Icelandic literature: the works of nine writers from Iceland, Poland, the US, Australia, Scotland, Brazil and Canada are included. The non-profit Ós Pressan community behind the initiative supports and promotes new authors in the country.

Akureyri Public Library website

WOMEN OF THE WORLD

The monthly Women of the World group brings together foreign women living in Reykjaneshæð. The group meets at the library to practice their language skills, to share stories and experiences – and to enjoy the good company.

Bókasafn Reykjaneshæð FB page and website

NORWAY

BUILDING VIRTUAL LIBRARIES

All of Norway joined forces in building the country's local landmarks in the Minecraft computer game in July. The virtual construction project was an initiative of NRK, the Norwegian broadcasting company who invited families, associations, sports teams and groups of friends to take part in the 12-hour building spree.

Public libraries around the country were quick to the challenge and many organized Minecraft parties for builders. The process was covered on TV with drone pictures of the work-in-progress and with a live stream on YouTube, also shown in many libraries as part of the programme.

The country was divided into 19 counties and participating teams used their creativity to build what they believed represented their area.

In Bergen, the public library invited users with or without their own laptops to take part – or to come and watch and talk to the participants. In Levanger, the local coding club meeting every week at the public library, was one of the 700 teams picked by NRK, out of the 2,000 applicants, to take part in the Minecraft marathon. They chose to build the local university and the skate park.

Bergen Public Library and Levanger Public Library Facebook pages

E-BOOKS: NEW PRICING MODEL

A new lending and pricing model for e-books is the result of negotiations between The National Library, The Norwegian Publishers Association, representatives for author organizations and the Arts Council, on an initiative from the Ministry of Culture. The suggested new model is a combination of a licensing period and click-per-use. The license would apply for the first two years with limited number of loans and only one user per e-book.

After two years, the libraries would enter into a model where simultaneous use of the books would be possible – for a price. Even if the model is not optimal, it is a compromise between libraries, authors and publishers.

Bibliotekaren 5/2016

BILINGUAL STORYTELLING

Two storytellers per municipality are invited to take part in a training programme for storytellers in the Buskerud provincial library area. One participant is expected to have Norwegian as first language while the other should work in a language other than the native Norwegian, a language relevant in the local community. The course will kick off with a bilingual story time where the professional storytellers holding the course will be demonstrating the method. The participating library staff will undertake to conduct two bilingual storytelling events in their own libraries where they can invite kindergartens, school classes or asylum seekers but the arrangements should be open to all. The library has received funding for the programme from the National Library.

Buskerud Provincial Library website

HISTORY THROUGH GAMING

How to make cultural history interesting for children? The Gunnerus Library at the Norwegian University of Science and Technology together with museums and other partners in Norway and Greece have come up with *Ark4*, a project experimenting with games as a way to convey cultural history. The aim has been to explore how technology can be used in disseminating knowledge of the past to a young audience. The staff has been experimenting with different types of applications, from digital games and 3D environments to touch screens and online questionnaires. The project also uses digital content from the cultural heritage sector, mainly from *Europeana* and other libraries. The first English-language game in *Ark4* is a quiz on children's literature launched on the World Book Day in March.

Gunnerus Library Facebook page



Photo: CCO

SWEDEN



Photo: KTH www.kth.se/Arbom & Partner/

LIBRARY PREMISES UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Rooms within rooms is a concept which is seen in many Swedish libraries. This is also true for the KTH Royal Institute for Technology Library where the premises have undergone a thorough renovation. The reform will increase the space reserved for working and studying, while at the same time creating peaceful and quiet corners in a large unified space without actual dividing walls. The renovation will double the number of study places – the library is, after all, a work place for the students. And the staff state that “quiet will be even quieter” with a feeling of privacy where it is needed.

Biblioteksbladet 6/2016

“COME WORK FOR US, WE HAVE A SCHOOL LIBRARIAN!”

The principal of Hallenskolan is using a new trick when recruiting teachers: the school has a well-looked after school library staffed by a trained librarian.

While interviewing for teaching positions, the principal noticed a great interest for cooperating with the librarian who has been helping design courses in e.g. source criticism and ethical use of the web. So using the school librarian as a lure when recruiting made sense. At the same time, a survey conducted by the National Library points out the four biggest problems in school libraries: the number of staff is too small, the school leaders' interest in and knowledge of school libraries is not sufficient, the teaching staff do not recognise the importance of the school library and resources are scarce.

To remedy the situation, the government has allocated SEK15 million (around 1,6 million Euros) to enhance school library staffing, with SEK30 million (3,2 million Euros) annually for the coming years.

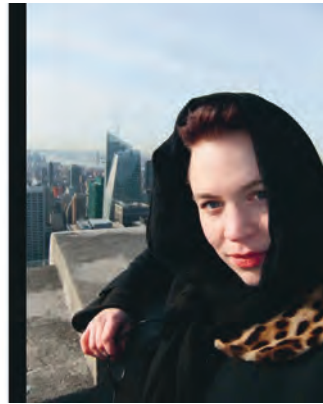
The National Library press releases

CATALOGUE CARD OF THE WEEK

Many libraries present staff picks of the week but the Gothenburg University Humanities Library has a novel – or at least unusual – take on the matter. They present the catalogue card of the week from the old card catalogue. If you still have yours, make use of the retro vibe!

This also reminds the users of how the tools of the trade have developed while the more esoteric older materials are a nice reminder of the long tail of the collections.

Gothenburg University Humanities Library Facebook page



belong to a minority of some sort? How can libraries prevent discrimination through their work?

The project *Books that break the mould*, (*Brytiga Böcker*), is a project which explores ques-

tions of identity, power and norm.

The project uses children's books as tools for change. The aim is to develop new and norm-critical practices for libraries with the support of literature for children and young people. Another target group are,

BREAKING THE MOULD

How to let children aged 3-12 see diverse representations of girls, boys, children of different ethnic, social or religious backgrounds? How to offer them stories they can identify with if they and their families

of course, library staff working with children. The staff at the public libraries in ten municipalities from the Umeå region have taken part in workshops and learned of new resources to support their norm-critical and human rights work. The project is a collaboration between the Sensus Study Association, the regional Bureau Against Discrimination and the participating libraries, financed by the Swedish Inheritance Fund.

Brytiga Böcker website



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