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Bibliographic control in the Nordic countries

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Abstract:

The Nordic countries all carry out endeavours to achieve bibliographic control. This paper gives the status of legal deposit legislation and national bibliographies, with a specific focus on remote electronic resources. The use of international standards in the Nordic library community is described as well as specific projects or cooperation areas.

Why talk about the Nordic countries?

I will start my paper by saying a few words about the geographic area that is covered by my paper and why we consider it to constitute a unity. The Nordic countries include Scandinavia (Denmark, Sweden, Norway), Iceland and Finland. In addition there are three autonomous territories: Greenland (Denmark), the Faroe Islands (Denmark) and Åland (Finland) as well as Svalbard, which is under Norwegian sovereignty. The total population is approaching 25 million people, roughly divided as follows: Denmark 5,3 million, Sweden 9 million, Norway 4,6 million, Iceland 300 000, Finland (including Åland) 5,2 million, Greenland 60.000 and Faraoe Islands 50 000. The Nordic countries are connected by heritage, language and culture. The Vikings founded the islands in the west, which means that we at one point spoke the same language, Old Norse. An exception is Finnish, which belongs to the Finno-Ugric language family.

From the Viking age and up to present we have been rulers of or been ruled by each other. Together with extensive trade links and migration of people this explains why we today (to a certain extent) are able to understand each other's languages, and probably also why we have developed similar societies and political systems.

There is an indigenous Inuit population in Greenland and Sámi populations are found in Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia. The Sámi populations constitute a minority and have a limited political autonomy in the respective countries. Their Sámi Parliaments have restricted political power. During the last few decades we have had an increased level of immigration. The Nordic population is therefore becoming more and more diversified.

Nordic cooperation

What we today refer to as the particular Nordic cooperation in cultural, political and social life is, however, a fairly recent phenomenon. In its early years it was mainly connected to academia, civic organisations and various forms of public information campaigns. In particular after the Second World War it developed into deeper political, economic and cultural integration. The main pillar of the Nordic integration has always been that people have been able to move freely across borders to work and live in the area.

The five Nordic countries are members of the Nordic Council, whereas the autonomous territories Åland, Greenland and Faroe Islands are associated members. The Council was formed in 1952 and is a forum for inter-parliamentary co-operation. The members of the council are members of and elected by the national parliaments. The Council holds ordinary annual sessions and also arranges so-called theme sessions for comprehensive treatment of selected issues. Closely connected is also the Nordic Council of Ministers, which serves as the forum for Nordic governmental co-operation. The different ministers – including the prime ministers - meet regularly. The Council does not have any formal power, but each government has to implement the decisions made during the sessions. Military cooperation is not included, but issues such as labour market and working environment, agriculture, energy, industry/trade, fisheries, transport, IT, research, education, integration, prevention of drug abuse, legislation, consumer affairs and culture are discussed. The funding of projects and prize awards stimulates Nordic cooperation and cultural exchange. An example of a project that has received funding is the Nordic union catalogue of serials (NOSP), which was started as a NORDINFO project. This union catalogue now also includes the Baltic area. There has been a lot of cooperation with the Nordic/Baltic area in recent years.

The library cooperation in the Nordic countries has its roots in the strong human and cultural bonds that exist. These transcend politics. In the NORON forum the directors of the Nordic state and national libraries exchange information and discuss matters of mutual interest. The national library associations also work closely together. An example of a Nordic library association is the Nordic Federation of Research Libraries (NVBF). The main objective of this federation is to strengthen the cooperation between research libraries through joint meetings, conferences and other activities. There are also numerous examples of both formal and informal cooperation and contact between individual libraries or regions. Special mention could be made of the coordination efforts of the Sámi bibliographies of Norway, Sweden and Finland.

Bibliographic control

Several definitions of the concept of Bibliographic control exist. One definition that I came across on the Internet simply states that bibliographic control is: “The systematic identification of recorded information and the mechanism for gaining subsequent access to such information”.

