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Theme:
PROFESSIONAL SKILLS

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Cover photo: Librarians have a professional skill as readers on behalf of the public. They decide what to keep and what not to keep in the local library collection. Cover photo shows with a touch of humour the 'weed-crew' looking for possible 'Awfullibrarybooks' at Vestfossen Library in Buskerud County.

Correction: SPLQ 3. 2010 page 3: Mats Hansson is Senior Advisor, Swedish Arts Council, and has written the article in english.

Professional skills

Libraries are patron-oriented, part of citizens' every day life, they have to adapt to changing user expectations and societal change. There is a continuous need for developing services, with a view also to measuring and evaluating performances.

A qualified staff is a prerequisite for relevant library development, but exactly what competences and skills would actually be needed these days?

In this issue we look at education and competence building in the library and information field. Library directors give their views on essentials when recruiting new staff. On the other hand, the library manager is a central actor, what qualities would be of importance when recruiting new managers?

Current national reports address the qualification requirements in national legislation and visions of competencies needed at present and in the future, but this is also a topic being keenly discussed at the moment among library professionals.



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Eight types of professional skills

- badly needed in public libraries

From book containers to community centres with focus on the needs of users in terms of lifelong learning, e- inclusion and cultural inspiration and citizenship – this marks a change of scope for the public libraries. A change that has been broadly accepted in the library communities and also among the general public in the Nordic countries.

Decades ago it was recognized that traditional collection management core competences, as within cataloguing and classification, were no longer sufficient to run a library with an ambition to play a role in bridging the digital divide, in social inclusion and basically in presenting today's media to the citizens. Actually the traditional professional librarian skills are becoming clearly inadequate or at least insufficient.

In the Nordic countries at least one agenda has had to be adopted early in the transformation process, namely the agenda of continuing education that has been and continues to be essential in order to handle the new conditions in a digitally oriented knowledge society. The average age of librarians in public libraries tells us that the majority of staff have their roots in the old book and card catalogue paradigm. It is thanks to a systematic focus on training and building new competences that we are today prepared to take the last steps into library concepts based on the digital paradigm.

What then are the competences needed to create the ultimate library of the knowledge society? A Danish government report on the concept of the public library in the knowledge society was launched earlier this year (see SPLQ no 2, 2010), which was based on a year's work in a committee that I had the pri-

ilege to chair. Overall the report recommends the establishment of a national digital library, new concepts for the library space with a focus on the role of community centre with learning and cultural activities and partnerships as a model for relations to users. To fulfil this vision we need staff with so-called meta-competences in particularly three fields. These are competencies that are general prerequisites for more specific subject-oriented competences to develop. The three meta-competences are:

- 1) The *ability to acquire knowledge* and use it for change and development.
- 2) The *ability to handle the many relations* involved in creating a dedicated and relevant service profile.
- 3) The *ability to handle a dialogue between a multitude of attitudes and values* and establish and communicate a platform for the library services recognized by staff as well as by the public.

In addition to those meta-competences we identified five competence fields that we agreed are particularly needed in the process of transforming the classical library into the library of the knowledge society – and competences that in recent years have proved to be necessary:

- 4) Skills in *instruction, teaching and intermediary activities*. These skills should be seen in relation to the growing need for supporting media and digital literacy on many levels, for supporting the ongoing process of transforming the library space in appealing and inclusive ways.
- 5) Skills in *marketing* are generally recognized as necessary, and public libraries' marketing have developed in recent years, but there is still room for improvement.

- 6) Updated *competences in ICT* for all staff members will in the coming years be crucial for the transformation of the library in a way that matches new services competing with library services.
- 7) *Professional competences in various subject fields* are traditionally core competences in libraries and will still be needed.
- 8) Skills in *leadership and management* are becoming more important the faster the conditions for running library services change.

The competences that we focus on reflect, of course, our vision for the new public library that is accessible on the web as well in the traditional space, that is constantly offering services that help citizens to cope with their lives, that inspire them to use and learn from all the different kinds of media presented to us.

In consequence of these ideas we suggest that each and every library plans competence-building for all its staff members, has a policy for recruitment of new competences and for the maintenance and development of services. The plans must relate to the given conditions for continuing education and training. Generally the needs are endless, so the good library leadership will work with a variety of means from internal knowledge sharing to master programmes at library schools and universities.

There is always something that can be done – do it.

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Translated by Vibeke Cranfield

Competence building in Norwegian libraries

Framework and priorities

The leaflet *Competence building in Norwegian libraries – framework and priorities* gives library owners, training providers and the library community a common basis for their competence development efforts. The leaflet is the result of a thorough preparatory process, and public development funds have been granted for its follow-up in 2010.

Library Reform 2014 – the starting point

The national report on libraries from 2006, *Library Reform 2014*, addressed the future challenges facing the library sector, and proposed strategies and measures to meet these challenges. The report was produced by The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority under a mandate from the Government. The proposals were grouped in three target areas: content and services, structure and organization, and competence and research. The strategies outlined by the two first target areas had competence building in the libraries as a precondition, and the strategies identified in the third target area represented responses to these challenges. The key proposal in this target area was to establish a national programme for developing competence, with a view to strengthening the total library network and the individual libraries.

Library Reform 2014 was followed by a comprehensive round of consultations that gave widespread support to the proposal for a programme for competence development.

Focus group interviews with library managers and library owners

In its follow-up of the report during the spring of 2008, The Norwegian

Archive, Library and Museum Authority was assisted by the consultancy enterprise Human Factors to conduct a number of focus group interviews with library managers and library owners, with a view to discussing and identifying needs pertaining to competence development in the libraries. Participants were encouraged to provide input associated with seven issue areas:

- In what thematic fields should the libraries enhance their competence?
- In what ways could a possible reallocation of the existing resources of the library or libraries contribute to enhancing competence development?
- In what ways could a facilitation of the conditions of the libraries and library staff help to encourage participation in competence-enhancing programmes?
- In what ways could new working methods help strengthen competence building?
- In addition to ordinary training courses, what kind of specific development initiatives could help strengthen competence building in the libraries?
- Is there a need for new training courses for further and continuing education of library staff?
- What is expected of the library authorities and the library owners with regard to competence building in the libraries?

Framework document

The report from the focus group interviews constituted an important basis for the document *Competence building in libraries – framework and priorities*, published by The Norwegian Archive,

Library and Museum Authority in the spring of 2009. This publication was issued shortly after the Government submitted its report on libraries to the Storting. The term framework document was chosen because this document outlines a framework for competence building in the library sector, i.e. preconditions and needs, forms of competence building, distribution of responsibility, instruments and areas of priority.

Objectives of the document

The general objective of the framework document is to contribute to the renewal of the libraries. Digitisation and technological development require new skills among staff and call for new working methods. The framework document is intended to provide a common platform for library owners, training providers and the professional communities for their planning, facilitation and cooperation pertaining to competence-building activities. The document is also intended as a basis for a national programme for competence building in the library sector.

Preconditions for successful competence building

The framework document emphasizes that purposeful competence building must be based on a plan drawn up by the library owner and grounded in the main challenges and requirements of the library. The libraries need to be aware of the strengths and weaknesses of their activities and of the measures that can be taken to improve the situation. The libraries further need to develop a culture that is conducive to continued learning, in which all those



Photo: Bjørn Djupvik



Arne Gundersen

involved assume responsibility for making an effort to achieve common goals.

Development needs

The document encompasses the entire library sector. It describes the current status with regard to competence in the various types of libraries and identifies needs for further development. *The Norwegian Library Act* stipulates that all municipalities shall have a public library headed by a professionally qualified library manager. Nevertheless, close to thirty per cent of the municipalities have a library manager without professional qualifications.

Forms of competence building

The document discusses key concepts associated with competence building, reviews opportunities for further and continuing education and workplace learning, describes prevailing regulations and agreements, and reviews the position of research and development activities in this context.

Responsibilities and tasks

A concerted effort to enhance the level of competence in the libraries will require a clear division of responsibilities between the various actors in this field. The framework document describes the particular tasks of these actors. The actors comprise library managers and library staff, library owners, county administrations, educational institutions offering training in library and information science, government authorities and the social partners.

Competence areas

A key purpose of the focus group in-

terviews was to identify areas in which the library managers and owners perceived a particular need for competence building. Six areas were identified: management training, promotion of the libraries' services, communication, digital skills, the library as an arena for learning and cultural diversity.

Instruments

With regard to competence building, focus tends to be put on formal further and continuing education programmes. These are important, but not exclusive instruments. A programme for competence building in libraries could draw on a combination of several instruments. The framework document points out research, development funds, further education, continuing education and short training courses, county administrations in their role as promoters of regional development, networking and measures that are coordinated at a national level.

The parliamentary report on libraries and competence building

The parliamentary report on libraries, Report No. 23 (2008-2009) to the Storting, *Libraries: Knowledge Commons, Meeting Place and Cultural Arena in a Digital Age*, which was submitted by the Government in the spring of 2009, underscores the need for competence building in the public libraries. The report refers to multiculturalism, promotion of literature, digital services and management as specific areas where competence building is required. The report also maintains that a knowledge gap is evident in the structure of the public libraries and needs to be

filled, for example through better cooperation between the public libraries.

According to the report, the Ministry of Culture (which is responsible for the public libraries) and the Ministry of Education and Research (which is responsible for the university and college libraries) will jointly assess the need for further measures, including a joint programme for competence building in the entire library sector.

