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PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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● Remodelling the instruments

Library professionals all over Scandinavia are currently considering appropriate tools for measuring performances. This is not something that has been agreed upon jointly, the entire library field just seems to have come to the same conclusion simultaneously. Production and use of library services have changed in so many ways, now is the time to remodel outworn measuring instruments.

Sweden started with a comprehensive article on this theme in *SPLQ* 4/2010, in this issue there are articles from Denmark, Finland and Sweden on this subject.

Although not part of the 'publishing company', Iceland is invited to contribute every now and again. There have not, however, been any articles from Iceland for a very long time. Warmly welcome back, Icelandic colleagues!



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The art of defining quality

In Finland we strongly focus on the role of the public library as conveyor and provider of knowledge and culture in a networking society. Library expertise and services of quality are key words. Libraries are expected to mediate relevant information and knowledge and to create quality online services. They are seen as places for learning and personal development. Central actors in the knowledge provision for individual citizens, organizers and initiators of online contents they bridge the digital information gap. The National Digital Library will soon provide access to cultural heritage. Public libraries are part of this huge project, functioning as access points but also digitising regional collections of national interest. Providing access to this extensive treasure of cultural heritage will certainly improve the quality of services.

According to the Library Act the municipality shall evaluate the library and information services it provides. The purpose of the evaluation is to develop and ameliorate the services. As no time limit is mentioned in the paragraph the self-evaluation is done from time to time, if ever perhaps, in some cases.

Evaluation methods are of varying quality, from simple questionnaires to ambitious surveys. The regional administration evaluates so-called basic services annually, and library services belong to these services along with health, education and rescue services. Certain service areas are targeted, for example supply of material in electronic format or the extent of services supplied by SMS and e-mail.

The new quality recommendations, issued in 2010, will be fundamental for renewing the performance indicators. The working group behind the recommendations represents different kinds of libraries as well as library administration on regional and national level.

There are many factors behind the reborn interest in measuring performances. Library use and user behaviour have changed. There are new service expectations, new ways of looking up and processing information. Other information providers and the social web influence user expectations of how information should be presented and conveyed. The structure of collections and services has changed, and so has the use of the physical library. Measuring instruments and indicators have begun to appear partly inadequate and unsatisfying.

Last but by no means least there is also the existential question, the need to testify to societal implication and effect in order to argue maintenance and financing in times of profound structural change. In municipal service surveys inhabitants tend to give local libraries full marks for excellent, friendly services. Decision-makers, on the other hand, tend to ask for specification and reasons of expediency.

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KPI Index

K(ey) P(erformance) I(ndex)



Ulla Kvist

With the help of KPI Index Danish Libraries collect comparable statistics on the use of the libraries' homepages and digital services.

Background

Today relatively many resources are spent on the running and further development of the libraries' homepages, and it is therefore extremely important to be able to compile statistics on this usage. It is important to be able to register whether an extra effort, for example in marketing or development, results in an increase in usage. It is moreover important for the public libraries to be able to produce a reliable statement to the effect that the use of the library increasingly takes place via the internet. Such an account of the individual library's homepage is not very valuable by itself, however, because it is impossible to know whether e.g. 10,000 visits per month is a lot or not. It is difficult to judge whether the library's homepage is of a high standard unless you have something to compare it with.

The Danish Agency for Libraries and Media has for several years been working on finding an accurate and comparable indicator for the usage of the libraries' homepages. Originally the view was that like within other areas of library statistics it would be sufficient to agree on common definitions (e.g. of "a visit to the homepage"). It turned out, however, that it was also necessary to use the same procedure in order for the figures to be comparable. It was

therefore specified not only what one ought to count, but also how.

Even this was not sufficient enough to be able to compare the figures, and the Agency therefore wished to take yet another step and introduce a uniform system for counting.

The product

After lengthy preparations the Agency, in collaboration with Gentofte Library, in 2007 signed a contract with the firm KPI Index that suggested an alternative method for measuring usage. The log-analyzing program, which KPI Index is based on, is called Webtrends and is a widely used commercial product. The system collects statistics from homepages, catalogues and net libraries via a script placed on the relevant homepages. On the basis of the information gathered a series of reports are generated which contain the common information about the usage. These reports provide a large number of key figures and statistics on the development concerning usage.

The agreement means that smaller public libraries are offered a comprehensive and comparable account of the usage of their own homepages and a means to prepare comprehensive statistics for local usage. The large public libraries are offered a more flexible solution that makes it possible to adjust configuration and choose different parameters for e.g. local use. It might be an overview of where the users of the homepage come from, where they click most frequently, what is not being

used at all – a great advantage when trying to improve local mediation. Finally, a few selected comparable key figures are extracted and presented on the same interface called Denmark's Library Index, www.bib.kpiindex.dk. The figures are counted each week. Here you can see i.a. number of page views, visits, visitors, and visits per 1,000 inhabitants.

The annual reporting to the national Danish library statistics on the usage of the public libraries' homepages thus takes place via KPI-Index.

Developments

Since the signing of the contract the public libraries' use of the internet has changed a great deal, and in order to be able to catch up with digital developments and measure the usage of new services, the Agency in 2009 granted financial support for the purpose of examining the possibility of further developing KPI-Index to i.a. also include the use of blogs, social media etc. This development is described in further detail in the following article in this issue.

Finally, it should be mentioned that a new three-year contract has been signed with KPI-Index taking effect from 2011 with participation by 89 public libraries.

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Development of the Library Index



Thomas Angermann

The public libraries' online activities have changed considerably since the establishment of the Library Index in 2009. Increasingly the libraries are using the internet in a more versatile way and targeting communication and services at certain specific groups, needs and situations. Also electronic materials have gained a firmer footing since 2009, both in terms of what is on offer and in terms of usage. In 2011 the Library Index will be developed further with a number of new measuring and benchmark functionalities that will enable Danish libraries to learn from and handle the online business.

From domain to activity-based figures

The use of campaign sites, blogs and other social media means that the library's online activity does not only take place on a main site as it used to do, but is spread around the internet or happens in partnerships with other institutions. One library may perhaps have established a blog on Wordpress.com where the music librarian can more easily promote music and create a dialogue with the users. A special site for a local book festival could also be an example of online ventures that are now being measured. It is now possible to measure this type of activities and they will establish themselves on a par with the library's other sites.

The development of the Library Index also makes it possible to group content into a number of categories which will be uniform all over the country – for example 'search', 'mediation', 'event'.

This will make benchmarking easier because the libraries can now be compared on the basis of content and not only on the slightly anonymous total figure.

The real-time library

All in all the libraries possess a large number of transaction data which each in their different ways represent a great potential for learning in the libraries. The figures from the Library Index are often only used in annual reports aimed at management and politicians, but the activity-based approach to measuring enables the libraries to better exploit these data for creating learning and using them operationally from day to day.

The development of the Library Index provides the opportunity, for example, to follow popular searches in the library base in order to spot user trends across the country. Searches are a performance indicator that tells you something about which subjects the users think the libraries can elucidate, and by comparing the searches with the collections it is also an indicator of to which extent the libraries are able to meet the user's expectations.

The development project will mean that the use of licensed resources (databases, e-books etc.) can be monitored collectively, centrally and right across the country. In Denmark a large number of different suppliers deliver online materials and enable everyone to locally extract consumer figures from the systems, but a collective overview from

day to day will make it possible to benchmark campaigns and strategies both between libraries, but also internally in the local organisation.

Platform for strategic thinking in everyday life

The development project is not only about more technology, more indicators and more benchmarking. It is also a question of the competences of library staff. The digital library opens up for an increasing flow of knowledge about what actually happens when the library meets the user, but one must practice using this knowledge to create learning and innovation. The technological development is therefore being followed up by a number of courses.