The Bibliography Section of IFLA where I am currently a member once made the following definition that will serve as a guideline for my paper: ”Bibliographic control requires the development and maintenance of a system of descriptions of documents that are arranged according to accepted standards within cataloguing, indexing and classification, in order to ensure the identification, retrieval of and access to the documents”.

The ultimate aim of the bibliographic community is Universal Bibliographic Control. This can only be achieved if every country collects, records and makes the documents produced within its borders available to present and future users.

I will look into how the Nordic countries stand in relation to the various components that make up bibliographic control and also how they meet some of the recommendations from the International Conference on National Bibliographic Services (ICNBS) in Copenhagen (1997). These recommendations serve as the main guideline for national bibliographies worldwide. They clearly state that national bibliographic control is a prerequisite for Universal Bibliographic Control. In most countries legal deposit legislation serve as the major instrument for ensuring that published documents in all formats are collected, whereas the national bibliographies are the main tools for ensuring the recording of the national heritage. This is also the case in the Nordic countries.

How is the bibliographic work organized in the Nordic countries?

The recommendations from the ICNBS state that the overall responsibility for co-ordination and implementation of standards should rest with the national bibliographic agency. In Denmark the overall responsibility for the national bibliography as well as for the strategic issues related to the development of catalogues, the MARC-format and bibliographic standards lies with the Danish National Library Authority. This is partly due to the fact that the responsibility for the national bibliography is split between the Royal Library and the Danish Bibliographic Centre. In Sweden the committees on classification and cataloguing are organized under The Swedish Library Association. The committee on cataloguing is responsible for developing and maintaining cataloguing rules and bibliographic formats for printed and electronic media whereas the committee on classification is responsible for the maintenance of the classification system for Swedish libraries (SAB). In Norway the national steering committees for cataloguing and classification and indexing are organized under the National Library. The national steering committee for cataloguing standards and guidelines in Finland is organized under Helsinki University Library/the National Library of Finland whereas the committee responsible for the classification system that is used mainly by the public libraries (YKL) works under the authorization of the Ministry of Education. In Iceland there are two bibliographic committees, one for cataloguing rules and one for indexing. Both work on behalf of the Icelandic Library Consortium, but in close cooperation with the National Library.

Even though organized in different ways, all countries make sure that experts from different sectors of the library community participate and influence the development of standards and tools.

Legal deposit legislation

According to the ICNBS recommendations all countries should “examine existing deposit legislation and consider its provisions in relation to present and future requirements” (paragraph 1). This is based on the knowledge that many countries have old legal deposit acts that do not include “newer” material such as electronic resources. The recommendations also state that where necessary, existing legislation should be revised.

Legal deposit in Norway is regulated by the Act relating to the Legal Deposit of Generally Available Documents, No. 32 of 9 June 1989. The law came into force 1 July 1990 and has not been revised since. The law is comprehensive and includes broadcasting and television material, films and videos as well as remote and fixed electronic material. A planned revision will probably include specifications regarding legal deposit of electronic resources.

Special mention should be made of Svalbard, which is situated in the Arctic Ocean north of mainland Europe. By the terms of the Svalbard Treaty of 1920, international diplomacy recognized Norwegian sovereignty over the islands. According to the legal deposit act the King may determine that the act shall also apply to Svalbard and the Norwegian part of the continental shelf.

The Finnish Legal Deposit Act (420/1980) and Ordinance (774/1980) was passed in 1981 and has not been revised since. It does not include any type of electronic resources. Even so, Finland has bibliographic control of electronic material. In the proposal for a new Legal Deposit Act (dated March 31, 2000) both fixed and remote electronic resources as well as radio and television material will be included.

Åland is an autonomous territory, but publishers operating in Åland have the same obligation as all other publishers to comply with the Finnish legal deposit legislation.