The Competence Million 2010

In the state budget for 2010, the Government granted NOK 1 million to competence building in the public libraries, in the form of an allocation to The Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority. Half of these funds have been allocated to the Faculty of Journalism, Library and Information Science at Oslo University College, which partly will develop an expanded programme for distance learning at bachelor level, and partly assess the feasibility of an experience-based master's degree focusing on library management.

The remaining funds will be devoted to The Year of Reading 2010 and the planned efforts to promote reading in the period until 2014. The remaining funds will be allocated to county libraries to be used for measures that aim to enhance the ability of the public libraries to encourage reading and promote literature to adults with little reading experience.

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Finnish policy on staff qualifications

The aim of the Ministry of Education and Culture is to raise the level of the library's core expertise. The revised requirements for qualifications call for an increase in the percentage of highly educated library staff to 45 %. According to the quality recommendations being drafted in the Ministry, the prerequisites for quality services include an ample amount of staff, an extensive level of general knowledge, a high level of expertise and systematic, goal-oriented development, management and recruitment of staff.

The foundation of activities lies in the quality assurance of services, including customer service. The underlying factors are the increase in the level of education in general, increasing demands and the shift in learning processes and teaching methods toward an emphasis on independent information management.

The basic mission determines the type of staff

More and more, the work carried out in libraries is marked by comprehensive information management, which traditionally refers to the organization of information and consultation that promotes information retrieval. In the future, services will be based on the refining, applying and combining of information to generate added value for the patrons. Finding quality information in the masses requires expertise in advanced information retrieval and the evaluation of information.

The task of instructing municipal residents, learners of all ages and teachers in information management will be one of the core duties in libraries in

upcoming years. There are only a few school libraries in Finland. Teachers possess master's degrees, but their training lacks instruction in information retrieval. The aim is to develop public libraries into inspiring learning environments.

At best, library activities support the entire cycle of information use, from acquiring information to the utilization of it and further to the creation of new information. Through their online services, developed libraries utilize the opportunities rendered by ubiquitous technology and become an integral part in the community's life.

A good library institution creates a good society

The ability to see the library's position in the larger picture and to react quickly to societal changes as well as the high level of education in the field are the prerequisites for its success. Education, lifelong learning and the valuing of knowledge and information place libraries in a context according to which society and libraries have been consciously developed in the last decades. Learning and applying information is still seen as a precondition for Finland's competitiveness.

Libraries that have an up-to-date information management infrastructure and that offer personal consultation boost the competitive edge, success and well-being of the regions. Quality library and information services on location and on the internet have an impact on the positive, sustainable development of society. The ability to cooperate and the skill in identifying

Future services will be based on the refin

and evaluating the needs of citizens are necessary for the development of the library institution. It is good to step away a little, contest issues and find new types of solutions.

Qualification requirements, recruitment and management

It is my experience that obtaining funding in municipalities for technology and new innovations is easier than for skilled staff irrespective of the time period and economic situation. The qualifications requirements were included in library enactments very early on as was the requirement that 2/3 of the staff should have training in the library field. Libraries had to have at least one man-year for every one thousand residents. All of this was necessary because there were more than 350 small municipalities.

The premise behind the qualifications requirements for the year 2010 is the desire to bring to a halt the dissolving of job positions requiring higher education or the lowering of the educational requirements for those positions. Not only was there an economic downswing taking place, but also municipal reforms and the retirement of the so-called baby boomers. There was a similar situation in Finland during the

and recruitment

ing, applying and combining of information to generate added value for the patrons



Kirsti Kekki

recession of the 1990s. At the time, the 1993 library decree was in force from which nearly all of the regulations pertaining to staff had been removed. With the help of the Parliament, the qualifications requirements and master's degree required of directors were included in the 1998 library decree.

Recruitment is the director's most important duty. Each recruitment situation is a building block for the library of the future. Staff is not recruited merely for the present situation, but for upcoming duties. Among other things, it is the director's job to make the library's basic mission crystal clear and to commit the staff to the common goals.

Quality and flexibility in field-related education

Offering studies in the library field at university level, beginning in 1971, provided an opportunity for interested students to receive extensive, overall training. For the most part, graduates have found jobs as directors, supervisors and specialists for demanding duties. Students can complete a three-year bachelor's degree or a five-year master's degree in information research. There are also doctoral programs in the field.

A three-year programme in the library field at the university of applied sciences level was not offered in Finland until the 1990s. Education at this level emphasizes not only the core expertise needed in the library field, but also considers the needs of the working world. A two-year programme for library clerks began in 1981. In addition, staff already working in the library has the opportunity to qualify as library clerks by completing a vocational degree. Students can smoothly progress from one level of education to the next. All of the levels of education offer contact teaching as well as online and remote teaching. This is the only way to acquire up-to-date training in all parts of the country in a sparsely populated country such as Finland. A person who has acquired solid vocational education needs continuous updating. Further education is offered locally, regionally and nationally both in a university setting and online. A perpetual problem is, however, that not everyone wants to participate in further education. When drafting quality recommendations, the recommendations for participating in further education are also revised.

New generations

Good service involves exceeding the

customer's expectations. Even though the Ministry of Education and Culture emphasizes higher-level education in the field, it does not mean that the same services and expertise need to be offered in all libraries and locations. Creating self-service, online and multi-service libraries is an equally good way to produce services. What is most important is that the patrons know where and from whom they can obtain the services and expertise they need. Library services and expertise must be made transparent.

That, which is done, should be done consciously to avoid being driven into a situation without a plan. Not doing something is also a form of action when building the future. Library staff will be renewed in the upcoming years. In just a few years, there will be new generations in the libraries, and for these generations network skills and digital services are self-evident. To safeguard the period of transition, the 2010 qualifications requirements may no longer be feasible. The way in which institutions of higher education answer to the challenges of the future also has an impact on this issue. Then we will also see how well libraries answer to the goals presented here.

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Future competence needs in public libraries

The libraries of the future need leaders who are continuously able to work with processes of change and development in an interaction with the organisation and its environment, and staff who are able to assume responsibility in relation to projects etc. And then both members of staff and leaders must possess strong meta competences.

Professional development is a central theme in the report *The public libraries in the knowledge society*, published by the Committee on Public Libraries in the Knowledge Society in spring 2010. As a member of the working group, who has been concentrating on this theme, it is very gratifying to see that the committee has taken heed of the working group's proposals. The Committee has even been very precise indeed in its recommendations for the public libraries' future work in terms of professional development.

The fundamental premise for the endeavours concerning future professional development is that the explicit point of reference must be the needs of the library users when considering meeting future competence needs –

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Centre for Leadership and Governance compiles knowledge about practical, operational leadership with the latest theory and research on leadership – to the benefit of the large welfare areas. CLG is a knowledge centre with educations, courses, consultancy and advisory services as well as knowledge development and research on leadership.

and not those of the individual member of staff or leader. The necessary strategic perspective of this premise is further underlined when competence development and organisation development are viewed in context: no competence development without an organisational development perspective – and vice versa.

The report points out a number of concrete professional competences, which must currently be developed and enforced in the public libraries. Not surprisingly, good IT skills are singled out, as information technology and digitisation provide the framework and requirements in terms of professional development in the libraries. Apart from that, the report stresses the need for competencies in relation to marketing and teaching.

Important meta competences

Furthermore – and perhaps even more important – the Committee recommends that the libraries, apart from the strengthening of professional competences, ensure the development of a number of meta competences in members of staff as well as management:

- Learning and transformation competence, i.e. the competence to acquire knowledge and be able to transform this into value-creating action
- Relation competence, i.e. the individual's and the organisation's competence to handle many different perspectives and perceptions of library tasks, internally as well as externally
- Dialogue and meaning competence, i.e. the competence to meet the demands of the outside world in

order to see and create meaning between a multitude of values and understandings.

When the libraries act in a world of constant changes, these competences, which in a classical sense can be perceived as formal management competences, become important to a library system that wishes to develop in harmony with its surroundings. It is a library system where

- focus has moved from collection to user
- the 'Bildung-ideal' has to do with facilitating the individual user's path through a diversity of cultural offers and information – not with shaping the user into a normative, static ideal
- the library's staff work with many kinds of learning and inspiration activities and join in a number of inter-institutional partnerships inside and outside the organisation.

New interdisciplinary partnerships established

In the report the Committee puts forward the concrete suggestion that tailor-made modules be established in *The Public training of Leaders* programme targeted at leaders in the cultural sector. At the Centre for Leadership and Governance, which is part of the Metropolitan University College, we have picked up the gauntlet and formed a partnership with the Union of Danish Librarians and the Association of Library Leaders in order to offer targeted competence development to the culture and library sector. Through their thorough knowledge of the sector the professional organisa-

- The fundamental premise for future professional development must be the needs of the library users



Ingelise Konrad

tions have helped to identify the two most pressing leadership challenges in the culture and library sector:

1. To be able to work in new types of organisation (team, network, project organisation etc.) as an ever increasing amount of library and cultural-professional development work takes place in interdisciplinary teams and networks. It is apparent that the area of culture in a municipal context increasingly is being invited into for example prevention initiatives, integration, business and tourism policy, health initiatives, children's area etc. The interaction with other specialist professions, with citizens, politicians and other stakeholders within the field of culture therefore becomes absolutely essential in the cultural sector's work.
2. To be able to embrace processes of change and development as a permanent condition for the sector, which following the municipal reform operates with fewer and larger units and also experience increased pressure in the shape of
 - users and politicians who want more choices in terms of services
 - the technological development that challenges and in part supersedes existing offers and services
 - greater focus on non-users
 - requests for entering into partnerships.