The expectation is that the development project will make the Library Index the strategic platform from which we will be arguing in favour of selection or de-selection, developing our mediation initiatives and altogether creating a better online product for our users.

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Quality recommendation

A national goal

The Ministry of Education and Culture's Library Policy 2015 program outlines national strategic focal points for public libraries for the upcoming years. The program's main objective is to safeguard citizens' cultural rights and access to information and culture in a quickly changing environment. The program emphasizes expertise and quality as central focal points for the development of public libraries.

In the spring of 2009, the Ministry of Education and Culture appointed a workgroup to renew recommendations. The workgroup consisted of representatives from public libraries and state administration. The basis for the work was the quality recommendations from the previous library policy program in 2001-2004, drawn up for the library and information services of an information society. The recommendations have since been partially modified and have been used widely as a tool for local, regional and national evaluation. With the drafting of the *Library Policy 2015* program, it became clear that the previous quality recommendations and goals for public libraries had to be revised.

The assignment of the workgroup was as follows:

- to draw up a presentation of a national set of criteria for quality for public library operations, which observes local and regional conditions and which generate tools for libraries' self-evaluation
- to draft a presentation about how the social impact of public libraries can be measured on a national scale
- to make proposals about new key

figures to be used in the public libraries' statistics database.

The work of the workgroup was primarily based on the municipalities' responsibility for organizing the library and information services needed by the population and on the municipal libraries' obligation in terms of library evaluation, as stipulated by the Library Act. A quality recommendation primarily aiding and supporting the development of operations and the municipalities' own self-evaluation was set as a goal in the very early stages of the group's work. For the evaluation of the influence of library services, a research project funded by the Ministry has been launched at the University of Tampere's Department of Information Studies and Interactive Media. The project is a study of the importance of public libraries in the daily lives of residents, in relation to other methods of information acquisition. The results will be published in spring, 2011.

It was decided that the Finnish public libraries' statistics database should include, in addition to the requested information, the following sub-categories: staff's level of competence, more accurate cost distribution, acquisition and use of electronic materials and production of library events.

The quality recommendation drafted by the workgroup includes a background frame of reference for evaluating library operations, a quality management recommendation for quality work in libraries and quality descriptions, presented from the point of view

of a good and high-quality public library.

The drafting of a national library services quality recommendation is the agenda of the Ministry of Education and Culture, and it clarifies the rights of the library user and the availability, accessibility and quality of the services. High quality library and information services provide timely and economic benefits and positive, lasting social change. The quality recommendation is a logical continuation of the previous recommendations and goals and it supports the implementation of national library policy agendas. The core competency of libraries – content management – will continue to produce added value for which there is a demand. More and more, libraries have cause to develop their operations on all levels from the point of view of the library user. The development and revision of public library services require active interaction among different participants, continual evaluation of operations, marketing and information and, above all, a competent, motivated staff, whose work ensures high-quality library and information services.

The quality recommendation for Finnish public libraries is also being published in Swedish and, later in the spring, an edited English version will be released.

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A new quality recommendation for Finnish public libraries

How do we understand the concept of quality in library services? Excellence, relevance, economic efficiency and the ability to change? Or, above all, responding to the needs of library users and the community? This article describes the new quality recommendation for Finnish public libraries. The main focus is on the presentation of new quality descriptions. To get the big picture, we will also shed some light on the frame of reference for evaluation and the quality management needs of libraries.

At the end of 2010, a high profile Country Brand Working Group appointed by the Finnish Minister of Foreign Affairs published its final report. The report included a list of development challenges for different sectors. The library of the future is described in the report as a so-called "Tacit Factory" hosted by people-oriented problem-solving and information search experts also known as Finnish library professionals. A pleasant "Tacit Factory" library represents the culture of sharing and could form the spearhead of soft Finnish diplomacy. Future libraries would build relationships and networks between people, with the end products being learning and shared experiences. And all of these factors would have a powerful compound effect.

The working group report showed that the value of libraries is recognised, but in a constantly changing world, value is not maintained automatically. Public Libraries are facing the fact that the "Tacit Factory" library ideal cannot be reached in a single leap. It can only be

reached along a path of development. A good library should be everyone's goal. We can only aim for a good library by creating an image of the desired object, by evaluating and developing the current one, by fighting unwanted developments and by formulating strategies and choosing methods. Along this path of development, we need verifiable evidence. We need evaluation and the ability to map the future, and we need to learn the jargon used by decision-makers.

The basis for making the quality recommendation was simple. The working group had a common vision. First, the working group realised that libraries cannot ignore the need for self-evaluation, even though they have performed excellently in a number of surveys gauging service quality. They must be able to demonstrate their excellence and the good quality of their services based on the same professional standards used elsewhere. Operations and services must be evaluated for development; we cannot get stuck in a rut.

Secondly, we must recognise the necessity of emphasising the library user's perspective. Development efforts must

be based on the library user's needs and expectations, and on the smooth functioning of the library's operations. Therefore, focus on the library user must be included as a key factor in both quality evaluation and development. Identifying the different needs of library users and meeting those needs in a changing work atmosphere requires continuous feedback and assessment of key operational indicators, as well as the opinions and views of all potential library users.

Thirdly, the working group shared the vision of integrating quantitative and qualitative perspectives. Exclusive reliance on quantitative benchmarks and standards for evaluation can only yield a partial picture. With quantitative evaluation methods, we can obtain information, for example, on the number of acquisitions, but not about what library users feel about the library's opening hours and collection policy, nor about the kinds of impressions library users have of the library. Both methods need to be used in good combination.

A fourth trend considered by the working group was the emergence of the local stakeholders' viewpoint and

“THE BEST VERSION OF THE INFORMATION SOCIETY: THE LIBRARY

The Finnish belief in the remedial power of information is great. Whatever the issue, be it public health, children's education, traffic safety, basic home hygiene or some other social challenge, the Finnish solution is generally to increase information. Finland's history has several success stories based on popular education. As a result of the North Karelia project, the world's gloomiest statistics for cardiovascular diseases have been replaced by the best.



the library's influence. The targeted outcomes of the cultural policy of the Ministry of Education and Culture include the strengthening of the cultural foundation of the community, the promotion of citizen's well-being and participation in culture, and the strengthening of the economic role of culture. Local stakeholders and decisionmakers are being offered an opportunity to reach these goals with relatively little effort through libraries. If the municipality guarantees, by providing sufficient resources to the library, the production of high quality services, these services will be used and they will have an influence on the well-being and satisfaction of the whole community.

They can, at best, prevent marginalisation and help increase Finnish know-how and competitiveness.

The recommendation consist of five core quality descriptions that include all the decisive factors influencing service structure, operations and the final result. These are 1) Local decision-makers' viewpoint, 2) Services and their use, 3) Personnel and professional competence, 4) Collections and 5) Premises.

The quality description concerning the local stakeholders includes some of the most fundamental elements in the overall quality of a library. This infor-

mation is intended as a brief for decision-makers, and it includes the library's service promise. It is, in a way, a summary introduction to high quality library services, the positive influences of library operations, as well as the importance of an up-to-date library system and collection, skilled staff, versatile premises and sufficient opening hours. Everything is fine if the municipality realizes, is aware of and takes advantage of the library's possibilities to enhance the well-being and enjoyment of the municipal residents, and if decision-makers take time to check the accessibility of services regionally, across municipal borders.

Leadership is important and, from the municipality's perspective, the best administrative model is one in which the best expertise is used in library-related decision-making. We can ensure the high quality of these services with funding requirements amounting to about 1-1.5 percent of the municipality's operating budget. The importance of the perspective of the local residents and library users, as well as the extensive evaluation and follow-up methods, are also emphasised to the decisionmakers.

