Access versus Ownership: academic libraries outsourcing print collections – cases Aalto University and University of Eastern Finland

Digital material is becoming dominant in many libraries. Especially the libraries in universities that do research and give teaching in STM subjects need to concentrate on digital content provision. At the same time economic constrains force libraries to make savings where ever they can. Savings can be made in profiled collection policy and profiled acquisitions. The costs of library premises are also a target of economic consideration. Premises to accommodate print collections should be reduced and if possible local storage facilities should be turned down.

Two Finnish universities that have recently merged from previous universities have invested in digital collections. Both of them - Aalto University in Helsinki area and University of Eastern Finland – are multi-campus universities that are building their collections mainly on digital basis. Both of them have almost completely outsourced their printed collections to The National Repository Library (NRL). NRL is a facility provided by the government to serve all libraries as a joint storage and interlending centre. It has developed in twenty years to house big part of the long tail of printed material.

Efficient outsourcing requires good database facilities so that the libraries can easily find whatever they need. It also requires efficient logistics that provides libraries with easy access and fast delivery of requested material. This means digital delivery whenever possible and fast postal services combined with services free of charge.

The paper describes collection policies at Aalto University and University of Eastern Finland. It also gives calculations about savings in premises and savings in libraries on a national level.

Authors:
Sirpa Janhonen, Senior Planner, National Repository Library
Ari Muhonen, Director, University of Aalto University Library
Kari Paakkinen, Library Assistant, National Repository Library
Jarmo Saarti, Director, Library of the University of Eastern Finland
Pentti Vattulainen, Director National Repository Library

Contact:
Pentti Vattulainen
National Repository Library
PO Box 1710
70421 KUOPIO
Finland
Pentti.Vattulainen@nrl.fi
**Introduction**

Finland is one of five Nordic countries and fifth biggest country in European Union after France, Spain, Sweden and Germany. Area is 390,920 sq kilometres or 150,900 sq miles. Finland is known in the world perhaps best of its lakes (188,000), forests, the largest archipelago of Europe, midnight sun and perhaps also of mobile phones, Formula 1 drivers and ice hockey. The population is about 5.4 million. For seven centuries (from 12th century to 1809) Finland was part of Sweden. As a result the country still is bilingual. About 6% of the population is Swedish speaking. After 1809 Finland became autonomous Grand Duchy within the Russian Empire. Finland gained independence after Russian revolution 1917, and it is a sovereign parliamentary republic. It has been member of the European Union since 1995.

Finland is very education intensive country. 78% of the population aged 25 to 64 have completed upper secondary or tertiary education and 35% (the highest percentage in the EU countries) have university or other tertiary qualification. Finnish educational system has many strengths: e.g. free basic education for all, equal educational opportunities and high quality teacher training. It has guaranteed Finnish schoolchildren special success in OECD’s Pisa-survey (http://www.pisa.oecd.org/pages/0,2987,en_32252351_32235731_1_1_1_1_1,00.html).

Finnish library network consists of university and polytechnic libraries, public libraries and special libraries. University, polytechnic and public libraries are open for all citizens. There are 15 universities and 25 polytechnic universities and each of them have their own libraries. Universities get main part of their funding from the government and they decide independently about the funding of libraries. Polytechnic universities get funding from both the government and local authorities.

During the past two decades the dissemination of scientific information has changed thoroughly. There is a digital publication chain. Even printed books are part of this chain. Also the culture of using publications has changed. Especially the “fast food” i.e. scientific papers and journals are used in the digital form, this due to the fact that rapidity and ease of use are of great value to the academics. (see Muhonen et al., 2010) This might have a great role in the digitisation of the printed culture.

As more books are published in printed format, more of the older printed books are being digitised. Libraries face new challenges: how to save the printed heritage for future generations and by whom. Are repositories of each library enough or should there be an international distribution of labour and duties and if we are in fact facing a total digital collection of all the printed materials in the near future what are the local printed collections for?

As a small country with limited resources Finland’s libraries have had to work in co-operation already over many decades. Specialisation in terms of collections and database construction has been essential in creation of national collections. Even though there is no official national collection policy, there are elements of it. Some services are provided on a national level and individual libraries can trust on the availability and continuity of these national services and institutions. These
national level services make it possible to share resources and acquire resources as cost-effectively as possible.

