

The National Library Supports the Library Network of Finland

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Video link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tv9sX_iFIAM&t=1h22m30s

Introduction

My home institute is the University of Helsinki in Finland. The National Library of Finland and the Helsinki University Library both function as independent institutes of the University. Therefore, I will describe not only the National Library but also highlight the similarities, differences and synergies of these two institutes.

The establishment of universities in Finland followed that of international university history. Queen Christina of Sweden founded the first university in Finland, the Royal Academy of Turku, in 1640. Finland was for several hundred years part of Sweden. Finland's period of autonomy as a Grand Duchy of Russia was between 1809 and 1917. The University was named Imperial Alexander University. After Finnish independence in 1917, the official name was changed in 1919 to the University of Helsinki.¹

In Finland one of the main memory institutions is the National Library of Finland, founded in 1640 as a library of the Royal Academy of Turku. For historical reasons, it was the main library of the University of Helsinki until 2006.²

The establishment of seminar libraries and departmental libraries began at the University of Helsinki around 1850. The model of having a departmental library expanded up to the 1970s, when every faculty and institution had its own independent library. The number of branch libraries and separate collections grew to 170. The library network of the University of Helsinki followed the tripartite model of old European universities in the early 1990s.³

Currently, two large library entities are independent institutes of the University of Helsinki. One is the National Library of Finland. The other is the new Helsinki University Library, founded in 2010. A gradual merging process of what were formerly 170 faculty and department libraries between 1998 and 2010 has created the new Helsinki University Library, which consists of the main library and three local campus libraries.

1. The University of Helsinki is part of a network of European research universities dating back to the 17th century. In international university rankings, it typically ranks among the top 100. Today, the University of Helsinki has 11 faculties and 16 independent institutes, as well as 35,000 students and some 4500 teaching and research staff. It awards an average of 5500 first- and second-cycle degrees and 530 doctoral degrees (Statistical Data of the University of Helsinki for 2015).

2. Rainer Knapas, *The Helsinki University Library – The National Library of Finland, 1640-2010*, Helsinki: Suomalaisen Kirjallisuuden Seura, 2012.

3. Kaisa Sinikara, 'History of the Helsinki University Libraries, 1850-2010', manuscript, 23 January 2017; the research project will continue until 2018.

These two library entities collaborate with each other in the collection policy and through the use of a joint library system and a shared collection catalogue. The University Library uses the services of the licensing office FinELib as a member of the consortium. There is no need for the University Library to create services which are special services of the National Library, such as the digitisation centre.

The Main Mission of National Libraries

Let us look at some cases of how national libraries have expressed their mission, as well as some strategic targets. All national libraries support the national heritage and provide services for the whole nation. Some of them, especially the oldest and largest, describe their duties as global.

The first true national library was founded in 1753 as part of the British Museum. This new institution was the first of an original kind of museum – national, belonging to neither church nor king, freely open to the public and aiming to collect everything. The British Library expresses the mission as ‘Advancing the world’s knowledge’ and the vision, ‘In 2020 the British Library will be a leading hub in the global information network, advancing knowledge through our collections, expertise and partnerships, for the benefit of the economy and society and the enrichment of cultural life.’⁴

The mission of the Library of Congress in the United States is to provide Congress, and then the federal government, and the American people with a rich, diverse and enduring source of knowledge that can be relied upon to inform, inspire and engage them and support their intellectual and creative endeavours. The Library has approximately 162 million items.⁵

The National Library of Finland expresses its main vision and mission as a national focal point: ‘Our national treasures available for everyone’. The main mission is focussed on Finnish society and citizens: ‘We secure the availability of the national published cultural heritage in our society; we distribute and produce information content for research, studies, citizens and society; and we develop services in cooperation with the library network and other operators in the information society.’⁶

Some Differences among Scandinavian University and National Libraries

The Scandinavian countries have implemented different solutions concerning the organisational structures of university libraries and national libraries. In Finland, as mentioned above, the University Library and the National Library are separate, independent institutes as part of the University of Helsinki. In Denmark and Iceland the universities and the national libraries together form one organisation, which reports to a ministry. In Sweden and Norway the university libraries and the national libraries have been separated. The University Library is a part of the university, and the National Library reports to a ministry.⁷

4. Growing Knowledge: The British Library’s Strategy, <http://www.bl.uk/aboutus/stratpolprog/strategy1115/strategy1115.pdf>; last accessed 6 May 2016.

5. Library of Congress Strategic Plan: FY 2016 through FY 2020 Serving the Congress and the Nation, https://www.loc.gov/portals/static/about/documents/library_congress_stratplan_2016-2020.pdf; last accessed 6 May 2016.

