

The National Library of Finland - Strengthening the Finnish Library System

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INTRODUCTION

On Thursday 29 June 2006, the President of the Republic approved the amendment of the Universities Act which changes the Finnish name of the Helsinki University Library, *Helsingin yliopiston kirjasto*, to *Kansalliskirjasto*, the National Library of Finland. The Library will remain an independent institute within the University of Helsinki. The amended Universities Act enters into force on 1 August 2006.

The purpose of the change is to strengthen the Finnish library system and the position of the National Library as a development centre for networked library services. According to the amended Act, the National Library's duty is to develop and offer national services to university libraries, polytechnic libraries, specialised and public libraries, and to promote national and international cooperation in the field of librarianship.

The National Library continues to be responsible for the preservation of the national cultural heritage in the form of publications and for the maintenance of other collections.

NATIONAL LIBRARY NETWORK SERVICES

Finland's library network is extremely efficient; the four main library sectors have organized their own activities and each sector has its own specific development areas as well as common interests with other sectors. Cooperation between the sectors is becoming increasingly important as a consequence of the National Library's changing role and the transformed working environment.

The National Library's new role - a service unit for the library network - will result in certain practical administrative changes, the most visible of which will be the change of the organization's name. The Helsinki University Library, the National Library of Finland has become simply the National Library of Finland. The new name emphasizes the importance of the Library's national responsibilities. The steering mechanism of the library has also changed. Within the library network, the National Library is the only library conducting budgetary negotiations directly with the Ministry of Education. Cooperative mechanisms between the library network and the National Library are also being developed. Another important administrative development area is the budgetary system, where the aim will be to streamline the library's fairly complex financing arrangements, even though most of the funding is allocated by the Ministry of Education.

The library network has defined the national services it provides and the Ministry of Education has confirmed them. The Ministry will provide the National Library with permanent funding for these services' operation and maintenance. The specific and demanding task facing the National Library will be to develop these services to meet the needs of the library network and to provide the network with added value. These services can be grouped into three categories: developing access to high-quality information; developing the digital working environment and developing impact assessment. All aim at providing researchers, students and citizens with relevant information resources cost-effectively and conveniently.[1]

NOTE

[1] Additional information can be obtained from Kristiina Hormia-Poutanen, Head of the National Library Network Services, kristiina.hormia@helsinki.fi