The basis on which individual university library can build its own services can be divided into three parts:

- Acquisition of electronic resources: university libraries have established consortia that acquire and maintain the services and collections needed in the digital environment. The backbone of electronic resources provision is the National Electronic Library (FinELib) which acquires Finnish and international resources to support teaching, learning and research. FinELib negotiates user-rights agreements for electronic resources on a centralised basis for its member organisations. The university libraries receive central government funding via the Ministry of Education and Culture. In addition to the central government funding the university libraries pay acquisition out of their own budgets. (http://www.nationallibrary.fi/libraries/finelib/)

- Developing digital libraries: The National Digital Library started as a project of the Ministry of Education and Culture in 2008. It is in pilot phase and if successfully opened, it will combine resources of all memory organizations under the same user interface and long term preservation system. The development of user interface and long term preservation system are coordinated by the National Library. (http://www.kdk.fi/en)

- Preserving and keeping available print material: the National Repository Library ensures the availability of print material which has been transferred from other libraries in Finland.

**National Repository Library**

The Finnish specialty is the service for libraries is the National Repository Library. It was founded on March the 1st, 1989. It is meant to be a repository for all libraries in Finland as the most economical way of storing library material. Because of the NRL, the need for extra shelf space in libraries throughout the country is decreased and can be controlled. The material in the Repository Library is received as transfer from other Finnish libraries and becomes the property of the Library. Thus the material can be deduplicated. The activity of the National Repository Library is funded by the Ministry of Culture and Education. Services for libraries are free of charge.

The basic function of the NRL is to receive, store and offer material for the use of other libraries. The NRL serves university and special libraries as well as public libraries, and acts as a connecting link in the library network. With regard to older printed material, the NRL is a considerable resource – nowadays it preserves more than 20 percent of all material acquired by university and other academic libraries in Finland.

The NRL’s activities are directed by a Board whose members are appointed by the Ministry of Education and Culture for three years at a time. The members represent different library sectors. The Board was established in order to develop interaction between the NRL and other libraries in Finland. This is important, since the library has no framework organization of its own.
The budget of NRL is about 1,6 million Euros. It is 6,8% of the acquisition budgets of university libraries and 1,6% of total budget of university libraries.

NRL has three impacts for libraries.
- It helps them to control collection space and make savings locally.
- It preserves and keeps available important research material and acts as a national interlending centre, efficient document delivery,
- It can also be used as a tool for the collection policy of individual library.

Libraries have transferred 111 shelf kilometres of locally less-used material to NRL and 68 shelf kilometres of that material is from University libraries. This equals with more than 23 000 square meters. Cumulative savings for this space are annually 3,5 million Euros. From the very beginning of the history of the National Repository Library all university libraries has been able to save 2 685 700 Euros per year calculated in the cost level of 2009. It is a big amount of money, which Finnish university libraries have been able to use in ways which serves better their own organizations and users. This is in line with a recent OCLC study which shows that academic libraries can make essential savings by creating print repositories (Malpas, 2011)

According to statistics of the Finnish university library space costs 2009 the mean costs were about 171 Euros/m²/year. At the same time the space costs at National Repository Library were a little less than 70 Euros/m²/year. If these sums are compared it is easy to find out why university libraries are interested to transfer big part of their printed collections into National Repository Library.

When most of every-day-use material is in electronic form it is natural that most of acquisition and collection maintenance funding is used for them. For printed material, especially if it is older and less-used, it is essential to make savings whenever possible. Older material is still, if not often, sometimes needed to support the study or research.

Following table describes change of premises in university libraries:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Library premises, m²</th>
<th>Closed stacks, m²</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University libraries, total</td>
<td>134 796</td>
<td>165 880</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal deposit libraries</td>
<td>52 231</td>
<td>88 010</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>other university libraries</td>
<td>82 565</td>
<td>77 870</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: premises in university libraries (Source: Research Library Statistics Database)

Total premises of university libraries (20) have grown 23%. Closed stacks have grown 3%. In legal deposit libraries (6) the premises have grown 69% and closed stacks 14%. Other university libraries (14) have managed to diminish closed stacks by transferring material to NRL.

62, 6% of transferred material is from university libraries. It is 15% of collections and 20, 2% of the serial collections of university libraries. After deduplication NRL offers nearly 70 shelf kilometres materials for use. This is more than 3 million volumes of monographs and serials.

NRL gets nearly 80,000 ILL requests annually. As ILL traffic is nationally decreasing, in NRL it is growing. Most of the loans go to public libraries (66% in 2009). Article copies are sent mainly to research libraries (90% in 2009). The amount is close to half of national ILL traffic of university libraries.