Concrete initiatives in relation to leaders and co-leaders

At the Centre for Leadership and Governance we operate with an extended

concept of leadership which applies to the formal leaders, but also to what one might term co-leaders, being employees who actually assume professional managing of a great number of tasks that have to be dealt with every day. This would typically be project managers, process managers, coordinators in interdisciplinary work etc. These are roles and tasks that take up more space and time in the day-to-day work than before and demonstrate how leadership and management happen at several levels in large, decentralized organisations. Therefore the target group for the new competency initiatives includes both formal leaders and co-leaders (professional leaders).

Together with the professional organisations we have chosen to apply for certification to offer two qualifying modules to the culture and library sector – under *The Public training of Leaders programme*. The modules have been selected among about 20 possibles in the course regulations of the programme and are professionally designed specifically to meet the culture and library sector's actual challenges. An important point is that both modules are carried through in a pedagogical-didactical way so that students simultaneously develop the sought-after meta competences. The two modules are:

Team and network leadership where the students through theory and practice acquire knowledge, skills and competences for working in teams and networks, and where they are equipped to orientate and develop both them-

selves and their individual organisations in the interaction with the large number of stakeholders as well as their personal perspectives on the concept of culture.

Management of processes of change where focus is directed at how culture and library management succeed in handling the dual pressure and apparently conflicting demands between being the attractive work place and at the same time developing, prioritising and functioning effectively in a multitude of management rationales and concepts. In the module the students will through both theory and practice acquire knowledge, skills and competences in how political and administrative management unfold in the public sector. Just as they will be able to analyse and understand conditions and possibilities in the interplay between citizens, users, specialist professions, administration and politicians.

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Room for CURIOSITY

Once again I have attended Scandinavia's greatest literary event, Bok & Biblioteksmessen (Book and Library Fair) in Gothenburg. Once again I return home filled with sensuous impressions and full of enthusiasm for the world of diversity I have visited.

To me Bok & Bibliotek means an annual journey back to a gigantic manifestation of a shared space – where there is room for curiosity. This year with an impressive focus on African culture. But altogether with more than 900 exhibitors and a total of 3,000 programme items.

It is not for some spurious reason that the title of the fair contains the word library. There are library-professional exhibitors, seminars and debates. But first and foremost there is breadth and depth. Admittedly, there are events where authors are being questioned by sympathetic journalists. And there are

lots of queues in front of authors signing their books. But these author presentations do not dominate.

What really draws me to Bok & Bibliotek is the ever-present zest for communication, the manifold literary expressions, that each year I come away with books I had never in my wildest dreams imagined that I would one day possess. I feel wiser to the world.

Bok & Bibliotek differs from the libraries by being a commercial fair where selling books is a good idea. But it is my own choice whether I just want to wander around and listen, watch and inquire or whether I wish to buy.

I can easily sympathize with ALIS-prize winner, author Bob Hansson's declaration: "Even though I hate the consumer society, you are very welcome to go and buy my new book".

The libraries' most important function

is not to sell. Neither books, nor anything else. What they have to do, is make room for curiosity.

The libraries are centres of public cultural education. Where all the other meeting places in our time follow the mantra about focus, focus, focus the libraries can focus on spread, spread, spread. The world is absolutely enormous, and it is very good for us to be reminded of that.

In the library I glance with curiosity over the shoulder of other people to see what they are borrowing. I look at notice boards, and I try to understand why the librarians have placed exactly these books in front of my wondering eyes.

As far as I can see it is rather immaterial whether the library has a certain physical size or a so-called virtual room. I appreciate being invited inside – and being challenged.



Tom Ahlberg

Nearly all library homepages are put together by way of CMS systems. It is practical and it is good – but they emit more than a whiff of databases. Where several pages are pre-defined for predictable parts. But I like the unpredictable. I like to be thrown helter-skelter. When leaving the physical libraries I often stop and flip through boxes with discarded books. I cannot quite explain why, but I do like the disorder, that the book on football is placed in front of a book about Descartes, that a long-forgotten novel is lurking somewhere between the cartoons. That is what I miss on the homepages – the jumble.

Along with the homepages we also get the libraries' new electronic services. The libraries are seen as suppliers of services – and I use the word services advisedly - not as the starting point for communication. E-books, music, journals and audio books are to be found among the new library offers. Notice the word offer – it originates from the market, not from the public sector.

It is convenient to be able to sit at home in front of your personal PC and pick and choose between the cultural products. The Danish libraries' net music gives access to more than 3 mil.

pieces of music. On the ordinary market a consumer ombudsman would interfere in case of such an excess as “3 mil. pieces”. The same song can count as many tracks if it appears on many compilation albums etc.

Unlike other commodities, however, there are no requirements as to informative labelling of the libraries' electronic products. Instead the wondering user is informed about which choices have been made and the preconditions for the database that is made available to the users. Important artists are missing – and you are not being told that this is due to lack of agreements with the rights owners. Decidedly lousy music is included – and you are not being informed that this is because one can only buy rights in great quantities, without quality assessment.

The digital cultural market opens up completely new vistas. The libraries can play a vital role as our guides. But today the only important formal difference between Spotify and the libraries may well be the geographical borderlines and the concrete license agreements. Spotify communicates both with us as consumers and as part of a web 2.0 community. The libraries'

network communicates with us as consumers in the large market square.

There are lots of good reasons for the libraries to be keen to test new digital possibilities. But it has to happen based on the fundamental values that underpin the physical libraries: community spirit, breadth, openness in every sense. Also in a digital world we need room for curiosity.

The libraries' spaces should be open to all of us. We must feel welcome and the libraries must live up to our common goal of diversity and neutrality. Just imagine if the libraries had a vision about creating a digital cultural fair – and the chaos this would entail.

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Translated by Vibeke Cranfield
Photo: Adam Lundquist



Measure correctly or do the right th

A national perspective on statistics and indicators

In one of the Swedish dailies, during the spring of 2010, one could read that evaluation processes had gone “from being ice-cold to luke-warm”. In other words, from being considered a grey dreary fact of existence to evolving into something useful, at least within state and municipal activities. Indicative of this is that a number of authorities have been established in Sweden during the past 10 years for the sole purpose of monitoring and producing evaluations. 2011 will also see the establishment of a government authority on cultural analysis.

It is not evaluation in general, but the use of indicators in particular which has become popular. A search enquiry in the proposal from the Swedish National Agency for Higher Education for a new national quality assurance system provides more than 30 hits on the word ‘indicator’. What is the reason? Why do we want to measure more?

A long tradition of gathering statistics

We have a long tradition of gathering statistics from the library sector. Both public library statistics and research library statistics have data from the 1950s. These time sequences of data reflect what we traditionally consider to be the core functions of a library: loans, user visits, and collection and reference questions.

What is it we can take into account when applying present scales of measurement regarding core activities of libraries? We have seen that the number of loans, visits and reference questions have declined, as have the collections of printed books. The results are by no

means unique to Sweden, but part of the general trend among the Nordic countries and in Europe. The Swedish research libraries' statistics for loans indicated an upward trend over a period of years, but a closer analysis actually reveals that it is renewals that have increased rather than new loans. New loans have actually declined year by year.

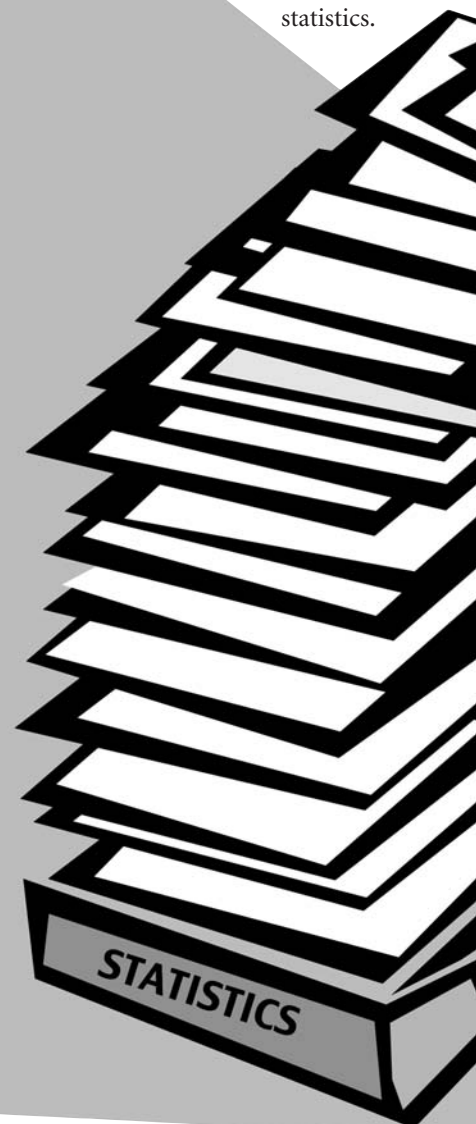
More has often been considered better and libraries have in some cases been pressurized from their heads of organization to increase number of loans and visitors. When the data for a core business starts declining, the existence of libraries tends to be disputed. But more is perhaps not always better and what has previously been measured at libraries perhaps no longer constitutes a library's core activities. If the case is that other activities have replaced traditional ones, the question is what those other activities consist of, what scales of measurements apply and can we compare new activities with old ones.