The local character of services is emphasised in service delivery. However, local services are not always economically feasible – Finland still has many sparsely-populated rural areas. In such cases, accessibility must be improved through the introduction of mobile services, home services or transportation to the library. The library user should be offered the opportunity to choose the service type best suited to him or her. Self-service and assisted services complement each other.

this recommendation, we mean excellence, relevance, a focus on the library user, ability to change and economic efficiency

Likewise, locally produced services complement the online services that libraries produce together. Whatever the type of service, it must be effectively marketed and using the services must be made easy by providing guidance and assistance. The working group also included a handful of quantitative criteria: The trip to the library should be less than 2 km, or should not take more than half an hour. Satisfaction level in customer surveys should be at least 80% and these should be carried out every 2-3 years. If the library services are good, the library becomes part of people's everyday life and leisure. If the library has at least half of the municipality's residents as active users, and they visit the library once a month and borrow 20 books a year, the library may emphatically declare itself a good library.

From the point of view of the quality of library service, it is absolutely essential that there is a sufficient number of employees with up-to-date competences to meet the demand for services. It is equally important that the library has a passionate and determined director who is provided with the tools for good management. The workload required to maintain online services must be considered when decisions of the number of staff members are being made. Experts in specialised fields cannot be hired in every library, and this is where libraries can show their ability to collaborate with others. There is also a number of national first class web-based services produced by skilled staff, and libraries should take full advantage of them. The municipalities vary greatly, but a good service level can generally be achieved if there is staff of 0.8-1 man-years per 1,000 population.

The library's collection should be developed for the needs of the residents of the municipality in question and the renewal of the collection should be taken care of. The library collection must be developed as a part of a regional collection and the library must be involved in regional cooperation in acquisition, stocking and evaluation. Collection content is presented to the public in different ways and materials are transported to those in need using effective logistics. In addition to printed and other traditional library material, e-materials licensed for national use and other e-materials are available, and people have access to periodical portals, which complement printed periodical collections. The recommendation does not include guidelines on the quantities of different types of material in the collection.

A proper library requires proper premises. A year ago, in an evaluation of library premises, 70% of Finland's public libraries thought they were situated in suitable locations. More than half of the libraries considered their premises to be good or excellent, but every tenth library needed urgent improvements to the premises in order for them to become nice places to pop into, work and study. A good library is centrally located, and its premises are attractive and so versatile that the library turns into a community centre. Effective use requires generous opening hours. The main factors are accessibility and safety. The quality recommendation was intended to set benchmarks for self-evaluation by libraries. However, it can be used equally well as an aid in peer evaluations and as a starting point in developing user and non-user surveys. At a national level, the recommendation is used for the follow-up of the implementation of agendas for library policy and the follow-up of the implementa-

tion of access and equality requirements for basic services. With the aid of the quality recommendation, libraries are able to identify problem areas in their own operations. At the municipal level, it can be used, for example, for monitoring the population's service needs and the user-orientedness of library services. Since this is a national quality recommendation, there should at some point be a national evaluation of the implementation of the recommendation.

By 'quality' in this recommendation, we mean excellence, relevance, a focus on the library user, ability to change and economic efficiency. The quality management guidelines included in the quality recommendation describe what kind of procedures, processes or systems the library should use to ensure quality. It focuses on the ease of the processes, the library users' perspective, the importance of management and goal orientation. A good library must be able to learn – and competent library staff ensures the library's ability to renew itself. Success does not come by itself. By networking and establishing partnerships, the library can grow strong and fulfil its social responsibility. This quality recommendation is currently being introduced. Training events are being organised and libraries are being encouraged to compile their own evaluation materials. During the introductory phase, it is hoped that libraries will test the usability of the recommendation, for example, in regional or municipal pilot projects.

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One lives longer by visiting the



public library



**Margret
Sigurgeirsdottir**



**Hrafn Andres
Hardarson**

Reading is a kind of sport. We must all learn to read; and then practise reading for the rest of our lives.

Scientific research has shown that libraries and reading are likely to extend life expectancy considerably more than any other physical exercise. The brain is a body organ that needs work-out and constant stimulation – and reading is the best activity for this.

According to Keith Oatley, writing in *New Scientist*, fiction improves one's IQ. The public library is therefore a kind of health centre. Hrafn Andres Hardarson and Margret Sigurgeirsdottir, librarians at Kopavogur Public Library/Bokasafn Kopavogs, Iceland, say: "You live longer by visiting your local library, borrowing books and reading them."

Reading is a kind of sport. Everyone must learn to read. Once learned, it is then imperative to maintain this skill by constantly reading – both fiction and non-fiction – both for one's betterment and for the sheer enjoyment of it. Exercising the tools of reading, the eyes and the brain, means that the sport of reading is also a training for a healthy brain.

Libraries are the power stations for this sport of reading and are where endless processes of reaction take place in thousands of brains. People of all ages walk or run or take buses or cycle to their library (others may of course choose to come by car or taxi) so as to select books and other media to take

home. And this movement to and from the library is both sound and refreshing.

Using scientific research, it has been proved that the reading of books and the use of libraries actually lengthens people's lives. In fact, these investigations show that it is more likely to make us live longer than any other physical activity. As a corollary to this, it has become evident that people who smoke but do not read have a shorter life expectancy than those who smoke but do read. In other words, reading has been shown to extend life; and the benefits of using libraries surpass other social activities such as work-outs in the sports centre. Run by municipalities, libraries can therefore be seen as something akin to health care centres. As library people have long known, the brain is a part of the body that needs both practice and challenges to function fully. Reading is the best brain-training possible; and the combination of this and of walking regularly to the library is something both healthier and cheaper than many other pastime activities.

Whilst other sports may also be beneficial, all of them having many positive aspects, the list of additional things that are also health-giving is topped by reading. Your local library is therefore to be seen as a physical training centre and a place of energy generation as much as a culture centre. It can therefore be concluded that to drop by the library and train one's brain is a smart thing to do.

The example of the woman who says that reading is best

"Some years back I became ill and had to undergo a general anaesthetic on several occasions within a short period. Following this, in spite of being a book-lover, I suddenly stopped reading and became rather forgetful. Something that was far from pleasant for me. I had always kept myself quite fit by working out and felt that I should therefore have been in good shape. But while my body had recovered fully, reading was a problem for me. I simply could not concentrate on books or other information media. I was neither able to remember things nor to apply myself properly to anything."

Something had to be done.

"Thinking of how one has a personal trainer for the body, I transferred this idea to training for the brain. So I went to school and for a whole winter I sat on a school bench and completed a course. And this was my personal training for the brain. This obliged me to read simply because the courses all finished with an exam. Through this work my memory improved greatly and I found that I was once again able to concentrate and get real enjoyment from reading. And so, in my opinion, reading is the best of all activities. It was this that saved me."

Another example that is relevant is the Kopavogur Library's Literary Club which has now been running for over 25 years. It was aimed at people over 50 and was intended as a 'soft landing into old age'. It currently has about 30

- ... fiction is not only enjoyable but also enhances our ability to empathise with other people, thereby connecting us with something larger than our-selves

members, including some of the founders who are now close to 100 years old. It only meets during the winter months and in spite of what the weather may be like, they all attend every single meeting. Do we need further proof?

The eyes are the portals of memory and remembering

Our eyes are a part of the body that needs training; and for this purpose reading is particularly suitable. At the same time they clearly also need to be rested so as not to overstrain them. That is where one of the beneficial side-effects of reading enters the story, the side-effect being memory since, through reading, we also collect other people's memories into our brain's store. Furthermore, when we read something that we especially like, we tend to make the effort to learn it by heart. Once learned, it can then be brought to mind time and again, and recited silently or out loud – and even with one's eyes closed, the eyes thus being given the chance to rest.