Figure 2. Number of requests received annually by the university libraries and the National repository library (Muhonen et al., 2010).
Print repository in action: Cases UEF and Aalto-university

Two Finnish universities that have recently merged from previous universities have invested in digital collections. Both of them - Aalto University in Helsinki area and University of Eastern Finland – are multi-campus universities that are building their collections mainly on digital basis. Both of them have almost completely outsourced their printed collections to The National Repository Library (NRL). NRL is a facility provided by the government to serve all libraries as a joint storage and interlending centre. It has developed in twenty years to house big part of the long tail of printed material.

Efficient outsourcing requires good database facilities so that the libraries can easily find whatever they need. It also requires efficient logistics that provides libraries with easy access and fast delivery of requested material. This means digital delivery whenever possible and fast postal services combined with services free of charge.

Radical outsourcing – the collection policies of the University of Eastern Finland Library

University of Eastern Finland (UEF) was created by merging the University of Joensuu and the University of Kuopio. Both parent universities had started in the 1960s and they had their own specific profiles. Joensuu’s profile was mainly the humanities and social sciences and education and Kuopio’s was sciences and health sciences. The merger process started in 2007. The new University act became effective from the beginning of 2010 but the university had to function almost as a single unit from the fall 2009. The University has three campuses, about 130 kilometers apart from each other.

The new University act separated the Universities from the state thus making them more independent both economically and management-wise. This had its effect on how the university libraries are seen in Finland. During the state-ownership the libraries were definitely a part of the national library policy where the libraries had both national and local obligations providing scientific information services and collections both the academics and the laymen.

The digital revolution of dissemination and ownership of the scientific research has changed this point of view. At the present, it seems that the libraries are seen more as a part of the strategy of its parent university, not as a part of the national policy. This is definitively true in the case of the University of Eastern Finland. From the beginning of the new university, the economic pressures and the need for savings on the library budget emerged. Thus e.g. the university’s board has decided that the university must reduce its costs of the premises at least 5 per cent.

This combined with the fact that more and more publications are published digitally lead to the radical resizing of the Kuopio Campus Library (former Kuopio University Library) – its premises were reduced almost to the half of the size (see Muhonen et al 2010). This resulted as better premises for the students, a concise printed collection and most important: the actual number of the loans remained almost the same when the use of the digital collection expanded constantly. The
next phase is going on at the Joensuu Campus Library where during the summer 2011 about one fourth of the library’s public premises are renovated in a similar manner, i.e. towards a digital learning centre.

The library has been able to do this due to following facts:

- outsourcing the less used printed document storing and delivery to the National Repository Library
- using digital document collections and digital deliverance as much as possible; at the present the transition from printed book collection towards mixed digital/printed collection in going on
- using efficient document delivery between campuses; a document, if present, can be delivered from one campus library to another within a day to the patron with no extra costs

The flexible collection policy is especially important for the UEF library due to the fact that university has several disciplines and three campuses quite far apart from each other. The digital and automated solutions are used always if they are possible and functional. The savings wanted from the library are also easy to accomplish in this manner: it is easier to save in premises than e.g. in personnel costs and focusing on creating the best possible collections for the university’s students and academics is the best way of lobbying the funding and need for the library services from the university management.

One of the main missions of the academic libraries in a digitalized document dissemination culture is the supporting of the information literature skills of the students and the academics. In Finland, this has also been promoted at the national level, e.g. a recommendation for universities for including information literacy competence in the new degree structures has been published (see Juntunen et al 2008). In addition to that, the individual university libraries have had their own tuition programs. Thus e.g. in the UEF there is one credit program for students for basic skills in information retrieval. At the Kuopio Campus, this has a long tradition, dating already from the beginning of the university from the 1970’s. This most likely has had a great role in the fact that the students and academics do use a lot of digital resources.

**Aalto-university** (Source of this part of the paper: Muhonen et al. 2010)

Aalto University (www.aalto.fi/en/), was established in 2010 as a merger of three universities: The Helsinki School of Economics, Helsinki University of Technology and The University of Art and Design Helsinki. There are 16 500 students, 300 professors.

The libraries of the three universities were merged. The new Aalto University Library specializes on business, technology, and science as well as art and design. There are three campus libraries and a few faculty libraries. The budget of the Aalto University Library is about 8 million euro and the size of the staff is about 100 persons.