Sweden’s latest Legal Deposit Act was passed in 1993 and revised in 1995 (SFS 1993:1392 and SFS 1995:1375). It includes fixed, but not remote electronic resources. Even though there is yet no legal deposit of electronic resources in Sweden, the Royal Library tries, and generally succeeds in, obtaining as much of the e-material as possible through agreements with e-book and e-journal publishers. A revision is expected within the next few years.

In Iceland the Law of Legal Deposit to Institutions was passed in 2002 and came into force in 2003. It includes both remote and fixed resources.

Denmark has the newest law. It was passed in December 2004 and came into effect July 1 2005. It replaces Lov nr. 423 af 10. juni 1997 om pligtanflevering af udgivne værker. The new act allows the Royal Library and the State and University Library in Århus to harvest materials made public on the Danish Internet domain and materials aimed at a Danish audience and made public on other domains. It also includes Danish radio and television programmes by Danish radio and television broadcasting companies or programmes aimed at a Danish audience broadcasted by companies domiciled outside Denmark.

The Danish legal deposit act does not include Greenland and the Faroe Islands. In the Faroe Islands printers have a statutory obligation to give the National Library of the Faroe Islands copies of all printed matter. Nunatta Atuagaateqarfia, Groenlandica (Greenland's National and Research Library) has the responsibility of gathering and recording documents published in the island according to the Order of 15 October 1979 on the Library System, passed by the Greenland Home Rule Parliament. The law only deals with printed material, but the library also collects videos, CDs and DVDs produced in Greenland.

The recording of the entire national output is a breathtaking task that implies that the national library/national bibliographic agency must have comprehensive resources. Quite often the responsibility for legal deposit is shared with other institutions. This is also the case in the Nordic countries:

- Films produced for public showing is the responsibility of the Danish Film Institute
- The National Film Archive of Iceland is responsible for collecting films and radio and television programmes
- The Norwegian Film Institute is the depository for films and videos.
- According to the Finnish proposal the Finnish Film Archive will have the responsibility for legal deposit and archiving of electronic motion pictures
- The Swedish legal deposit is shared with the National Archive of Recorded Sound and Moving Images

As can be seen from the description above the Nordic countries have fairly new legal deposit legislation and/or are working on revisions. Material presently not included in the legislation is included under bibliographic control in apprehension of law revision.

The Nordic national bibliographies

The national library normally has the responsibility for compiling the national bibliography. This is, however, not always the case. In Denmark the Danish Bibliographic Centre is responsible for the compilation of the national bibliography of books, visual, sound, remote and fixed electronic resources and sound recordings whereas the Royal Library produces the national bibliography of serials, printed music and maps.

The remaining national libraries hold the responsibility for compiling the national bibliographies in their respective countries. The responsibility of recording films, and partly audio and broadcasting is shared with other institutions.

As mentioned earlier the Danish legal deposit act does not include the Faroe Islands or Greenland. The National Library of the Faroe Islands and Greenland are both responsible for collecting and recording material published in their areas. No specific national bibliography is produced in Greenland, but the Danish Bibliographic Centre and the Royal Library cooperate in producing a printed booklist that contains material from Greenland. This annual publication is issued with the Danish national bibliography Remote electronic resources have been collected in the Indoreg project. The National Library of the Faroe Islands produces the national bibliography – Føroyskur bókalisti.

The way the national bibliographic work is organized in the Nordic countries is in line with the recommendations of the ICNBS conference. These state that the national libraries and national bibliographic agencies may work co-operatively with other agencies.

Content

Generally speaking the national bibliographies in the Nordic countries are quite comprehensive in their coverage. The bibliographies contain e.g. monographic material, serials and other continuing resources, indexing of periodicals, maps, music scores and sound recordings. Denmark stopped recording material about the country published abroad in 1999. Apart from Denmark it is worth noticing that all other Nordic countries including Faroe Islands and Greenland collect and record documents published abroad by national authors and material about the country, its inhabitants or of national interest.