We are measuring the wrong things

In an interview project during the spring of 2010 there were questions included about library statistics aimed at heads of libraries and decision makers at universities. The study was aimed at the research library directors to encapsulate views concerning the value and usefulness of the national

statistics currently produced and in what respects it could be improved. It became quite apparent that the interviewed library directors felt that the national statistics were too traditional. They were not felt to be indicative of activities taking place in libraries today and that the reality of the surveyed libraries was well beyond the traditional scales of statistical measurements

which constitute the national statistics.



ing?

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Christine Lindmark

The libraries' mission, operations, collections, and accessibility have changed. Not least, user patterns and needs have changed.

Statistics are not reliable

It also became apparent through the interview project that library management felt there to be quality issues regarding the national library statistics, and especially concerning the reliability of statistics. The provision of library statistics appears to be caught in a vicious circle.

Libraries fail to believe that national library statistics are reliable and are therefore not as accurate when reporting data, and they place even less faith in their approach when gathering statistics, etc.

We compare the wrong things

In the national library statistics comparisons have for instance been made between the number of downloads of e-books and the number of new circulation statistics of printed books.

Comparisons have also been made between the number of physical visits to library facilities and number of visits to libraries' web sites. Parallels have also been drawn between the increase in tuition and the decline in the number of reference questions – all this in an attempt to reflect a library's development. This line of reasoning has provoked reactions, and many believe that the comparisons rest on false grounds and that the use of e-resources is not equivalent to loans of printed materials.

We know too little

A reason why comparative statistics are perceived as less appropriate is perhaps that we in general know too little about our users and their behaviour patterns. Studies have been conducted, among other places, in England as to how students use e-books – in Sweden we know too little about how the act of reading occurs and how readers make their way into printed and digital texts.

Quality and quantity

The interview project showed that qualitative measures are needed rather than quantitative when communicating with management. Several libraries have identified their work processes and thereby making a library's operational activities visible to management. Stockholm University Library has implemented a major reorganisation, based on the library's main processes. This has increased awareness as to how scales of measurements can be applied in various ways. Catherine Ericson-Roos, Head Librarian at the Stockholm University Library, noted in her report

that "The processes that can have measurable objectives also have them. This applies to processes such as identifying and placing books on shelves, interlibrary loans, acquisitions and cataloguing. Others are dependent on customer surveys and evaluations of various kinds, such as education and information work."

That scales of measurements in statistics are perceived as inadequate is perhaps because we are measuring what is easy to measure whilst libraries are currently in a process of change. The discrepancy between what is developed and displayable and the traditional aspects that have always been measured has simply become too large.

Are indicators the solution?

If traditional statistical approaches fail to describe library activities perhaps an indicator can do it. The term indicator is widely used, but what do we put into the notion? The Swedish National Financial Management Authority defines the concept of performance indicator as a "measurement that can be used in assessing the success of stated goals or policies."

The starting point is that there is a targeting system. At this stage, a library that makes use of indicators can run into problems because libraries and their respective councils have not always incorporated libraries in their governing documents. Not all local councils mention libraries in their strategic documents and for instance a special library might find it difficult to even gain a clear mandate from its council.



- We have no national library strategy in Sweden today... Nor do we have national indicators for libraries

We have no national library strategy in Sweden today. We do however have the *Libraries Act*, which is currently subject to revision. Nor do we have national indicators for libraries. The closest attempt was in a project by the Swedish Library Association several years ago. This was when the ISO standard 11 620 Performance indicators for libraries was translated and a number of libraries, both public and research libraries attempted to use indicators during a period of time to see how useful they were and if the indicators could be used as a kind of benchmarking between libraries. If we instead look at the use of indicators among the different library types and at individual libraries, there are at least a couple of examples to highlight.

Public libraries

Each year the Swedish Arts Council gathers and compiles statistics for the public library sector. Subsequently, the Swedish Library Association, on its own initiative, produces an adaptation of the data sorted by county and municipality. In this way the Library Association produces 10 indicators for public libraries:

- Number of visits per capita
- Total loans per capita

- Number of children's book loans per child 0-14 years
- Number of children's books per child 0-14 years
- Number of books per capita
- New acquisitions per capita
- AV collections per capita
- Magazine subscriptions per 1,000 inhabitants
- Library employees per 1,000 inhabitants
- Total operating cost per capita.

It has been made apparent in a number of municipalities that the allocation of funds is based solely on some of these indicators. Municipalities do an analysis of library performance based on indicators and much is then understood as being better. Fewer loans or fewer visits can therefore in reality mean a decrease in acquisitions funds. It is the traditional core business, which makes an impact and it is difficult for libraries to show that new activities have been implemented and require resources.

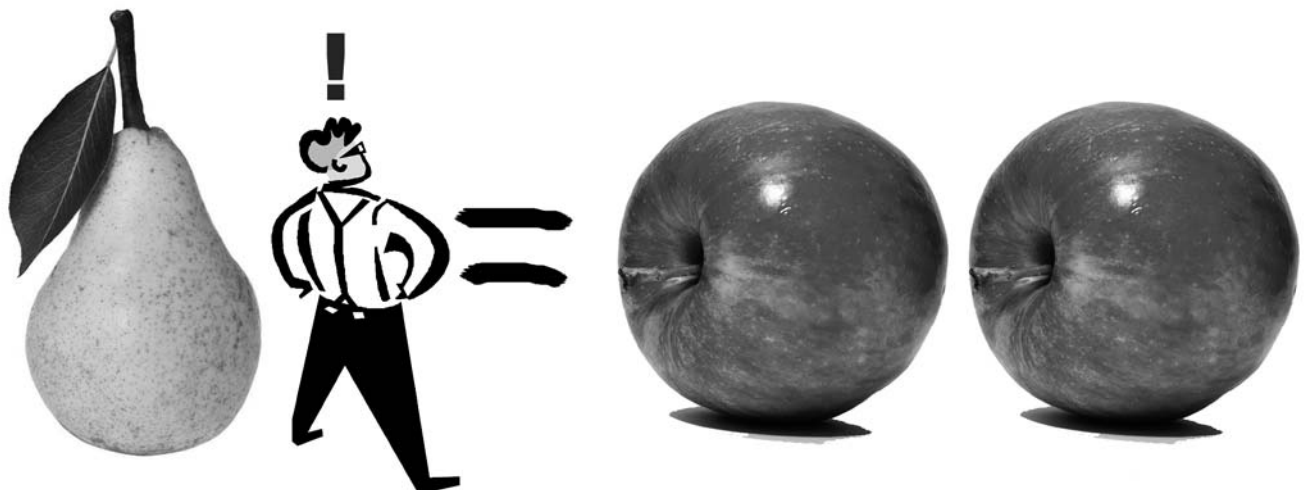
School libraries

The Swedish Arts Council gathers school library statistics. The latest gathering of statistics was done in 2008. Once again, the Library Association processed the material and

constructed an indicator for school libraries: The percentage rate of schools with school libraries staffed of a total number of school libraries. Staffing can in this case be either staffing at the school library or that a school library is integrated with a public library or that a school uses a library at another school unit. The indicator is new and has no correlation over time but can safely be used in debates about the existence of school libraries.

Hospital libraries

Hospital libraries have undergone a change. From being solely patient libraries the hospital libraries of today exist both as patient libraries and an important information resource for hospital staff. The gathering of statistics, which the Swedish Arts Council did in 2010, was based on a new survey-form, which was devised and developed to better suit the present-day activities of hospital libraries. In general terms one can say that the questions asked of hospital libraries in this new survey are more related to research library issues than, as before, public library issues. A new network has been instigated for the heads of hospital library and there is now a solid foundation to proceed with for instance statistics and quality issues.



University and college libraries

The National Library has by tradition supported the Swedish Arts Council in the gathering of statistics for the research libraries. Questions and definitions of terms have largely been based on international standards. The data compiled are used by Urank, which is a free and independent association for the study of and performance of the Swedish university and college rankings. Urank publishes an annual ranking of Swedish universities. This ranking included two indicators related to the library:

- The libraries' grants from the parent organisation as a share of the university's total assets
- Acquisition (printed material and electronic resources) divided by the number of students.

Urank have five criteria and within each criterion, there are a number of indicators. The library is a separate criterion; others are students, teachers, education and research. One can therefore say that libraries are well represented even if the indicators reflect a traditional image of the library.

One university library has gone further in using indicators and that is the Mid Sweden University Library who in close collaboration with the university principles has developed a quality index. The aim is to show how library operations work and how well the library meets the goals contained in the university's strategy plan. The library saw an opportunity to work through the quality index to reach a clearer understanding of how integrated the library's activities are with other areas within the university.

The present quality index has 16 indi-

cators divided into four areas: research, education, operational fundamentals and growth potential. Among the indicators are the more traditional ones such as "How much of the interlibrary loan volume consists of lending?" In which the interpretation lies in the fact that the library has a good stock if the lending volume is greater than the loans to the library itself, and "ILL: time for book orders" whereby the time span it takes between initiating a request to when the user receives the material should be as short as possible. But there are also indicators which attempt to describe new activities such as visits to library web sites in relation to the number of students and staff at the university. Attempts at reflecting the library's development potential is set by the indicator "How many of a strategy plan's objectives have been met throughout the year?" and the library's developments in collaborating with other organisations and finding external customers have received their own indicators.