In the article *Besök ofte ditt lokale bibliotek og lev lenger* (4) it says:

“The library is a formal space where people from many different walks of life can meet without concern. With no regard for either age, gender or social standing, all sorts of friendships and relationships can easily develop from such meetings. In this way a visit to the library can be seen as a thoroughly positive experience, something which can indeed lengthen our lives.”

Dr. med Docent Markku T. Hyppa of the Nasjonalt Folkehelseinstitutt in Finland sees this participation in the social community as something that both strengthens democratic awareness and encourages further activity. After many years of research, he concludes that the library is one of the few institutions where everyone can meet on an equal footing, which makes it an extremely healthy place for people.

‘Novels make one smarter.’ Read novels, be smarter

In an interesting article in *Morgunbladid* on Saturday, 23rd August 2008, Throstur Helgason wrote:

“Keith Oatley, writing in *New Scientist*, says: “For the first time it can now be proved that fiction has a good effect on one's soul.” Oatley, himself a novelist, is also a professor in psychology and leads a team of researchers at the University of Toronto which has studied the effects of reading fiction on a person's intelligence.

In an interview with *The Toronto Star*, Oatley says that the reading of fiction seems to stimulate those parts of the brain where compassion and empathy are born. “When you read a novel you are allowing yourself to become another person for a short time; and this loosens up the strictures of your own personality. Through a series of studies, we have discovered that, at its best, fiction is not only enjoyable but also enhances our ability to empathise with other people, thereby connecting us with something larger than our-selves.”

The article goes on:

“Oatley and his team ran a combination of experiments before arriving at their conclusions. They first assembled a number of people who were split evenly between those who liked and those who disliked fiction. Both groups took a series of diagnostic tests to determine their social acumen. The fiction readers, they found, demonstrated “substantially greater empathy” than their counterparts. But which came first, they wondered, the chicken or the egg? Could it be that people who



are naturally more socially developed gravitate towards fiction, that their affinity for novels is an expression, not a cause, of their talent for empathy? To resolve this, the researchers then came up with another experiment, this one involving Chekhov's story *The Lady With The Dog*.

First, researcher Maja Djikic wrote a 'control' version of the story. This was written in a documentary style, was the same length as the original and described precisely the same events. This

was rated just as interesting by Group A (non-fiction readers) as Group B's (fiction readers) rating of the original text. Before and after the reading, both groups filled out questionnaires which evaluated their personality traits and emotions.

Oatley declined to speculate much further, pointing out that similar experiments using video games or movies instead of Russian literature could very well produce comparable results. And he freely admitted that there were

many questions his findings did not resolve. Would, for instance, a short story by Chekhov produce the same result as a Tom Clancy airport thriller? In which is one more likely to gather knowledge about a people, a pop novel or a literary memoir? And what about a piece of writing that purports to be non-fiction but is actually to a great extent made up (à la James Frey); or a piece of fiction that is actually a thinly concealed account of things that real people really did?

Oatley concedes that it is possible his research applies, if not exclusively then at least especially, to good fiction. But what is good fiction?

This article was published in the Icelandic daily *Morgunblaðið* and the Iceland Library Association's *Bókasafnsi* in Icelandic.

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Indicators for Norwegian public libraries

Libraries face huge challenges. They need to keep up with technological developments and be active contributors to the development of culture and the knowledge society. In addition, central and local authorities impose stricter demands on reporting and management by objectives. This requires systematic recording of data and statistics as well as the tools and competence to use the data that have been compiled.

National public library statistics are an important source of information. The National Library of Norway collects and publishes data on public library activities annually. Another important source is KOSTRA (Municipality – State – Reporting) run by Statistics Norway which presents a large body of data on municipal services and finances annually. Moreover Statistics Norway publishes statistics on people's use of culture and media, including use of public libraries.

Systematically collected data and statistics can reveal activity / achievement / development in individual libraries and in the sector as a whole. They can be used as a basis for making decisions in public administration, locally and centrally, and also in the individual institution as a basis for management and development. Statistics and other data can provide a better overview, insight and information about the libraries and can be used to make visible the activities and importance of libraries.

The study *Library Reform 2014* from 2006 and *Report no 23 (2008-2009) to the Storting: Libraries – Knowledge*

Commons, Meeting Place and Cultural Arena in a Digital Age from 2009 place emphasis on the use of statistics. *Library Reform 2014* embraces all types of libraries and comprises two documents; firstly, one that sketches out strategies and measures, and secondly a background document *Norgesbiblioteket (The Norwegian Library) – network for knowledge and culture*. The report launches the term 'Norgesbiblioteket' as a cooperative library network. Working together, all types of libraries will be able to give the public a broad library service. *Report no 23 to the Storting* focuses on content and services, on structure and organization and on competence and research.

In chapter 2 of *Library Reform 2014*, it states: "The compiling and analysis of statistics and other documentation is important in the evaluation of libraries' activities and performance compared to the goals that are established for the activities in *Norgesbiblioteket*. This is an area that will be of even greater importance in the future. It is also important to develop tools that can measure the activity and can contribute to raising the quality of the service...".

This is followed up in *Report no. 23 to the Storting*:

Statistics and analysis
"In addition to such measures, it is essential that various kinds of indicators be developed for what constitutes adequate provision of service in archives, libraries and museums... In the library field, the work on indicators will first and foremost be concentrated on the field of public libraries."

Report no. 23 to the Storting emphasizes the use of statistics as a tool to ensure quality in the library field and also the need for indicators that can be used in this connection. Quality in the collections, services and the work processes is essential to the role of libraries in today's society. Quality can be defined as the totality of features and characteristics of a product, process or service that bear on its ability to satisfy stated or implied needs (NS-ISO 8402).

In order to judge whether the requirements for quality have been fulfilled, they must be stated. Developing quality therefore involves defining visions for the service, setting out goals and preparing guidelines for quality (policy on quality). Visions and goals will to some extent follow on from lawmaking and state guidelines in this area and also partly from political and professional evaluations regionally and locally.

An indicator can be defined as a quantitative and qualitative device to measure the value of an activity/service. Performance indicators comprise various types of measurement methods; quantitative or qualitative evaluations used in library management, which can measure or describe directly or indirectly to what extent the library achieves its overall goals in a given period. Systematically compiled data and active use of indicators provide an important basis for resource management, decision-making and documentation for the management/owners.

KOSTRA

In Norway, KOSTRA is a central source of information on municipal and



- Not just a user, but an important upcoming source of information for library development

county service provision and finances. KOSTRA was implemented in 2002 and is a national system for statistics run by Statistics Norway. All Norwegian municipalities and counties must deliver standardized data about their operations. Large quantities of data are readily available and these are also presented in the form of indicators. Moreover the system allows for comparisons based on grouping of municipalities according to population and financial frames of reference.

KOSTRA is a good tool, but cannot cover all the requirements for indicators in the field of public libraries. The libraries will in addition need various indicators suited to local objectives, and which require data that cannot be compiled from national statistics. As well as annual national statistics, it will be necessary to collect data for example by having public questionnaire surveys, focus groups or observation.

Indicators for public libraries

On account of the need for indicators in the area of public libraries, ABM-utvikling (Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority) in 2008 set up two project groups, one for public libraries and one for university and college libraries. The groups were to develop tools for evaluating and managing their own libraries and for making comparisons with other libraries. They were to arrive at recommended sets of indicators; one for the public library sector and one for the university and college library sector. The members of the project group for public libraries represented libraries of different sizes, and both municipal and county libraries were included.

