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### The National Bibliography Concept in a Changing Information Environment

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#### Introduction

New information carriers that emerged at the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century have widened the traditional definition of the book. For this reason the range of objects to be recorded in the national bibliography has expanded. The questions of how and to what extent the changing information environment has influenced the concept of the national bibliography were addressed at the Conference *The National Bibliography in a Changing Information Environment* held in Tallinn on 12-13 October last year. The arrangement of the Conference was, no doubt, prompted by the 475<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Estonian book, celebrated as the Year of the Estonian Book, to recognise the printing of the first Estonian-language book.

The National Library of Estonia, organiser of the conference, invited experts on the topic of national bibliography from neighbouring states – Finland, Sweden, Norway, Latvia, Russia and also the Czech Republic - to make presentations. The conference was sponsored by NORDINFO (the Nordic Council for Scientific Information), the Central Committee of the Estonian Book Year and the Cultural Endowment of Estonia.

The main subjects discussed at the conference were: changed functions of national bibliographic data, the scope of the national bibliography, legislation regulating delivery of legal deposit copies, the production and use of the national bibliographic data, the recording of Web documents as an essential part of national heritage, and also retrospective conversion.

## **Legal Deposit and the National Bibliography**

The current concept of a national bibliography is largely based on the definition of a national publication, which is, in its turn, connected with the Legal Deposit Law. This was emphasised at the International Conference on National Bibliographic Services (ICNBS), sponsored by IFLA and held in 1998 in Copenhagen to review and update the Paris principles of 1977. As Gunilla Jonsson from the National Library of Sweden states in her report, the legal deposit arrangement is also the foundation of a rational and economic division of work internationally. In the recent years the need to revise existing legal deposit acts has been placed on the agenda of many countries.

Riitta Mattila, legal deposit specialist from the National Library of Finland, shared her insights about the Finnish legal deposit system. The present Finnish Act and statute on legal deposit came into force in 1981, and it covers all types of printed publications as well as sound recordings. The Finnish Ministry of Education has set up two working groups for revising the Legal Deposit Law. One of the central aims is to extend the legal deposit system to cover all types of electronic materials.

The proposed Act on Legal Deposit covers both static and dynamic online publications and aims at minimising efforts required on the part of the library and publishers. This is one reason why this proposal does not specify in detail how electronic material should be collected.

Riitta Mattila's report reminds us that one of the problems is the harmonisation of laws. The legal deposit of electronic materials depends on copyright regulations and the Finnish Copyright Law depends on the EU regulations concerning electronic materials. Hopefully, a new Finnish Legal Deposit Act will take effect in 2002.

In the next Conference report, I discussed the legal deposit situation in Estonia. During the past decade, the number of legal deposit copies as well as the scope of the Estonian Legal Deposit Act have changed considerably. In 1992, the provision of legal deposit copies was specified by Government regulation requiring publishers to provide 28 deposit copies from each edition that exceeded 50 copies. The Legal Deposit Act passed in 1997 is considerably more publisher-friendly, providing for eight legal deposit copies to be delivered in total. The new Act covers printed material as well as audio-visual items and electronic publications.

Currently, it is on the agenda in Estonia to complete the Legal Deposit Act in relation to online publications. On the other hand, there have been proposals to further reduce the number of legal deposit copies. This autumn the National Library of Estonia intends to put forward its suggestions for amendments of the current Act.

Unni Knutsen from the National Library of Norway gave an overview covering the administration of the Norwegian Legal Deposit Act. The present legal provision came into force in 1990, giving Norway one of the most comprehensive systems of legal deposit in the world. The regulations are currently under revision. Ms. Knutsen viewed the increasing flow of material as the greatest challenge in the field of legal deposit. Therefore, discussions on selection criteria will be even more important in the future.

## **The Scope of the National Bibliography**

The fourth ICNBS recommendation states: "National bibliographies should include the current national output, and where practicable they should also provide retrospective coverage". The fact that the retrospective conversion is continually a topical issue was reinforced by several presentations at the Tallinn conference. Anita Goldberga from the National Library of Latvia gave an overview of the retrospective conversion project, begun in 2000, of the printed Latvian national bibliography. The largest amount of bibliographic information (about 2.5 million records) in Latvia is still available only in printed

form. The long-term aim of the project is to create a unique national cultural database (from the mid 18<sup>th</sup> century to 2000) converting printed indexes of the national bibliography into machine-readable form (some 136,000 pages of text). Tasks to design and test software that integrated standard applications to carry out further retrospective conversion were successfully fulfilled during the first stage of the project last year. Converted and current national bibliography data will form a database within the national union electronic catalogue and will serve as the basis for the national document delivery system.

Bohdana Stoklasova introduced the Czech Republic's experience in pursuing retrospective conversion. She provided an overview of the project RETROCON, which enabled the availability of the Czech national bibliography for the whole 20<sup>th</sup> century on the Internet as well as within the National Library's database, in the Czech Union Catalogue, and in OCLC's WorldCat. Ms. Stoklasova discussed and critiqued the application of standards in Czech libraries from the second half of the 1980s to the present, confirming the importance of observing international standards in compiling the national bibliography. For me and my Estonian colleagues, this presentation was extremely educational, and we enjoyed the pleasure of recognising similar problems.