Research libraries

The Swedish special research libraries reply to the same questions as those put to university and college libraries. It appears that a number of issues in the national statistics are not relevant to special research libraries. The results are misleading and research libraries are virtually invisible when compared to university and college libraries. In a newly written report, Kerstin Assarsson-Rizzi presents the situation which special research libraries within the humanities find themselves in, and it becomes clear that special research libraries have difficulty maintaining their positions both in relation to their principals as well as other research libraries. Resources are small at special research libraries, while their collections and expertise in many cases are

totally unique. In an attempt to better reflect more precisely the uniqueness of the special research libraries the report suggests an indicator for special research libraries: the number of unique titles registered in the union catalogue LIBRIS, compared with the total number of titles registered in the same catalogue for a specific special research library. The interpretation of the indicator is that the larger the share of unique titles in LIBRIS the more important a collection is. With the help of such an indicator a research library can emphasize its unique role to its principal. It is also easier to present a national scenario in which the various special research library collections complement each other and also complement the collections of the National Library. The use of such an indicator would encourage research libraries to an even greater extent to catalogue their unique material in LIBRIS, rather than what is most in demand, as so often is the case today. Another advantage is that the results of the indicator can be entirely machine generated.

The National Library

The National Library has been commissioned by the Department of Education to develop indicators that better describe the results of its operations. For instance, the department has requested suggestions for indicators to present results from its provision. The National Library has taken part in international ventures within the ISO to develop indicators for national libraries and these recommendations have been the basis for its continued internal work.

The National Library's expert group on library statistics

The responsibility for gathering official library statistics lies now with the Swedish Arts Council. The gathering of

data made in January 2010 covering 2009 is the first collection where the public libraries, research libraries and hospital libraries have responded to the questionnaires in the same time period and in which the results have been processed simultaneously. A degree of harmonization of the questions for each library type has been effectuated while a few new issues have emerged.

The efforts to coordinate library statistics are based on the National Library's expert group on library statistics. The Expert Group's objective is to represent all types of publicly funded libraries, and to gather all significant players in the field. The group studies future scenarios and works in a long term perspective. During the coming year, the groups of experts have put their time to revising the questionnaire to accommodate the different library types. The starting point are the ISO standards that deal with library statistics and which are also under revision. The idea is that the added areas of questions included in the standards are to be used in the Swedish questionnaire and that all definitions are retrieved from the standards and thus are identical regardless of library type.

There is a parallel, ongoing process in developing a common technical system for managing library statistics. To have a common reporting system in which libraries can also extract data and process it locally is something that information providers and library directors have wanted. There is also an ongoing dialogue with suppliers of library systems. Even here there is a need for a harmonization of terms used in library systems and definitions used for statistics to facilitate the withdrawal of statistics from the systems. The ideal would of course be that some basic data could be obtained directly from

the system and delivered to the national statistics without too much manual intervention from the libraries. It would streamline the work considerably. If the basic data could be extracted from the systems, time could instead be used to develop indicators and to produce thematic analyses.

In November 2009 the National Library was assigned with the task of formulating an overall national strategy plan for publically funded libraries. Their response was a plan that was published in the spring of 2010. The plan describes how the National Library in various ways desires to work towards a national collaboration in the library sector. Working on a national scale with quality aspects and statistics are consistent with the assignment and are well in line with the ongoing work of the Expert Group on Statistics.

We measure – therefore we exist

There is a sense of awareness among libraries that follow-ups of various kinds are needed and that quality work is crucial, among other things, to enable constructive dialogues with those in management who are also responsible for funding. At present there seems to be consensus on a national level that we measure the wrong things in the library sector. The question is what we want to make available with our statistics. Is there a tangible result that can be applied for the purpose of requesting more funds? In this case, perhaps a number of indicators might be a useful tool. Who shall then actually determine the content of an indicator then becomes a crucial point. Who has the power to put together a display and to determine the level of achievement? And what is then connected to the outcome of the indicator? Is it the allocation of funds, number of staff or something else? Are a number

of national indicators needed as in Norway? Should we in that case use the international indicators, developed by ISO and which are in the process of modernization? Or should we create our own? Or collaborate with the other Nordic countries?

Are we closer to the truth with regard to the results of library operations if we use the indicators compared to traditional statistical approaches? Is it not rather the case that, in addition to producing better tangible results within the library community, we should also analyze the impact of library activities? The question then is not about how many books are borrowed per capita or per student. The question is rather whether children with access to a school library achieve better educational results? Does the student with access to a university library improve his academic results? Do hospital libraries create better health care? Does access to a public library increase adult education? Does the National Library contribute to the nation's collective memory?

We measure, therefore we are – but the question is for how long. If we do not analyze the impact of library activities, we will not be able to choose a path and therefore not be able to justify the importance of a library. Of course, it is a problem that we measure the wrong things but the crucial question is: are we doing the right things?

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Books left on the pier with the message: "We're out fishing. Thanks for the service this summer." The librarian will leave new books in place of the returned ones

No man is an island

(When there is a book boat service available)

In the Åboland archipelago in Western Finland a book boat has been serving the inhabitants on the small islands around the town of Pargas for over 30 years. The boat has not been built for library service - it is actually an operating sea rescue boat which can be called out anytime, also during library service hours - and the service only runs during the summer months, but it is still both popular and invaluable. It has also up until the recent years been the only book boat in Finland, in spite of the fact that 46 000 kilometres of the country's circumference is made up of coastal line with over 73 000 islands.

The book boat service run in Pargas has eleven stops every four weeks from May to September. Some of the users request certain books from the library beforehand but many rely on the librarians' recommendations. If the customer is not at home, sometimes the issued material is left at their front door or on the pier for the user to pick up later.

The boat carries 20 to 25 boxes of materials which have been carefully selected by the staff with the needs of the customers in mind. The library staff needs to be familiar with not only the library collections but also the target group consisting of three generations of islanders. The preparations take about a week and each and every one of the 600 books has been thoroughly weighed and considered necessary for the users as space is scarce.

The book boat collection includes a great deal of non-fiction: gardening, handicraft, fishing and hunting are popular topics. Books on history and environmental protection are also being widely read. Fiction, large print and talking books are part of the collections, as a matter of course, and children's books have their own audience in the youngest generation.

After the 30-year-celebrations of the book boat service in 2006, Tiina Viik, the library director of Pargas Public Library and the rest of the staff started to work towards expanding the sphere of the maritime library service to the neighbouring municipalities. As the libraries in the region had long been cooperating across municipal borders, it was a natural progression, even more so when five of the municipalities were consolidated in 2008 to form the new town of Väståboland.

Today the service operates in three other of the former municipalities. The ferry servicing the islands around Iniö was the first to carry five boxes of books, which are changed every month during the winter months by the librarian from the local library. With a grant from the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2007, Iniö was able to expand the hours of the librarian and buy new material for loan. Unlike on the boat in Pargas, there is no regular personal service available but a booklet where the borrowers can record their inter-library loan requests and ask for any additional material from the local library.

As the response to the two-year project in Iniö was positive and even enthusiastic, the library decided to broaden out the service to the other regular ferries in the nearby villages. The arrangement means the library does not have to hire or let alone acquire a boat or pay for fuel but can still offer a library service for the hundreds of people living regularly in the archipelago. The staff on the ferries have welcomed the service onboard and have even made acquisition suggestions of their own. The service is popular and the library is planning to make it a regular part of the supply of services.

The users, old and new, are a satisfied lot. When reading, or at least borrowing books, was thirty years ago seen as something for the women and children to do while the men mostly compared notes with the boatswain on the pier, today many men are regular customers. Librarian Gerd Backman-Pettersson who has been involved with the book boat almost from the first day notes that the highlights of the job are the moments when you've been able to choose the user a book which they didn't even know they wanted. That is something you cannot measure in euros.

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Extreme makeover at Lier upper secondary school

In 2007 Buskerud County Library Service decided to focus on weeding and library collection development. The people engaged in this work were soon dubbed the Buskerud bandits. By becoming involved in practical and creative change in the libraries in Buskerud, the county library service wishes to foster a common practice of weeding, collection development and reorganising the physical library space. The starting point for the practical work is a 'weeding stunt' and physical reorganisation of the library. Fewer books on the shelves provide more room for changes to the actual library space.

Why weed?

Many librarians find it difficult to 'abandon' books in decent physical shape. The lack of weeding results in low turnover rates and creates public areas dominated by shelves rather than space for browsing, reading and other in-house activities. When we weed we make sure that we maintain a collection that is vital, relevant, and useful. The Buskerud bandits base their weeding on the American manual: *Crew: A Weeding Manual for Modern Libraries* (www.tsl.state.tx.us/ld/pubs/crew). This has been in use for over 30 years and is being translated into Norwegian by Jannicke Røgler.

Communities of practice

The theory of communities of practice is rooted in the work of Etienne Wenger and Jean Lave, done at the beginning of the 1990s on situated learning.

They contended that learning should be seen in relation to the context in which it occurs. These learning communities were termed Communities of Practice (CoP). The term CoP denotes informal learning cooperative groups as a basis for skills development. Wenger defines Communities of Practice as: "groups of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly."