Today KOSTRA operates with 13 indicators for public libraries:

- Net running costs of public library in relation to municipality's total running costs (percentage.)
- Net running costs of public library per capita (in NOK)
- Loans of all media (physical units) from public library per capita
- Book loans from public library per capita in total
- Children's literature; number of book loans per capita 0-13 years old
- Adult literature; number of book loans per capita 14 years old and above
- Loans of other media (physical units) in total from public library per capita
- Circulation of children's books in public library
- Circulation of fiction for adults in public library
- Additions all media (physical units) in public library per 1,000 inhabitants
- Number of visits to public library per capita
- Media and salary expenditure in public library per capita
- Staff positions; number of inhabitants per full time equivalent staff position in public library.

The project group wanted to arrive at measurable indicators that could reveal something about the libraries as:

- Institutions in society
- Learning resources and learning arenas
- Purveyors of literature and culture
- Arenas of cultural diversity.

The intention was to choose indicators that encompass the most important activities that can be naturally compared, over time and with other libraries. Emphasis has been put on finding good, common indicators, based on unambiguous data. The project group has discussed a wide range of indicators. Many were rejected when the project group could not establish that the indicators had fulfilled the requirements that formed the basis for working with indicators: easy access to data, expedient in relation to comparisons over time and with other libraries, and relevance to public libraries' activities,

tasks and goals. Other suggestions were rejected because it was not possible to find unambiguous or comparable data. The municipalities have varying practices when it comes to organisation and budget allocation and the libraries are arranged differently in terms of physical location, design, tasks and duties. The indicators that have been chosen are based partly on data already easily available in library statistics or in KOSTRA, and partly on data that require separate routines for collection.

The group judged each indicator on the following criteria:

- What does this indicator tell us?
- Is the indicator suitable for making comparisons with other libraries?
- Is the indicator suitable as an internal management tool?
- Which other indicators should it be seen in relation to?
- Is it difficult/easy to get hold of the data?



● Where to go? What to do?

The purpose of benchmarking is to find areas for improvement in services and processes by studying best practice in the library field

The proposed indicators are in part taken from existing sources, partly adjusted to suit Norwegian conditions, and in part created by the project group. The project group has tested the indicators in their own libraries from early summer 2009. Proposals for indicators have been discussed in open blogs and have been circulated for comments and there have been many contributions and comments. The proposed indicators were revised following a review of the comments received and are now recommended for use in libraries.

The goal is not that all libraries should use all the recommended indicators. The libraries choose indicators based on their own goals and activities. It is recommended that fewer indicators be used at a national level.

The indicators are also intended for benchmarking at national and local level. The purpose of benchmarking is

to find areas for improvement in services and processes by studying best practice in the library field. By using indicators the individual library will also be able to compare its own results over time. The indicators give libraries a broader base for comparison. When comparing oneself with others, it is vital that the data used are similar and of high quality. This requires, in many cases, collaboration between participants. One must know the libraries one chooses to be compared with. Consideration must be given to special circumstances, for example institutions in the establishment phase, internal restructuring and/or development of collections or services. One also has to take into consideration the municipality's size, topography and number of branch libraries.

Combined school and public libraries, which provide library services as both public libraries and school libraries, have particular challenges in relation to

compiling statistical data on their own activities. In many cases it is difficult to distinguish between school library activities and ordinary public library activities; thus it is hard to make a comparison with ordinary public libraries. Combined school and public libraries ought therefore to compare themselves with similar libraries.

Quality requirements and goals are defined on the basis of user needs, library resources and political guidelines. The libraries need statistics, measurements and surveys to show how well they succeed, what resources are used for different services and whether the libraries reach their targets. The material must be analysed and presented externally so as to make the libraries visible and internally so as to actively use the data as a management tool.

The indicators for public libraries are intended to serve as a useful tool. Hopefully many public libraries will begin to use and gain experience with them. It will be important to enable libraries to share their experiences so that this basis can be used in the further development of this tool.

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The project group arrived at the following recommended indicators, divided into four main groups:

FINANCE

- Library's proportion of the municipal budget
- Cost per opening hour
- Expenditure on media per capita
- Proportion of salary and media expenditure used on purchase of media/access
- Expenditure per downloaded document
- Proportion of expenditure used for purchase/access to electronic resources

USE/VISITS

- Visits to the library per capita
- Use of net-based services per capita
- Loans (physical units) per capita
- Number of downloaded/streamed documents per capita
- Proportion of visitors who have non-Norwegian speaker background
- Proportion of borrowers from other municipalities
- Number of participants at events organized by the library, per capita

MEETINGS/SERVICES/PROCESSES

- Total opening hours
- Number of full time equivalent staff positions per capita
- Additions (physical media) per 1,000 inhabitants
- Culture Fund media (media financed by the Norwegian Cultural Fund): proportion of total additions
- Provision of media in languages other than Scandinavian and English
- Circulation figures for non-Scandinavian and non-English media
- Inter-library loans - loans from other libraries in relation to loans to other libraries
- Proportion of library's loan total which comes from own collection
- Number of information requests per staff member
- Proportion of staff members' work time allocated to service to the public
- Proportion of staff members' work time used for regional/national answer services
- Proportion of staff members' work time used for school related activities

DEVELOPMENT/INNOVATION/MARKETING

- Proportion of staff members' work time used for project work
- Proportion of staff members' work time used for competence building
- Number of events organized by the library per full time equivalent staff position
- Collaboration measures per full time equivalent staff position
- Number of interactive services

For further reading: *ABM-skrift 64: Indikatorer for norske folkebibliotek*:
<http://www.abm-utvikling.no/publisert/abm-skrift/abm-skrift-64>
Kostra: http://www.ssb.no/english/subjects/00/00/20/kostra_en/

Almost 100 % satisfaction and so what?

A new common national tool will help libraries get more comparable and thereby more efficient satisfaction surveys. Many libraries are regularly asking the users whether they are satisfied with their local library. The answer is more or less always yes. But it is difficult to form an opinion of the situation on a national scale, because the libraries use different methods for examining the level of satisfaction. One cannot, therefore, compare satisfaction across libraries – and has likewise not got a background against which to estimate one's score of satisfaction: Is 67% very satisfied users a good result? The new tool is now going to change this.

National user satisfaction survey

In 2011 all libraries in Denmark are given the opportunity to take part in a national benchmarking survey. The survey uses the same questionnaire in all the libraries, it is carried out in the same week and in the same way. From now on it will be conducted bi-annually. The background is a pilot project done in a collaboration between Herning Libraries and the Association of Library Directors in 2009. It receives financial support from the Danish Agency for Libraries and Media. The pilot project resulted in a recommendation to use a common solution developed in cooperation with the engineering, design and consultancy company, Ramboll. The solution includes software to carry out surveys, a common questionnaire as well as consultancy assistance for carrying out the survey and analysing data. The model is based on collaboration between the

libraries and Ramboll, which makes it possible to keep the costs down.

National overview

Today we need to focus in a more qualitative way on how the users experience the library's services. For many years the libraries have measured their success on parameters such as loans and visiting figures, but as focus is being directed at the library's function as something else and more than just a place for lending books, it becomes increasingly necessary to develop measuring methods which gauge and document the users' perception of the library. The national survey can give us an overview of how the users see the library and how satisfied they are. And with sufficient support for the survey it will be possible to produce a figure for the overall satisfaction with the country's libraries. The survey is coordinated by Herning Libraries and Ramboll. Apart from that, all the country's regional libraries participate in a network which provides sparring on various elements in the survey.

A standardised measuring also emphasizes the legitimacy vis-à-vis the outside world and politicians, because the libraries are being measured on a very objective scale.