In 1997, seven major Estonian research libraries established the Consortium of Estonian Libraries Network (ELNET Consortium) with the aim of purchasing and implementing a common integrated information system. This goal was achieved in 1999 when Estonian research libraries started to use INNOPAC. The implementation of this ILS raised the compilation of the Estonian national bibliography to a new qualitative level. MARC 21-format, ISBDs, Anglo-American cataloguing rules (AACR2), UDC, and the Estonian Universal Thesaurus were the standards adopted for cataloguing.

The implementation of INNOPAC lead to a number of development projects, in particular one to achieve retrospective conversion. Building on the experience of other countries, Estonian libraries started the retroconversion of national bibliography data. In 1999, the National Library of Estonia launched the following retroconversion projects: (1) the retrospective conversion of Estonian books published 1945-1991; (2) the re-cataloguing of books in Estonian published 1918-1940; and, (3) the re-cataloguing of Estonian periodicals published 1945-1993.

Anne Ainz from the National Library of Estonia spoke about the project to re-catalogue books in Estonian published between 1918-1940. The main reason for re-cataloguing these publications was the fact that national bibliographies covering this period are incomplete, due to insufficient legal deposit copies of that time and the change of selection criteria.

Tiina Aasmann from the Estonian Academic Library introduced the programme of the Estonian retrospective national bibliography that was launched in 1978. By now this programme has achieved its basic goal to register all Estonian-language printed works. The compilation of the bibliography of foreign-language books published in Estonia until 1940 and of books related to Estonia is unfinished. The major part of the retrospective national bibliography entries has been converted into the electronic catalogue ESTER of the ELNET Consortium.

Olga Kuliš from the National Library of Russia discussed the impact of new technology on the compilation of the national bibliography, and the advent of new opportunities for co-operation. Ms. Kuliš indicated that in the new political environment, the Russian national bibliography is not considered to be the state bibliography. It is based on the language principle of the Russian book without boundaries rather than on the territorial principle. Her presentation provided an impressive overview of National Library of Russia's role within the Consortium of European Research Libraries (CERL). Taking into account CERL's primary objective to record all books printed in Europe during the hand-press period (i.e. before 1830), the National Library of Russia started to prepare a database of *Russian Civil Press Books of the 18<sup>th</sup> Century in the Collection of the National Library of Russia* database. Ms. Kuliš also described the

compilation of the *Union Catalogue of Russian Books of the Period from 1918 to 1926*, which contained information about the collections of 150 libraries (of which about 100 were foreign).

On the whole the national bibliography in Russia is a fairly flexible system which is structured not only from the centre downward to the regions, but also from the regions upward. In recent years, provincial research libraries have been active in collecting local publications. When a regional library sends information about books published during the first nine post-revolutionary years to the National Library for the union catalogue, they usually combine the information about collections of their libraries with the information about the university library of their city. Ms. Kuliš pointed out that during the 1950s-1980s, the national bibliography was fairly rigidly regulated -- principles of selection were often ideologically motivated and the work was strictly subordinate to the centre. But, continuous technological modernisation of libraries has contributed to development of the concept of a more dynamic national bibliography.

Unni Knutsen's summary of a study of the bibliographic recording of Norwegian legal deposit material and the Norwegian national bibliography was of great interest. This study, carried out by Barbara Bell, resulted in a report that contained 25 recommendations. On the issue of the scope of the national bibliography, the report suggested an expansion to include films, video recordings, as well as elementary and secondary school textbooks. The report concluded that broadcasting material, pamphlets, photographs, posters, and the bulk of the electronic material on the Internet are not part of the national bibliography. It recommended that the national bibliography should provide references to material not included. I believe that these suggestions form the basis for the compiling a truly effective national bibliography.

Discussing the scope of the national bibliography, Esko Häkli from the National Library of Finland pointed out that electronic publishing would change the selection of the objects to be recorded. The traditional distinction between books, periodicals, and articles will lose its meaning in that the primary unit will no longer be a book with chapters or a journal volume with articles. Instead, the primary unit will be a chapter or an article, which needs to be recorded in such a way that it can be accessed easily. In Finland, a separate database (ARTO) is maintained as an index to Finnish periodicals, but it is not considered as part of the national bibliography. It is not part of the Estonian or Norwegian national bibliographies either, but belongs to the Latvian national bibliography. But as Unni Knutsen indicated, there has been uncertainty about including the indexing of periodical articles in the Norwegian national bibliography. Related discussions were held four years ago between Estonian research libraries as well. The situation has been resolved by the involvement of seven Estonian research libraries in the creation of an article database that is freely available through the electronic catalogue ESTER.