Case Lier Upper Secondary School

Before the summer holiday started, school librarian Birgithe Schumann-Olsen called for both ideas and practical efforts to contribute to the renewal of the library. The Buskerud bandits turned out with the objective of renewing as much as possible in the course of one day.

The library at Lier Upper Secondary School is relatively new and has an area of 180 square metres. It is situated in an annexe, which links two buildings together. The library occupies a central position on the second floor between the staff room and the classrooms. This ensures good relationships between staff and pupils. The library is very attractive with a lot of natural light coming from the windows on both long sides of the building. The end panels on several of the bookshelves are decorated with old photos of Lier, which gives the library a distinctive character.

What we did

- Removed bookshelves totalling 20 metres of shelf space
- Discarded 497 books, both fiction and non-fiction
- Moved bookshelves to create more space for reading and meeting areas
- Placed three bookshelves at an angle to break up the space and provide new sight lines within the library
- Moved the PC worktables up to the windows to provide more space for free movement of users through the library.

Reflections on the process

It is actually possible to create a new library in one day. Creative work is hard, process-oriented, intensive and fun. We started the day quite literally by turning over a new leaf and starting afresh. Ideas and practical solutions followed each other in close succession. This type of change requires a very open, secure and broad-minded librarian, who can work out solutions together with those who do not work in the library on a daily basis. It is a distinct advantage that those who participate have concrete work experience from different types of library. In our case we had experience from professional, public, county and school libraries. Diverse backgrounds provide a broader discussion and experience basis, which gives greater weight to the arguments, while the solutions are based on solid practical experience. All the participants were enthusiastic and positive. Being attentive and showing



The weed-crew looking for possible
“Awfullibrarybooks” at Vestfossen
Library in Buskerud County



Jannicke Røgler

respect for the opinions of others in turn created a culture characterised by humour, curiosity, generosity and openness. These are useful qualities in working with change.

One goal to strive towards would be to gather a group of weeders and interior designers, who have a particular interest in the subject. This group of people, by all means call them a community of practice, will be able to help other libraries. One thing the Buskerud bandits have discovered is that it is often easier to weed books in libraries other than one’s own. There will be less of a personal relationship to the collection and one can more easily give up one’s ‘darlings’. However it is necessary to have good local knowledge of the library users and the collections.

Reactions from school librarian, teachers and pupils to the extreme makeover

The school librarian has received nothing but positive reactions to the changes. She hears comments from the

teachers that the reorganisation has provided more space, more light and a greater feeling of openness. It was also said that the photos on the end panels came more into their own, now that the shelves are standing at an angle.

Nobody has noticed that 500 books have gone, but then no one has asked for any of these discarded books either. More space between the shelves has given more room to display books and has reduced the need to reshuffle the collection. The fact that a whole shelf section was removed has increased the openness. Even if people do not notice it has gone, they recognize the effect its removal has produced.

It was on the librarian’s own initiative that the extreme makeover took place, but immediate superiors were informed ahead of time. Afterwards she received very positive feedback from both her immediate superior and the head teacher. The librarian referred to photos and articles on the whole process. The work attracted comments both orally and on Face book by the Head.

Sharing the experience

The results of the stunts are documented in various forms, as pictures on Flickr ([flickr.com/photos/buskfyb/collections/72157623334641144](https://www.flickr.com/photos/buskfyb/collections/72157623334641144/)), as film on vimeo ([vimeo.com/12968916](https://www.vimeo.com/12968916)), as reports on our web pages and a blog, as well as in the news media. By showing examples of what we do, we in-

crease the focus on collections and the physical library space.

Crammed on the shelves?

Taking “Awfullibrarybooks” as a model, I have started a blog “Trangtihylla” (Norwegian for: crammed on the shelves) to present good candidates for weeding. By focusing on outdated books in a humorous way we have succeeded in drawing many library staff into the discussion. The blog receives many comments and is relatively well visited. This is one of many ways to create reflection and discussion around the topic of discarding books.

Conclusion

The Buskerud bandits are one example of change happening over time. Long-term priorities have the greatest effect on change. We have found that the concept of communities of practice can lead to useful and effective methods for developing skills.

The Buskerud bandits’ work and resulting success has become an export commodity. Three other counties have had or will have whole day seminars on weeding and collection development where the undersigned will be lecturing.

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Translated by Akasie språktjenester AS

Library professionals amidst change

The notion of change has been a topic of conversation in the library field for some time now; change pertaining to content, collections, services and facilities. Naturally, all of this concerns the people who work in libraries. Library staff has listened to lectures about change, how they should react to it, how they experience change and how things change in the library. Indeed the profession is also changing, whether we want it or not.

In 2009, the average age of the staff in the Oulu Central Library was 48.5. In the next five years, 27 people will retire; that is 24.3 % of the entire staff. This is a rather normal situation for most of the libraries in Finland, as the Baby Boom generation will be retiring from the public sector around the same time. Although the economic downswing has resulted in many changes in the municipal labour market situation, job positions will need to be filled in the future as well, albeit the number of those positions will probably decrease.

What types of professionals will libraries need in the future? The image of a steadfast library professional still holds strong, although it too is in the process of change. An interest in literature and reading is one very favourable, and desirable characteristic for library professionals, but it is not enough. However, for many people, it still is one motive for entering into the library field, which often surfaces during the recruitment process.

Today's library professionals are required to have not only an interest in literature, but they also need to be creative, possess professional flexibility, knowledge of literature, social skills, a broad range of general knowledge,

skills in teamwork, computer skills (including social media), and the ability to adjust to change. They should also have some degree of extroversion and the desire and skills to act and perform or make presentations. Other important attributes nowadays also include knowledge of the financial sector and the ability to create various types of agreements, etc. using software.

Being able to teach people how to look for information in an interesting way is also an ability that requires more than just walking through the library and surfing through homepages from one link to the other. Studies pertaining to pedagogy and the guidance and empowerment of youth would also be useful for library professionals. Likewise, being able to introduce and market library materials using the latest equipment as well as the ability to write for various media about the material in question, knowledge of other cultures, and skills in communication and languages to use in a globalizing environment are also skills needed in today's libraries.

I must admit, it all sounds rather demanding when considering the level of the wages in the field. This is an issue that is sometimes problematic. For example, there are about 100 job applicants for each professional position in the library in Oulu (excluding management positions). However, there are only a few among the 100 applicants who fulfil the qualifications, although they may be formally qualified otherwise. Municipalities that offer training in the library field have a better chance of finding the desired types of applicants than municipalities where such training is not available. However,

despite the low rate of wages for municipal jobs, they are becoming more and more valued because, for example, the growing unemployment of young people in Finland is a serious threat. Municipalities are still good employers, and it can be said that, to a young person, obtaining a permanent job is like winning the lottery. Young people, and why not older ones, who are used to working in temporary positions, value permanent jobs despite the low wages.

In the future, the library will employ an increasing number of professionals whose skills are related to youth and social work or the production of other services in the city or municipality, for example. Nowadays, libraries often house facilities where young people can spend time, information service desks where people can obtain advice and guidance about the community, or facilities for community gatherings to meet other people, read the newspaper, have cup of coffee, etc. Offering these types of activities in the library engenders fluctuation in the boundaries between professions and library staff must learn or have the pleasure of learning new ways of working and even of learning the issues involved in a different profession. These types of multi-professional workplaces also provide an opportunity for representatives of other professions to learn the tasks carried out in libraries. Traditional job descriptions will change, and this is an area on which training must concentrate. Dialogue concerning the changes in library professions should take place between employers and educational institutions more often.

The principle substance of libraries will also change. Smaller libraries, which



Pirkko Lindberg

are profiled toward a certain type of patron group or area, will emerge. This type of development is already evident in some municipalities in Finland. Library 10 in conjunction with the Helsinki City Library and Entresse, which is a part of the library in Espoo, are good examples of well-profiled libraries. The boundaries between school libraries and public libraries will also fade; the Ritaharju combo-library in Oulu, which just opened its doors, is a good example. It also merged administratively. The information specialist there is employed by both the school and the library and in this way crosses professional boundaries. The library's operations concept has been planned together with the school. These types of solutions once again pose challenges to library professions. In the future, there will no longer be just one job description for librarians or library clerks; rather, each job description will be tailored personally according to the duties in question and with consideration to the person's skills and characteristics. Recruitment has become a challenging endeavour and will become increasingly challenging in the future as well.

The introduction of automation in libraries has also changed library professions. The borrowing, and nowadays returning of material, is self-service. Next, material reservations will be made self-service. Patrons already renew their loans and pay their fees

online; where then is a library clerk needed, for example? The professions of library clerks and librarians are merging and no longer will as much staff be needed to do routine work. In the future, the increase of online material will reduce the amount of physical loans, something that is already evident. For example, loans of music material in libraries have steadily decreased. The organisational structures in libraries and municipalities and the different regulations and restrictions influencing permanent job posts and duties make it difficult to answer to the need to renew library staff. There should be courage enough to take the step to change job titles and reform the structure of the staff. For example, publicist, marketing manager, events services producer, systems specialist, development manager, project planner or manager or coordinator, electronic services specialist, and content specialist would be necessary duties in libraries. Of course, the titles as such have no meaning, but keeping the old librarian and library clerk titles may have a confining effect and prevent the expansion of job descriptions to meet today's needs. Once again, it is a question of wages and training, the level and content of which should meet the needs of employers.