Local advantages

– evaluation and development

The individual library gets several advantages. The survey makes it possible to compare with other libraries similar to your own. For the library service, where by tradition satisfaction is very

high, it is an advantage to be able to compare your satisfaction score with others with a view to learning from those whose score exceeds your own.

The comparison makes it easier to evaluate own results. It can, for example, be quite difficult to judge whether one's library has obtained a good result if 67 % of the users are very satisfied with the library's services. But the comparison across libraries makes it possible to assess the result.

If the same survey is repeated, the library can monitor its own development and actively bring its influence to bear by deciding on concrete goals for





Sara Svenstrup

prioritised areas. The library can, for example, decide that next time the survey is conducted, awareness of a number of selected digital services must have risen by 30 %. You identify and select various initiatives that will further this knowledge. These are carried out in the time between the two surveys, and the new survey gives you an evaluation of whether you have been successful in spreading the knowledge.

Standardization of the survey method also means that the individual library can save resources: You do not have to spend time on developing and testing a questionnaire yourself, and time spent

on planning the survey is drastically reduced, because a manual will describe how it is to be done.

The collaboration also means economies of scale, as expenses on the purchase of software for the survey (SurveyXact) and consultancy support are reduced considerably as opposed to a situation where the libraries would have to purchase both of these individually.

Flexibility the code word

The basic element of the model is that the libraries and Ramboll work together on the survey. Ramboll are responsible for the technical part, the libraries collect the responses, and when it comes to the analysis part the libraries can to a greater or lesser extent buy consultancy support from Ramboll.

The libraries' conditions vary, both in terms of economy and in experience of analysing and implementing the results of the survey. One of the most important criteria for the model for the user survey has therefore been flexibility. Taking part in the survey had to be relatively cheap. You can participate at the cost of a mere 4,000 DKK, depending on whether your local authority has already got a license to Ramboll's system. At the same time it has to be taken into consideration that some libraries have got specialists in the field, who are able to analyse data, while others have not got this competence 'in house'. The libraries can, therefore, choose to conduct the analysis themselves or get Ramboll to do most of the

work. You can furthermore buy the possibility for asking local questions, if you feel the ordinary questionnaire does not cover a particular area.

A user satisfaction survey is not enough by itself

An important point is that a qualitative survey like the present one offers a diagnosis, but you have to find the medicine yourself. For example, a library may realise that only 49 % of its users are very satisfied with the library's facilities. The library very much wants to improve on this. But there are many possible focus areas, and the library therefore needs some input on which facilities could be improved and how. The library could then appoint a focus group or one might even provide a number of users with a camera and send them out into the library to document good and bad aspects of the library etc. etc.

Apart from being an evaluation tool the satisfaction survey can also provide the breeding ground for further thoughts and deliberations, which could be followed up in smaller surveys within specific areas, thereby pushing development and innovation forward.

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Cycling for libraries

The first cycling unconference for librarians

On May 28th 2011 a new type of professional event for library professionals begins. Instead of a conference hall or venue, it takes the form of a bicycling trip from Copenhagen to Berlin. The event ends in Berlin 7th June. Softly rolling through the 650 kilometres of beautiful Danish and German landscapes, the international group of 100 colleagues will discuss libraries, and librarianship itself from a unique point of view: from the saddles of bicycles. Librarians are venturing outside their normal habitat in the library, out into the world.

To get a better chance of self-evaluation and reflection, it is sometimes best to jump out of the everyday context. Often the best, most meaningful innovations and discussions do not happen in steering committee meetings, in routine work at the circulation desk or even at a presentation in an auditorium. Every once in a while something completely different is needed. The

Cycling for libraries unconference is a tool for this. Veteran cataloguers, well-established librarians, new professionals, directors, students, designers, temps and teachers alike will mount their bicycles and head for the road.

We, the organizers have nostalgized about the origins several times. Originally this was a suggestion for a private bicycling tour with a couple of colleagues, Jukka Pennanen and Kai Haltunen. But it got out of hands very quickly indeed, as the idea spread and more people got excited by the concept. It was soon apparent that this would be first and foremost a professional event of a deeply international nature, for a network of open-minded colleagues. By chance several independent initiatives merged and sooner than we realized, this Cycling for libraries concept was born.

At that time it was summer 2010, and the annual (76th) IFLA World Library and Information Congress (WLIC) was going to take place in Gothenburg soon. We had a little group who had announced that they would be bicycling from an IFLA satellite conference in Borås to the main IFLA conference in Gothenburg. This naturally evolved into what would be a conceptual demo of the much wider

Cycling for libraries concept and the planned Copenhagen-Berlin tour in the summer of 2011. After some brainstorming, we quickly contacted Danish and German libraries and asked if they would still have some second-hand library catalogue cards lying around. Within a few weeks we received several thousands (thanks to everyone who sent us some), and manipulated hundreds of these catalogue cards by printing information on them and laminating them, turning them into so-called 'spokecards'.

So, we took our concept with our 800 spokecards to IFLA in Gothenburg, and ran out of them! This was a clear signal to us that we had an interesting concept at hand.

Already at IFLA in Gothenburg we had discussions with colleagues from Germany and elsewhere on cooperation in the arrangements. One major feature is, that the Cycling for libraries group will arrive into the massive 100th Deutscher Bibliothekartag jubilee conference, which starts on 7th June 2011 in Berlin.

In September 2010 Jukka Pennanen and I travelled from Copenhagen to Berlin in a rental car to get an idea of what the bicycling route is like. And we were truly astonished; the views are absolutely stunning and the famous Berlin-Copenhagen Radweg is so well maintained! Of course we met with some Danish and German colleagues, and have been organizing things ever after. Needless to say, organizing a ten-day bicycling tour for 100 people, with





professional content is more work than we anticipated. But it has been fun and I am proud to say that we have an enthusiastic, motivated, international network of people making this happen.

Between the time of writing (late January 2011) and publication of this article (April 2011) a lot has happened. Most notably the registration for the Cycling for libraries event has begun on the website (<http://www.cyclingforlibraries.org>) and participants have started prepping up their physical fitness (though it must be emphasized that Cycling for libraries is a relaxed tour, not a bicycle race).

As mentioned above, the Cycling for libraries event is not just about bicycling. It is primarily a professional event, an 'unconference'. Naturally local libraries and librarians will be visited, there will be new types of workshops and other happenings. The discussed themes include the many connections in which libraries are connected to the society around them, Open Data, and the content of librarianship itself. A project like this will surely draw attention outside the profession too. The Cycling for libraries unconference is a challenge to gather pro-active, expressive and innovative librarianship and exhibit it.

I know there will be trouble and challenges ahead, but I have no doubt that the participants will benefit immensely. This will not be just another conference among many, but a memorable experience and we will be refreshed both mentally and physically when we

return back home. This is a unique opportunity for employers and employees alike, surely worth the invested time.

From a Finnish and Nordic point of view I want to contribute to a strengthening of the connections to our German colleagues, connections which once were strong but have now unfortunately largely diminished. Direct, informal and personal networking in an unfamiliar situation is a good method for underpinning connections, I believe. I also have high expectations for the workshops, where the network of organizers will be importing new, innovative and task-oriented methods for working together with our local colleagues. Other programmes include interesting video screenings, presentations, meeting with local politicians, discussions... and barbeque.

To join up and register for the Cycling for libraries event, or to get more detailed information see our website at <http://www.cyclingforlibraries.org> and meet us on Facebook (search for 'Cycling for libraries'), Twitter (hashtag #cyc4lib), Flickr (cyc4lib) or send us an email (see the webpage for contact).

I warmly welcome you to take up the challenge and come join the Cycling for libraries unconference. Let's get the wheels rolling!