Though the legal deposit act is considered to be a basis for the compilation of the national bibliography, some countries have begun to include records for publications even though they are not yet authorised. Sinimarja Ojonen from the Helsinki University Library reported about cataloguing online serials into the Finnish national bibliography. She introduced the project EVA (*Acquisition and Archiving of Electronic Network Publications*) that is supervised by the Helsinki University Library. This initiative touches upon the basic question of the cataloguing policy concerning Internet resources: should we begin to catalogue domestic online publications in the national bibliography even though they are not covered by legal deposit? Of the test material, 540 serial-like titles, 155 bibliographic records were included into the national bibliography. They were selected according to the following criteria: (1) The serial must include full text articles. (2) The articles must have informational value and the serial have professional editing. And, (3) the serial much archive its articles. Sinimarja Ojonen expressed the view that in cataloguing online resources -- especially of the integrating type -- the emphasis should be on access instead of description.

In 2000, the National Library of Estonia launched the project ERICA (*Estonian Resources on the Internet: Cataloguing and Archiving*). The central aim of this project is to create methods and tools to collect, register, and archive Estonian Internet publications to establish conditions for their long-term preservation. Development of selection criteria for such publications mainly proceeded from the criteria used for traditional publications. Presently, about 300 online periodicals have been selected, and about 100 have been registered in the Estonian national bibliography.

Gunilla Jonsson discussed co-operation between libraries and publishers, and publishing trends, emphasising the problems connected with e-books. E-books can be treated much like paper books; certainly they belong to the publishing output of a country and should be included in the national bibliography. The National Library of Sweden has started to collaborate with e-book publishers, taking on the responsibility of archiving their electronic books and providing readers with access to them via the Library's terminals. Publishers have proved interested in including their products in the national bibliography (that is, in the *Libris* database).

The more the publishing industry embraces the electronic environment, the more essential is co-operation between publishers and national libraries. Silvi Metsar from the National Library of Estonia reviewed the publishing within Estonia during the 1990s. She highlighted three distinct periods: (1) political breakthrough (1987-1991), (2) foundation of the basis for the restored Estonian Republic and the introduction of radical economic reforms (1991-1994); and, (3) economic and cultural stabilisation (1994-1998). In 1997, about 3500 titles appeared in Estonia. Thus, measured by book production, it ranked fourth after Iceland, Finland, and Denmark. E-publication is only beginning to develop in Estonia, and legislative problems concerning the harmonisation of copyright acts of different countries need to be solved.

The cataloguing of online publications and the future of cataloguing in general was thoroughly discussed by Eeva Murtomaa from the Helsinki University Library. She stressed two key words - *harmonisation* and *integration* - which were specially emphasised at the last IFLA conference. From a cataloguing point of view this means that cataloguing standards, formats, and rules for different materials will be harmonised and integrated with each other. In the Web environment, the cataloguer is more and more responsible for the quality of the service. The quality of the library catalogue depends very much on the selectivity and relevant predetermination skills of the librarians.

### **The Production and Preservation of National Bibliographic Data**

Unni Knutsen reported that the Oslo Division of the National Library of Norway has spent much time analysing the *Recommendations of the International Conference on National Bibliographic Services (ICNBS)*, an exercise which has occasioned a general overview of their bibliographic situation. One recommendation stresses the need to preserve the national bibliography. In Norway, the annual bibliography and list of new titles are the only remaining printed products. The CD-ROM version of the bibliography was stopped by the mid-2000. But, all national bibliographic databases have been on the Internet for years. The Bell report mentioned above suggested that annual printed issue should appear in print form as long as it is economically viable. This format meets the needs of users with no electronic access while serving as a preservation copy of the bibliographic records for the specified period. Norway is working out arrangements to enable preservation of its databases.

Ene Loddes from the National Library of Estonia provided information about the organisation of publications comprising the Estonian national bibliography. Currently, the national bibliography in printed form appears in the following series: *Books, Periodicals, Music and Official Publications*. Taking into account Estonian users, this practice should be certainly continued, at least for awhile. Printed publications of the current national bibliography are compiled on the basis of the records entered into the union catalogue. Thus, the national bibliographic database is an integral part of the Estonian research libraries'

union catalogue which can be accessed the Web-catalogue ESTER (<http://helios.nlib.ee>). In the near future, the Estonian national bibliographic database will be made accessible as an independent online database.

Gunilla Jonsson discussed the Swedish case where records used to produce the printed national bibliography are stored in the same union database as are records for all sorts of library collections as well as of Swedish non-commercial publications that do not appear in the printed national bibliography.

Tomas Lidman from the National Library of Sweden approvingly noted in his conference address: "Due to the new technology used in Finland the bibliography can be accessed only via the Internet. In Sweden we still publish in the ordinary way but we intend to follow the Finnish example soon."

### **Conclusion**

In drawing conclusions from the Conference, it was recognised unanimously that the changing information environment has essentially influenced the concept of the national bibliography. A number of legal problems need to be solved. Above all, many countries face the need to complete their Legal Deposit Acts. Gunilla Jonsson's statement summarises an idea expressed by several speakers: "We live in a time when the information landscape is changing more rapidly than ever before in history. One thing, however, remains similar to the take off of national bibliographies in the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, libraries and publishers must co-operate."

I hope that this report has succeeded in its goal of sharing the ideas that were presented in Tallinn last year. For further information regarding the conference, please visit the Web site of the National Library of Estonia at the following address: <http://www.nlib.ee>.