The concept of pro-action has reached the library as well. Hopefully the times when the staff sat behind their desk staring at the computer doing 'their

own work' while patrons humbly apologized for disturbing them are behind us, and part of the history of the library. Library professionals need to come out from behind their desk, or at least the desks should be lowered and converted into electronic terminals to make it as easy as possible for patrons to approach members of staff to ask questions when needed. There are numerous on-going customer-service projects in Finland, which strive to encourage staff to come out from behind the barricade and advise patrons as they browse through the shelves and in other areas where communicating with others is easy. The material in the library needs to be marketed, and who would be better at it than a library professional.

Library management is also faced with challenges – a crystal ball and the gift of foreseeing the future would be a welcome perk in the director's tool arsenal, but there is hardly training available for those types of things. The aging and retirement of the staff, together with a weakening municipal economy, fluctuating costs, municipal mergers, and a decrease in the amount of loans are just a few of the challenges directors must deal with. Good management is the sum total of many things, and not just anyone is suitable for the position. Different trends in management theory come and go, but with a compassionate, people-friendly yet assertive approach and a knack for cost calculation, identifying worldly phenomena and lobbying, one can get quite far.

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Core business and core competences in libraries

Today the libraries are facing at least two major challenges. The larger of the two has to do with a gigantic process of change, where Danish libraries have to adapt to functioning as both a physical and a virtual library. The process of change means a completely different organisation and new services which perhaps are unknown to us at the moment.

The second challenge is demographic. Within just a few years about 30 percent of the librarians will be leaving the labour market. It is first and foremost in the public libraries and research libraries that members of staff are generally older than in the rest of the labour market. In a very short time the library system will be 1,500 librarians short. The library educations produce – in a good year – about 150 qualified librarians, so we are talking about a massive ‘bloodletting’. It must be said, though, that a recent positive turn in the admittance number of the Danish library educations, partly at The Royal School of Library and Information Science, partly at the recently established library education at the University of Southern Denmark augurs well for an increase in this number in a few years.

This leaves us with the question: What will the future library organisation look like? Do we need academic/librarianship competence in the library of the future?

Growing need for academic labour force

Around the year 1900 Max Weber described the professions and their function in a society, which at that time was undergoing a profound

In a very short time the library system will be 1,500 librarians short

change from agricultural society to industrial and urban society. He emphasized the fact that the professions should endeavour to keep a society together where traditions had become redundant. Today we observe similarly big changes in society where the need for specialist knowledge by no means diminishes.

There has been quite a lot of debate in Denmark about whether the increasing number of academics or ‘academizing’ is a sign of increasing bureaucratisation. Personally, I don’t believe that. The public sector is challenged by the demands for more services from a more and more well-educated population. This requires employees who know how to apply the new technology in order to create better and cheaper access to public services. At the same time employees must deal with ever-more complex questions and communicate on the basis of the customer’s or citizen’s needs. Since 2000 about 5,000 new academic jobs have been created annually in both the private and public sector, many of which are related to the development of information technology and not least to the use of IT in new contexts.

The number of academics in the libraries has likewise increased – more and

more, particularly MAs in library science and MAs in culture and mediation, have found their way to the libraries.

The new professionals and the academization

We have moved from a collective society to a society where the individual has got far greater economic and personal freedom than ever before. This means that we now have the opportunity to make demands on our own behalf, and that our own life project has moved into the centre to a much larger degree.

Where previously the professionals in the public sector pontificated values and attitudes this has now been replaced by debate and dialogue. Today it is a question of making resources available or acting as service provider. You can for example read this in *9 principles for good public service*, where it is being emphasized that service must be delivered on the citizen’s premisses. The principles were formulated in 2008 in a collaboration between Danish Regions, the National Association of Local Authorities in Denmark and the State.

This does not mean that the professionals should forget their professional competence – on the contrary. The doctor, who asks his patient what he believes is the matter with him, disregards his own professionalism. The librarian likewise disregards his professional competence, if he asks about the user’s knowledge of library systems. The librarian must activate his knowledge and competence in order to obtain the best possible result.



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**Johnny
Roj-Larsen**

We need all the innovative power that can be generated in order to successfully deal with the changes which are happening due to new technology, new forms of communication, new forms of dialogue, new organisations, etc. A strong core professionalism must create the vision of the future library service. Targeted and applied research, knowledge and method are essential elements when running and developing libraries, solutions centres, community centres, faculty support centres or whatever designations we choose to apply to the future physical or virtual space, but which must represent the core business in a future library organisation.

Core business and core competences in the library

The most important factor in this development of new library services is that one knows one's core business and one's core competences. Core competences are necessary when attempting to develop value-creating and useful services for the citizens. Over the past few years this has typically been accomplished via specific development departments or indeed as part of an innovative culture.

New generations seek answers from the professionals, but also challenge their knowledge and expect a dialogue about the solution of a given problem. At the same time the professionals' knowledge is seen as a commodity to be sold on the market just like other goods and services. The direct product is today – as opposed to previously – characterized by the user/customer being co-producer. The librarian's competences

should therefore be combined with general, mediatory competences. But that also means that core professionalism must be even sharper.

A library does not compromise professional competence by involving the users as co-producers, whether this happens by e.g. asking the patrons to add subject words to articles or write a review. Many libraries increasingly involve the customer as co-producer and many exciting experiments are going on.

But libraries and librarians are undergoing a development, which cannot be said to be unique, being general for most professions. The meeting with the citizen, the student, the client, the user or the customer is gaining in importance. This is due to the fact that the citizen has become more competent and very often has a ready answer, but at the same time wants to discuss his point of view with a professional. The professional has suddenly become a 'second opinion', which can be something of a challenge for the professional's own self-image.

The subject-specific professional academic must be able to speak to the user and the customer and mediate his core competence in a language they understand. This does not mean that communication and mediation are core competences, but rather that these are necessary in the development of a modern library. But the raw material stems from the information-scientific competence inherent in the librarians, which will ensure that the library also has a future tomorrow!

Public service production and the new academic professionalism

The libraries are facing major strategic deliberations as to a future library organisation that must be based on other premisses than the ones we observe today. That is why development of an academic tradition and professionalism in the libraries is vital, where new discourses can be nurtured.

It is necessary to introduce the academic professionalism when one has to work systematically with new forms of learning and the public's interest in reading, citizens' use of public portals, development of the cultural urban space, digital management and business service to small and medium-sized businesses. Or to move into the more hyper-professional element with citation analyses, benchmarking, digitals rights, research data, management reporting, researcher reporting, data collection. Just to illustrate the diversity present in development and production of library service.

To put it briefly – we need to sustain and develop the core competences in the library – the academic competences or the ones that characterize a librarian – if you like. Both for the sake of the library and the profession, but first and foremost for the sake of the patrons who need to be able to navigate in a new world of knowledge and technology.

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Measure and Evaluate

About statistics and efficiency at public libraries



Measure and Evaluate is a project initiated and administered by the Stockholm County Library during 2008-2010 with a grant from the Swedish National Arts Council. For many years, the national library statistics were criticized and discussed and various initiatives have been undertaken to evolve statistical scales of measurement and despite these efforts, statistics have shown only a marginal improvement.

The criticism lies in how statistics of this kind fail to present an accurate picture of public library operations, how various areas of importance are not measured at all and how definitions remain unclear. To complement the national statistics, Stockholm County Library has over a long period collected complementary data from the county libraries and compiled key data for Stockholm County. In its work with county statistics, Stockholm County Library showed a lack of coherent analysis, which led to the initiation of the project Measure and Evaluate. The purpose of Measure and Evaluate is:

“... to find new scales of measurement that allow for a broad and reasonable presentation of library programs and account for the scope, quality and efficiency as its basis of operational developments. The result will be a paper on library statistics, applying a theoretical and discursive background, operable suggestions and applications” (from project application to the Arts Council).

About the book *Measure and Evaluate*

The project resulted in a book, *Measure and Evaluate* - about statistics and efficiency at public libraries, (2010). The book's emphasis has been placed on its

theoretical and discursive background. The reasoning in the book concerns public library service in general yet one of the chapters, written by Lena Lundgren, deals specifically with existing and prospective statistics regarding the activities of children.

Another chapter formulates some proposals for taxonomies. They are meant to be used as a basis for discussions when implementing partnerships with another sector. Taxonomies can be used to categorize standards of quality.

In a previous project, called *Goals and Measures*, four libraries in Region Västtra Götaland were involved in testing performance indicators. Kerstin Wockatz informs about the experience in one of the chapters.

Do statistics describe operational activities?

To what extent do statistics describe today's public library activities? How do measurements relate to stated objectives? Do we have the key data we need to pursue operational objectives? How should we interpret scenarios that emerge from our results? Who should we compare ourselves to in order to answer whether the results are good or bad?

An important question in statistics is what platform for comparisons should prevail. Should one only compare data on an annual basis and internally, one's neighbouring municipality, the municipalities included in the same municipal group or among those of other countries? Or should it be compared to other activities?

To a certain extent maybe, it is about how we view the concept of performance or what we mean by efficiency. Is an efficient operation by definition of a higher standard? To use resources more efficiently one has to deal with the formulation of efficiency in terms of goals. To understand the purpose as to why scales of measurements are being used and linking those to objectives will determine whether statistics can be used in operational developments. It is crucial that by using the governing documents we actually formulate the intent or purpose of the activities we perform in libraries.