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Photo: Jukka Pennanen



Happy campers create innovation

from cooperation Helsinki Midwinter Darkness Camp

I am not saying that library conferences are boring or drab as such, but still, whichever way you look at it, the Helsinki Midwinter Darkness Camp in January was special. The atmosphere at the Nordic get-together of coders, IT-minded and innovative library staff was tangibly enthusiastic and electric for the whole of the two-day unconference.

To be able to create something new, it is important to be quick and nimble. Innovation calls for informality. The rules of management do not apply in development work. Jørn Helge B. Dahl from the National Library of Norway talked about guerrilla tactics in library development: you have to surprise and convince. The power of example is elementary.

The Camp offered a new way of meeting like-minded colleagues in an atmosphere where having fun did not rule out being productive. The most important goal was to learn about what others do. Ideas flew around both in social media and the Suomenlinna Sea Fortress meeting rooms where around 40 Nordic library developers met for a two-day gathering.

From Kista Idea Camp to Helsinki Darkness Camp

It all started when the staff of labs.kirjastot.fi, Helsinki and Kista Idea Lab, Stockholm met at the IFLA WLIC congress in Gothenburg. The Kista Lab is a forum for library innovation and collaborative learning, run by the Stockholm Public Libraries and hosted in the Digital Art Center in the internationally renowned Kista Science City,



while the labs.kirjastot.fi is the corresponding Finnish version with a permanent staff of two based at the Helsinki City Library. The initial meeting resulted in Kista Idea Camp where colleagues from Oslo were also present. The Helsinki camp was attended by participants from Denmark as well.

As Åke Nygren, one of the activists behind the Nordic Labs, a growing network of Nordic library labs, noted – the labs are not an official body. Yet. “We are library professionals who are passionate about library innovation. We share a specific vision of making

this world a better place by means of an open, collaborative and sustainable technological development within the Nordic library systems”, Nygren says.

Many of the participants were pondering if the Nordic Labs should remain a meeting of individuals, not organisations. Innovation is harder to make happen if you are accountable for results. To be able to innovate you need to be allowed to take risks and test different ways of doing things. Kitty Rönnerberg, a first-timer at the camp from Espoo City Library, believes that “many good ideas could die out if you



Päivi Jokitalo

● Informal, fun, productive = unconference



are always obliged to ask permission or accomplish something concrete. At the same time it is a paradox, because when you take risks at work, you need to make sure you have the legitimacy of your organization and work to back you up”.

Gamebrarians and video reporters

The Helsinki camp sprang into action even before it started. Talking shop started on the ferry towards Suomenlinna Fortress (and even the previous night) between campers who originated among others from Mexico City, Espoo, Copenhagen, Stockholm and

Oslo. After a coffee refill everybody was ready to roll. The facilitators presented the different tracks briefly and participants got to choose their groups. As this was an unconference nobody was bound by their initial choice and regrouping happened during the day.

The staff interested in games and gaming at libraries discussed the Nordic Gaming Day, real time competitions between users in every country, sponsored charity events and user generated reviews. Collaboration between the self-named gamebrarians and the video reporters and editors of e.g. the Finnish

library internet tv, Kirjastokaista could result in interviews of the gamers, or video recordings at gaming events. “When it comes to games at libraries there is a lot to be done before games are seen as library material and contents in their own right and not just a throw-in gimmick”, as Heikki Varjomaa from Helsinki put it. The group also took up the question of the missing legal deposit practice of preserving games.

Mobile library in your pocket

The view of mobile library services is rapidly changing as smartphones are



becoming more and more common. Some of the campers had been asking themselves – and their colleagues – why the mobile phone could not function as a library card? The library systems of today are closely bound to the physical book collection which makes it difficult to gain visibility in the social web. “The big changes will happen outside and beyond the OPACs”, maintain the staff at labs. kirjastot.fi. Mobile phones could be used in authentication of users, sharing your favourite items on loan with others in social media, lending books further to a friend by taking a picture of the book and registering the loan to the next user without having to refer it to the library. P2P, peer to peer, lending could increase library visibility by making the collections mobile.

Sometimes things move very fast. This was proven during the Helsinki camp when one of the ideas discussed started taking shape and got funding from Denmark on the second day. The

prototype of the ‘Peek-a-Book’ application is under way in Aarhus – you heard it here first!

What next?

Right after the camp, the newly founded Facebook group had 136 members, several sub-groups had been set up and a web page published. The groups are exchanging library videos, discussing games collections and collection policies and getting to know each other better. The next Nordic Labs camp will be held in Aarhus, Denmark, in connection with the Next Library conference. Next autumn, the Nordic labs will be meeting again at the Nordic Camp Stockholm 2011.

As Mace Ojala from Finland put it: “I got the (good) feeling that the Helsinki camp was not an unconnected event among hundreds of unconnected events but a meeting of a fresh and emerging community. It was fun and absolutely tremendously useful. We need more of this.”

Kitty from Espoo concurs with Mace: “It was great. There are not enough common platforms for discussion. To meet face to face and do things together is really valuable.”

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DENMARK

Volunteers - what to make of them in Scandinavian libraries?

It is not only in the US and UK that libraries are facing budget cuts, Scandinavian libraries also have to make do with insufficient funds in many municipalities. This, and the need to connect more closely with the users, has led to a discussion on the role of voluntary workers in public libraries, something of a novelty in a Scandinavian context. The Danes have been the first to put the new trend into words. At the Gentofte City Library volunteers run a NetCafé and Viborg teenagers work together with the staff on arrangements and PR for their peers. The Nørre-Snede public library has eight volunteers working three hours a week to help keep the small library open to the public. The same voluntary workers also function as a valuable focus group when developing the library services. The official view of the Library Association is clear: voluntary work is needed and welcome, but it should never replace professional library staff. "A book collection run by volunteers is not a library."

Danmarks biblioteker 7/2010

Walk Your Library - a guide to visual marketing

Aarhus City Library has published an exiting new guide on visual marketing of public libraries: *Walk Your Library - a guide to visual marketing*. The goal was to create a resource which would help in the everyday development of library PR but could also inspire the libraries to think outside the box. The title of the book is meant to be taken literally. Walk round your library with the book in hand and ask yourself some basic questions about the design and space utilization: "Do the furnishings answer the needs of the users?" "Does the physical space support the role of the library as mediator of con-

tents?" The guide includes lots of practical tips and a useful checklist starting with first impressions: the parking space and the facade of the library building. The guide is produced by Staehr Grafisk in cooperation with a group of librarians. <http://www.aakb.dk/blog/walk-your-library>

Bibliotekspressen 20/2010

Literary web service assumes physical form

The national website on all things literary, Litteratursiden.dk, stepped out In Real Life gathering big crowds at the Copenhagen Book Fair. The web service was first started eleven years ago as a project and has since become a permanent fixture in the form of an association with public libraries as members. The editor-in-chief, Lise Vandborg, interviewed authors, the public took part in quizzes and listened to the editorial team's book talk on stage. Litteratursiden is now also a magazine on books, delivered to all Danish cultural politicians in cooperation with the library journal *Danmarks Biblioteker*.