6. Kansalliskirjastostrategia, 2013-2016, https://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/sites/default/files/atoms/files/kansalliskirjaston_strategia_2013-2016.pdf; last accessed 4 May 2016. The National Library of Finland: Duties and Strategy, <https://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/en/duties-and-strategy>; last accessed 4 May 2016.

7. Denmark, <http://www.kb.dk/en/kb/om-os/index.html>; last accessed 5 May 2016. Iceland, <https://landsbokasafn.is/>; last accessed 5 May 2016. Sweden, <http://www.kb.se/english/about/>; <http://su.se/english/library/about-us>; last accessed 5 May 2016. Norway, <http://www.nb.no/English/About-s/Strategy>; <http://www.ub.uio.no/english/about/strategy/index.html>; last accessed 5 May 2016.

Basic Facts about the National Library of Finland

The collections of the National Library of Finland represent diverse sources of knowledge. The Finnish collections include both large printed collections and electronic legal deposit copies (2008–) and online materials in the National Collection (2006–). It has special collections, the Finnish National Sound Archive, the Manuscript Collection, the Humanities Collection and the Slavic Library. Topics of the collections include research on Finnish history, culture and society; research on literary culture; research on learning and the history of science; literary research; and research on personal histories. The National Library is actively digitising older materials, such as Finnish newspapers and other valuable sources for researchers. In 2015 there were about 10 million digitised pages.

COLLECTIONS 2015	National Library	Helsinki University Library
Printed books (storage units)	2,000,000	1,600,000
E-books (titles)	4000	650,000
Printed journals (storage units)	1,000,000	400,000
E-journals (titles)	41,000	38,000
Maps	78,000	13,000
Music materials (storage units)	180,000	7600
Audio-visual materials	440,000	4500
Patent publications	137,000	-
Archive sources or creators	740	4

Table 1. National Library of Finland / Helsinki University Library collections.

In Finland the National Library and university libraries are open to everyone. All of the collections can be accessed by visiting the Library or through its online services. The collections of the National Library are nowadays covered by a single search service.

Giving only some facts and figures of the use of the National Library would not be illustrative enough. Therefore, I will compare the use of some of the basic customer services of the National Library⁸ with the Helsinki University Library.⁹ These two libraries have different profiles.¹⁰

The National Library and the new Helsinki University Main Library are located near each other in the very centre of Helsinki. The Main Library was opened in 2012 and the other three campus libraries between 1998 and 2001. The National Library's beautiful building, which was finished in 1845, has undergone extensive renovation in recent years.

8. Annual Reports of the National Library, 2010, 2015: <http://www.doria.fi/handle/10024/92438>; https://issuu.com/kansalliskirjasto/docs/kansalliskirjasto_vk15/1; <https://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/en/key-figures-2015>

9. Annual Reports of the Helsinki University Library, 2010, 2015: <http://www.helsinki.fi/kirjastot/vuosikertomus2010/tilastot/index.html>; <http://www.helsinki.fi/kirjastot/vuosikertomus2015/avainlukuja/index.html>

10. Research Library Statistics Database, 2010 and 2015: <https://yhteistilasto.lib.helsinki.fi/?lang=en>

	Library visits	Loans and renewals	Downloaded licensed e-journals	Downloaded digitised material of the national heritage	User training / number of participants
The National Library					
2010	0.17 million	0.5 million		6.5 million	
2015	0.07 million	0.38 million		14 million	58 training events, with 6240 participants
Helsinki University Library					
2010	1.6 million	1.9 million	1.9 million		
2015	2.1 million	2.9 million	3.2 million		7300

Table 2. National Library of Finland / Helsinki University Library statistics.

The use of digital materials is growing all the time in both libraries.¹¹ However, the number of visitors to the University Library has risen as well after the opening of the new building. Loans and renewals have also been growing.

One of the basic differences in supporting research and education is that the National Library is a research library for the humanities, but the University Library provides services to all fields of knowledge and 11 faculties at the University of Helsinki. Students are active users of the University Library, although the Library is open to everyone.

The operating costs of both libraries are about €25 million, but the sources of financing differ. The University Library is funded by the University, but the National Library only partly (about 20%). The main supporter of the National Library is the Ministry of Education and Culture.

The National Library Provides Services to the Whole Nation

The Finnish solution during the past 10-20 years has been successful for all partners. Strategic choices to separate the responsibilities between the National Library and the Helsinki University Libraries have created a clearer profile and division of duties for both libraries. The focus of the University Library is to provide up-to-date services for research and education at the University. The National Library is able to provide and develop services for the whole nation. When looking at the services today, the benefits are visible. The success of the Finnish model is reflected by the fact that the National Library of Finland offers a much wider service palette to the library network and a cooperation model with other actors than the national libraries in other Scandinavian countries. There are also several developing projects led by the National Library.