Internal and external efficiency

The project has partly been based on notions of external and internal efficiency:

External efficiency measures the performance of the right choices and that the operation is possible and utilized by the projected target groups.

Internal efficiency can be translated as meaning a description of daily operations. The operation is supplied with resources and in a number of activities these are converted into a result. This result should preferably provide an effect that is linked to the objectives. Internal efficiency measures whether things are being done the correct way.

We need parameters to describe both internal and external efficiency. Above all, it is necessary to consider what indicators are saying and how they can be combined. For example: If the circulation rate, circulation / inventory, increases so also should loans increase

- To what extent do statistics describe today's public library activities? How do measurements relate to stated objectives?
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per capita in order to be able to say that overall efficiency has increased. That is, the joint ratios of the internal and external efficiency together define the balance between different types of efficiency that interact to hopefully form a quality-assured operational activity.

Efficiency analysis of reaction rate calculation models

There are numerous calculation models for measuring rates of efficiency. The Danish researcher Niels Ole Pors has constructed a model which is based on the Balanced Scorecard model. The project *Goals and Measures* let four municipal libraries in Västra Götaland apply some of the key data suggested by Pors. The point of the Balanced Scorecard is to measure and evaluate the key data from all perspectives that exist in the model so as to obtain the balance of operational activities. Västra Götaland's experience clearly demonstrates that single measurements say very little about an operation in an overall context.

It is challenging to draw any conclusions as to whether a particular model is applicable or not merely by reviewing certain key data. Models are often based on an image of the organisation as a stable environment where the efficiency criteria is measured at position A are also expected to apply to position B. It seems to be that we need other ways of looking at the effectiveness of the concept. Efficiency might include the ability to manage conflicting interests and competing values. If one uses this approach to view efficiency, it means that efficiency is not served by

optimizing a particular method, but instead there is a balance between the (perhaps conflicting) values which over time favours operational activities. The challenge facing an organisation is to find such a balance and ways of working whereby values relate favourably to each other over time.

Measuring levels of quality using taxonomies

The taxonomies presented in the book differ from one another. While we have sought the same number of levels there are discrepancies if you place taxonomies next to each other. For example, it is not obvious that level 2 means the same degree of interaction in all taxonomies. This is partly because we are at different stages in terms of cooperation between different activities. Libraries, for example, collaborated together for a long time with the school sector and in many places around the country there are ongoing formal agreements. Agreements concerning cooperation between libraries and elderly care are less common. As our activities evolve so hopefully the highest levels evolve even more and maybe some of the levels will merge.

Another difference between taxonomies is the degree of a formalized political assignment. Public libraries carry mandate to collaborate and formulate municipal library strategic plans. Elderly care, child care centres and pre-schools have also formulated assignments where cooperation with libraries can benefit parts of their work. But the voluntary sector of associations has itself no mandate to cooperate with a library, although some organisations

would certainly benefit from collaborative ventures.

It is important to note that taxonomies have been developed within a library context, and from the library staff's diverse experiences in cooperative ventures. Although the taxonomies describe cooperation, their formulations nevertheless remain based on a library's assignment. It remains uncertain whether they would look the same if we increasingly cooperated with each respective activity when we have developed taxonomies. Of course this is a troublesome fact and may emphasize the project's ambition to initiate a work process and to provide a warm welcome to all initiatives to further discussions and to the further development of taxonomies. This also applies to the creation of new taxonomies.

Expectations are that seminars and workshops will be set up, applying our knowledge to embrace the use of key-figures, how they can be combined and what they say about our activities. We also hope that libraries want to test different models in their entirety. We also hope that national players such as Sweden's County Librarians, Local Authorities and County Councils, the National Library and the Swedish Arts Council keep contributing to ideas taking root, their dissemination and challenging them to further evolve-ment.

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Homework assistance on the internet

Homework Online is an innovative and exciting new offer to children and young people in Denmark. Three times a week, Sunday evening being one of them – six volunteer homework assistants (mostly university students) are ready at their computers looking forward to receiving requests. More than 800 pupils have used the online offer, which started in January 2010. Several of them have come back a number of times.

Basically there are three components that have to function and interact in homework assistance online in order for it to be successful. First and foremost the IT element must be working smoothly; secondly the homework assistants must be able to meet the needs of the pupils; finally the number of homework assistants on duty must correspond to the number of pupils who ask for assistance. Otherwise pupils will be queuing for too long. Until now it has been possible to combine all elements in a fruitful way, and in the remaining project period much effort will be used to boost the number of users. That is why an intensive marke-

ting campaign has taken off this autumn. Various primary and lower secondary schools are visited, and the project managers introduce the homework site and its possibilities to the pupils. As part of the presentation the pupils watch a short film, where the young rapper Chadi Alderbas shows how to use the site. Also YouTube and Facebook are used in the marketing campaign.

Homework Online is a three-year development project financed by governmental funds. The Danish Agency for Libraries and Media together with the Ministries of Integration and Education are overall responsible for the project while the State and University Library carries out the project. The primary target group is young pupils from grade seven to ten, living in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The project is running until the end of 2011. See a demonstration of Homework Online: <http://www.lektier-online.dk>

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DENMARK

Partying at the National Library

Not all libraries, even national libraries, can accommodate 2 600 students on its premises. The National Library of Denmark can, and celebrated for the second time the start of the academic year with a party for *Students Only*, which is in fact the name of a cultural network for college, polytechnic and university students in Copenhagen but also elsewhere in the country. The library building, called the Black Diamond, was transformed into a night club offering music, poetry, video and sound artists. The well-received arrangement increased the number of network members by 25 percent.

Bibliotekspressen 19.10.2010

Would you like to hear a story?

How can I help you? In Herning Library's children's department the staff have thrown away the desk and instead, are strolling between the shelves and talking with the users. While some patrons were worried that the librarians had been sacked, children have welcomed the closer interaction with the staff. The goal of the project is to create links between staff and children at the children's level. While the initial worries of 'how will the users find us' or 'what do I do when there are no children at the library' have slowly faded, the staff have noticed how the extra attention the children get can make a difference to the atmosphere at the library - and in the lives of the children.

Bibliotekspressen 16/2010

FINLAND

The library of your dreams

Even if it is about one local library, the main public library in Helsinki, the

project of planning a new library building has attracted attention in the whole of Finland. The library is meant to be ready in 2017, but already the users can tell how they would like the library to look and function. The online 'Tree of Dreams' is hung with leaves describing the hopes and dreams of library users. All dreams will be harvested by the library and some ideas will be realised in branches even before the new library takes shape. "A quiet and peaceful corner with comfy chairs where you can take a nap listening to music." "Silent areas." "Short story hours for the grown-ups." "Arrangements for singles and the lonely" were among the wishes from the public.

www.keskustakirjasto.fi

Let them eat porridge

The secret weapon against social exclusion at Enontekiö Public Library in Lapland is porridge! Morning porridge is served four days a week as part of the ESR project, *Step by step*, which strives to help people in danger of being marginalised in society. The target groups include the long-term unemployed, mental health rehabilitation patients, the mentally disabled and young people without work or study place. As the library has long opening hours, a low threshold and friendly staff, it is a perfect addition to the project.

www.enontekio.fi/web/index.php?id=95

NORWAY

Literature festival

All the libraries in the region of Akershus took part in the week-long literature festival in October 2010. All in all, 200 arrangements were organised as part of the festival and the national 'Year of Reading'. The libraries had been worried about the Norwegian results in the Pisa study and strengthened the cooperation with the schools. As a result, the use of the libraries has increased and in many cases the children have brought their whole family with them to the library. The festival week consisted of readings, exhibitions, author visits and a literature quiz. One library hosted a rap evening, a Halloween party and a teddy bear birthday party for the children. In line with the fun programme, the press conference for the festival was arranged in the mobile library.

Romerikes Blad 20.10.2010

Nordic kickoff time at a library near you

Dozens of Norwegian (as well as Danish and Swedish) libraries offered all kinds of games for their users on the 'Nordic Game Day' on 13th November. Library users were able to compete in the Nordic championships in Wii-bowling, or for the local title in the card game of Magic. SingStar and GuitarHero are already old favourites at libraries but more traditional board games were also on the agenda.

http://spilldag.no/

SWEDEN

Book circles on the internet - a joint venture by Swedish libraries

What started as the endeavour of one enthusiastic librarian has luckily been offered a permanent home when the regional central libraries together take over the maintenance of the BookCircles web site. BookCircles was created by Nina Frid in 2007 and has developed into a meeting place for book lovers with lively discussions and book tips. The libraries involved have got funding for a year which means that Frid can continue as editor on a part-time basis. She has also, together with two active participants in BookCircles edited a collection of blog texts from the site called 'You Are Among Book Friends'. Literature is alive and kicking on the internet.

Biblioteksbladet 8/2010

Culture to go gets a prize in Stockholm

Stockholm Public Library, Stockholm Public Transport and the City of Stockholm were awarded a prize by the Chamber of Commerce for making the city environment a better place to live. The jury commended the way the three subway libraries at metro stations have brought culture closer to the people who gather and move about at the stations every day. As the prize included a fourth placard it may well be that there will be more subway libraries in the future.

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Keep up with developments in the Nordic public libraries in Scandinavian Public Library Quarterly

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