The planning of the new Aalto University Library has been on the needs of multi- and interdisciplinary research, problem-based learning and case studies. This led to the recognition of the life cycle of customer needs, see Figure 3.
Each client has different information needs during his/her academic career. The service portfolio of the library has to cover all or at least most of these needs starting from studying up to professional life and lifelong learning. In addition, a library has to serve the society, like companies and general public. This is because the library is open for all users.

Figure 3. The life cycle of customer needs. (Source: Muhonen et al. 2010)

The change of the paradigm of the libraries have to deal with two-way dissemination of information: delivering the latest international research results to the University and from the University to the research community and general public in the world. Therefore it is essential for an academic library to maintain a CRIS (Current Research Information System) as well as a digital repository system in addition to the traditional collections.

The biggest Aalto University campus libraries is the former Helsinki University of Technology Library, now called as the Otaniemi campus library. It has a 100 year long tradition of being the central library in the field of technology in Finland. In 2008 it offered 25 000 electronic journals, 300 000 electronic books, 760 printed journals (subscriptions), and 225 000 printed books to its clients for use.

The Otaniemi campus library has had a written collection policy since 2003. It is based on the life cycle of a library book, see Figure 4. A book can be placed on several locations within a university. The best place for a book is a shelf where it has the biggest possibility to be found by a user. Ranganathan has said this his own way: “Every reader a book, every book a reader”.

The customers have different needs during their life and work life cycle. This has been taken into account in the service portfolio.
In practice, if a researcher needs a book very frequently, it has to be on his/her own bookshelf. A bit less needed but still useful books can be on the shelf of the research group or faculty library. Later on they can be moved to the main library which has a big clientele, and finally to the National Repository Library, which stores tens of shelf kilometres of books economically, yet easily to be found and used by anybody.

Figure 4. The life cycle of a library book.

For the Aalto University the importance of the National Repository Library cannot be overestimated. It gives the opportunity for long term preservation of books and serials which cannot be held at the campuses. As it has developed very fast and economic – in fact - free of charge services, the use of the these collections are easy for end-users.

**Conclusion**

Centralised collection services for Finnish academic libraries function on three levels. There is

- provision of electronic resources. Main actor in this is the National Electronic Library (FinELib),
- digital library development. The National Digital Library – a project of he Ministry of Education and Culture,
- print material availability and preservation. This is the duty of the National Repository Library.

The Finnish model of keeping print material available in digital time is a solution that has gradually developed from a storage facility whose main aim was to make savings for academic libraries in
collection facilities. It is now an important part of resource provision and as such a guarantee for the sustainability of the digital copy (see: http://www.varastokirjasto.fi/kuopio3/).

Its business model – direct funding from the government – would probably be quite difficult to get in these days. Still in many countries government funding is still possible also in new projects, e.g. Switzerland, Catalonia, France and Norway (see a list of ongoing projects and resources at: http://www.varastokirjasto.fi/print_repositories/). In many countries the business model is membership-based or consortium, e.g. Center for Research Libraries (http://www.crl.edu/about/) in USA, or CARM centre (http://www.caval.edu.au/carm.html ) in Victoria, Australia.

The benefits for an efficient print repository for libraries are many. The existence of a repository first of all makes savings in collection spaces, both locally and nationally or within a consortium. OCLC has estimated that savings for libraries are essential. (See Malpas ,2011)

It also makes it possible to change old spaces used for housing print collections to satisfy new needs, e.g. learning centres or student study rooms. Repositories can assist libraries to formulate their local collection policy by organising a trust access to outsourced print collections. In cases of University of Eastern Finland and Aalto University the library users have not given negative feedback about outsourcing print collections to the national repository.

Repositories can organise streamlined and fast access to the resources transferred from libraries e.g. using digital delivery when ever possible. As repositories get more and more material they become print resources on a regional or national scale. Finally there is an option to make a strong network of consortial, regional or national repositories and to create a Universal Repository Library (http://www.varastokirjasto.fi/kuopio3/).
Sources:


OECD, Pisa: http://www.pisa.oecd.org/

Research Library Statistics Database:

Further reading:

FinELib. See: http://www.nationallibrary.fi/libraries/finelib/

Ministry of Culture and Education: http://www.minedu.fi/OPM/Kirjastot/?lang=en


Print Repositories world wide:
http://www.varastokirjasto.fi/print_repositories/