11. For the growing numbers of the use of the digital resources of the FinELib consortia and the National Library digital sources, see the website <https://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/en/key-figures-2015>. At the Helsinki University Library, numbers of the use of e-books and the Helsinki University Open Access Repository grew from 2 million to 7 million between 2012 and 2015.

The most important services for the library network and other memory organisations are as follows:¹²

- **Licensing services:** The FinELib office working within the National Library negotiates the licensing of e-materials on behalf of consortium members. FinELib consortium members include Finnish universities, universities of applied sciences, public libraries and some other organisations receiving public funding.
- **System platform service:** The most important system platform service, Finna, is a search service entity. The National Library offers Finnish archives, libraries and museums the opportunity to upload their materials into the national Finna service, which is part of the National Digital Library [NDL] project of the Ministry of Education and Culture. Finna has been constructed using VuFind and other open-source software, and its source code is freely available to all. The National Library maintains publication archive and library system services as well.
- **Metadata reserve services:** The National Library is in charge of maintaining three information reserves. Melinda is a national metadata reserve, which collects the descriptive metadata of library materials in one place. ARTO is the reference database and metadata reserve of Finnish periodical and monograph articles. The reference data in Juuli has been collected from the research databases of Finnish higher education institutes.
- **Digitising and preservation services:** Centre for digitisation and preservation.
- **Evaluation tool services:** The Finnish Research Library Statistics Database; end user surveys.
- **Expert services of data description:** The National Library maintains and develops services to facilitate the data description of libraries and maintains subject indexes, ontologies and other glossaries. The description standard service gives instructions on how the rules are applied to the description of library materials. The description standards applied in Finland are RDA and ISBD. In Finland the National Library is in charge of distributing the standard identifiers.
- **The Finnish National Bibliography service:** Fennica – the Finnish National Bibliography – is a database dedicated to Finnish publication activities. Viola is the Finnish national discography and the national bibliography of sheet music.
- **Legal deposit service:** The duties of the National Library include collecting Finnish publications in cooperation with the publishing industry. Included in this collection are printed publications, sound and other recordings, digital publications and other online material. This activity is based on the Act on Collecting and Preserving Cultural Materials 1433/2007 (available in Finnish and Swedish). The Ministry of Education has defined the National Library's collections as one of the key national research infrastructures.
- **Conversion and transmission services of metadata:** The Europeana Formula service allows Finnish archives, libraries and museums to submit metadata on their materials to the pan-European digital cultural heritage portal, Europeana (www.europeana.eu).

Tools Supporting Collaboration

Functional structures and tools have also been created for supporting collaboration. The Finnish university libraries founded the Council for University Libraries in 1996 after the acquisition of the first common library system for all the university libraries, and the responsibility for these centralised services was given to the National Library. When the services of the National Library enlarged, other

12. For more detailed information, see the website of the National Library of Finland: <https://www.kansalliskirjasto.fi/en/services>

library sectors established their own councils, including the AMKIT Consortium coordinating the universities of applied sciences libraries, the Council of the Public Libraries and the Council of the Special Libraries. The councils define the joint needs for services for their own library sector. They form a stronger negotiating partner than an individual library in collaboration with the National Library. The National Library conducts regular surveys on the satisfaction of the partner organisations and about new needs for services.

From the perspective of the library user, this kind of collaboration creates good results. Among others, the material of Finnish archives, libraries and museums is accessible through a single search when using the new information search service.

Some Positive and Negative Perspectives on the National Library Model

The significance of the National Library is growing in the information society through partnerships with other service providers and memory organisations. The nationally growing importance of digital content requires compatibility between systems and effective and skilled background services.

The importance of the National Library is increasing as a developer of preservation methods for the printed and digital cultural heritage of the nation. Many new contacts have been made and collaborations formed between different partners in Finland and globally.

The current central threatening factor is the tightening of the economy in Finland. The University of Helsinki has reduced staff numbers by about 15%, the libraries included. Even though a part of these cuts can be managed through the retirement of staff, hundreds of people have been dismissed from the University, dozens of them in the National and University Libraries. The acquisition of collections has suffered as well. Growing space costs are a challenge to the National Library, with its large and growing collections. The economic cutbacks emphasise the significance of the centralised services of the National Library, but unfortunately they often direct decision-making to emphasise the priorities of the organisation itself (individual universities, universities of applied sciences or municipalities). This strengthens the competition between the separate libraries and can reduce the desire to direct resources to the National Library. Instead of benefitting from synergic advantages, libraries must compete more for resources.