Danmarks Biblioteker 8/2010

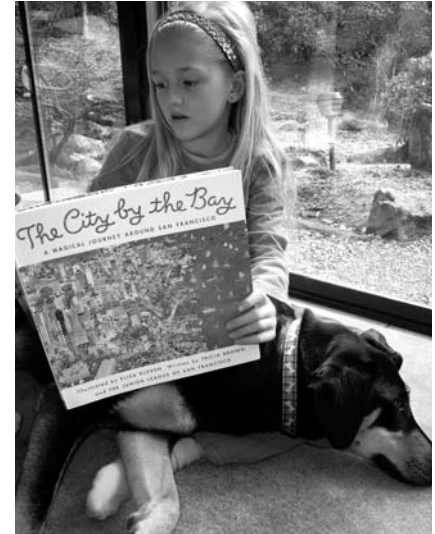
Human Library more than ten years old

Lending out Living Books such as refugees, ex-gang members, Muslims or homosexuals started out at the Danish Roskilde rock festival in 2010. Even if the Human Library is by no means a public library monopoly, libraries often organise events where living books can be borrowed. This makes sense as the Human Library Organisation states on its web page that the "librarian plays an important part, both as a facilitator of loans, and as the one responsible for keeping the books in check."

<http://humanlibrary.org>

Bibliotekspressen 19/2010

FINLAND



A man's best friend - now at a library near you

Reading-to-a-dog schemes are already common in USA but haven't really caught on in the Scandinavian countries. This is about to change, though, as the public library in Kaarina, in Western Finland, is cooperating with the institute of psychology at Turku University, offering fifteen eight-to-ten-year-olds the chance to read to trained dogs. It is a proven fact that children feel more relaxed and confident reading to a pet than e.g. in front of a class room or an adult who tend to criticize or correct any mistakes. Four dogs with their owners from the Cuddly-Bernies Association will listen to insecure readers several times during the year. The project will also result in a master's thesis on the effects of the undertaking.

Kirjastolehti 1/2011

Virtual paths well chosen

Hämeenlinna City Library has opened a new kind of web service which presents interesting cultural spots and routes in the area. The users can also produce their own content on the virtual paths at virtuaalipolku.fi. The

historical buildings, sculptures, beautiful nature resorts and good ski tracks (and much more) of the Hämeenlinna region are presented on Google Maps templates which bring the texts, photos, old construction plans as well as links to web pages and media files alive. All web users are welcome to add their own experiences in the service.

<http://www.virtuaalipolku.fi/>

From analogue to digital

Do you have ancient c-cassettes still lying around in a shoe box? How about videotapes? Don't know how to digitise your paper photos? Several Finnish libraries (and probably libraries elsewhere in Scandinavia as well) offer advice and equipment for transferring your analogue media into digital form. The Meeting Point of Helsinki City Library, Hämeenlinna and Lahti City Libraries as well as Kaarina Public Library have recently started offering the service.

Kirjastolehti 1/2011

Not a drop of moaning in January

Dropless January is a well-known concept in Finland: after the weeks of mulled wine and Christmas parties many a Finn gives alcohol a wide berth, whereas 'Teardropless January' is a notion introduced this year by a young librarian. The idea quickly spread in social media and attracted well over 500 followers on Facebook alone. The goal was to refrain from "complaining or whining about work or at work during January". Whining and moaning can poison the atmosphere at work when it's habitual and not constructive. We'll see if this will become a regular themed month!

<http://www.facebook.com/event.php?eid=186228514724743&ref=ts>

Finnish mobile libraries celebrate 50 years of service

The first mobile library was acquired by the City of Turku in 1961. The half-century milestone will be celebrated in the same city in the presence of foreign

guests as Turku will be hosting an international mobile library festival in August 2011. As the city is also the European Cultural Capital of 2011, there will be plenty of events to choose from.

<http://www.confedent.fi/mlf2011>

NORWAY



Time Library open for early birds

After years of waiting, a new library building opened its doors in Time last year. The library staff were hands-on in the planning stages taking part in design and in the choice of materials and colours. The non-fiction books are not divided into children's and adult materials but organized according to subject. From January 2011 the library has been trying out self-service opening hours between 7 and 10 am when users have access to the collections, are able to borrow materials and use the group working rooms and study areas. The library café offers breakfast from 7 o'clock.

Bibliotekforum 10/2010

National Encyclopedia emerges from collaboration

The Savings Bank and Fritt Ord Funds will finance the construction of a new national web encyclopedia, both with 15 million Norwegian crowns over the next three years. The Non-Fiction Writers and Translators Association also support the project with 1,5 millions while the National Library will host the

service and the universities will take part in contents production. The new encyclopedia combines three services: the biographical and medical encyclopedias and the 'Big Norwegian Encyclopedia'. The aim is to integrate the new service into the digitised media of the National Library and to daily update the encyclopedia.

Bibliotekaren 12/2010

Teenage critics' choice book award

Nine out of eleven Østfold schools decided to be a part of the critics' choice book award events starting in October and running until a glamorous prize ceremony taking place in March. 200 pupils discussed the shortlisted books, took part in author visits, book talks, breakfast readings and meetings with e.g. a Norwegian rap artist. The regional library of Østfold also organised training on how to teach literature to teenagers. The cooperation between library staff and teachers has been one of the keys to success.

Bibliotekforum 9/2010

PLACE for public libraries

Public libraries - Arenas for Citizenship is a study of public libraries as community meeting places in a digital and multicultural context. The project, funded by the Research Council of Norway, started four years ago and is now in its last year. Oslo University College, University of Tromsø, and Oslo School of Architecture and Design are the main partners who base the case studies on three municipalities where a new main library is being planned: Oslo, Norway; Aarhus, Denmark; and Birmingham, England. Several master's theses and research articles have already been published as an outcome of the project. The study charts the views and attitudes of users, legislators and librarians e.g. on the library's social role and meaning in the community.

<http://www.hio.no/Enheter/Avdeling-for-journalistikk-bibliotek-og-informasjonsfag/PLACE>

SWEDEN



Love Tensta wants to spread hope

How do you go about changing the reputation and atmosphere of a suburb with a reputation? Love Tensta is a network who wants to spread hope in the community. In their manifesto of hope Love Tensta proclaims the goal of setting up a platform for immigrants, suburban teenagers, the unemployed and other groups who are normally excluded from the public debate. The network sees the public library as an important gateway to social involvement. Cooperation between the young activists and the local library has been good for the community: the area has become safer, the younger kids with immigrant background see the library

as a cool hangout and the library gets help in the planning and organising of events.

Biblioteksbladet 10/2010

Children's books common ground for bookstore and public library

Book Spider is the name of a well-esteemed Stockholm bookstore selling children's books in Swedish (4000 titles!) but also in languages such as Tamil, Tagalog and Russian. The owners, both with immigrant backgrounds and a degree in cultural anthropology, have started a collaboration with Stockholm City Library. The library buys the books and the bookstore owners run reading clubs for children between the ages of 10 and 16. Both owners have wide knowledge of children's literature and actively look for new contacts, most recently in Ethiopia. This year more reading circles will be organised and a folder with tips for libraries on reading circles will be put together.

Biblioteksbladet 9/2010

Dewey arrives at Swedish public libraries

To change classification systems is not easy but it is exactly what the public libraries in Sweden will have to do in the near future. This is a natural consequence of the National Library's decision from 2008 to change over to the Dewey Decimal Classification System. In January 2011 all the records from the Royal Library will be catalogued according to Dewey. The training of staff and marking up of the shelves with plain language instead of numerical classification signs is something

the public libraries wish could be done centrally, without each and every library pondering on the same questions.

<http://www.kb.se/bibliotek/dewey/>

Is reading fiction a vanishing skill?

The public libraries will benefit from the results of a new research project on how young adults read fiction. The researchers ask whether the reading habits of young readers between the ages of 16 and 25 have changed as a result of network use. It has been assumed that young people prefer non-fiction and might be on the way to lose their ability to read fiction. The importance of fiction-reading in terms of personality development and orientation in the social environment is being studied. The Universities of Borås and Uppsala have been granted a subsidy for the project by the Swedish Research Council.

<http://www.dik.se/www/dik/web.nsf/dx/101217-Nytt-projekt-om-fiktionslasning>

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