Electronic resources

As mentioned earlier not all of the current legal deposit legislation includes electronic resources. Still the five countries have bibliographic control of the material.

The similarity in the way the national libraries handle the electronic material is partly due to the fact that the Nordic national libraries have formed a forum - The Nordic Web Archive - for coordination and the exchange of experience as well as the development of tools in the field of harvesting and archiving web documents. This project has partly received funding from NORDINFO. The approach of the national libraries is to harvest the entire national domain name space. In addition some countries will collect selected resources within the national domain name space or resources outside (such as .com, .org) or have documents deposited by the publishers. The frequency of harvesting is from 1 to 4 times per year. Some material such as newspapers is downloaded daily, other specific material on a regular basis.

In all five Nordic countries the main responsibility for harvesting the web rest with the national libraries. There are, however, some differences in the way the work is organized. In Iceland the National and University Library of Iceland share the archiving with the National Film Archive. In Denmark the Royal Library and the State and University Library in Århus cooperate closely. In Sweden and Norway the national libraries are the only responsible agencies. The Finnish legal deposit act is pending, so current archiving is experimental. According to the draft the Helsinki University Library/The National Library of Finland will share the responsibility of legal deposit and harvesting of electronic resources with the Finnish Film Archive. The Faroe Islands and Greenland do not harvest remote electronic resources.

In terms of bibliographic description most documents will not catalogued at all but left to be retrieved by search engines. All agencies give bibliographic description to both fixed (e.g. CD-ROMs) and remote electronic resources. All also include some electronic material in the national bibliographies. The creation of a full standard catalogue records is the normal procedure for material that is included in the national bibliographies. The Royal Library in Denmark report creating low level cataloguing data for material not included in the national bibliography. Iceland is the country that is most restrictive in terms of cataloguing and inclusion in the national bibliography; only e-journals and fixed electronic resources are recorded. Norway is the country that includes most document types in the national bibliography, but since permanent harvesting only started this year the selection criteria will be evaluated in the course of 2005. The remote electronic material included in the national bibliographies in Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway include e.g. monographs, research reports, e-books, serials, e-journals, maps and fixed electronic resources.

The selection criteria for fixed electronic resources seem to be the same as for printed material. In Finland selection criteria for electronic resources are presently being prepared. In Denmark a working group under the National Library Authority will issue a report containing various models for automatic and/or manual description of remote electronic resources. Iceland is in a similar situation where a working group under the consortium of Icelandic libraries dealing with bibliographic description of electronic resources has been established. Sweden has not yet developed selection criteria for remote electronic resources.

The electronic material that is included in the national bibliography will also appear in the OPAC of the national library/national bibliographic agency. Only Norway does not include the material in the union catalogue.

According to the ICNBS recommendations the national bibliographies should include the current national output (paragraph 4). In practice no national bibliography could possibly achieve this. The ideal is therefore modified by stating, "... when necessary, selection criteria should be defined and published by the national bibliographic agency".

In my opinion the Nordic national bibliographies are quite comprehensive in terms of coverage. It is not surprising that the selection criteria for the inclusion of remote electronic resources are not fully developed yet. This is also an issue that the Bibliography Section of IFLA is currently involved in. The section conducted a survey on inclusion of electronic resources in national bibliographies earlier this year. I have partly based my description above on the reporting of the national libraries. The results of the survey and the work on guidelines will be presented at this IFLA conference (meeting 133).

The format of the national bibliographies

Only a few years ago the national bibliography was in printed form in addition to a web format. The era of print is now close to an end in the Nordic countries.

International standards used

The recommendations from the ICNBS conference have devoted five paragraphs to international standards.

Paragraph 11 states that the national bibliographic agencies should adopt national and international standards and principles for cataloguing, identification systems such as ISBN and ISSN, script conversion, authority control, classification schemes, metadata and permanent naming of digital objects

They further state that "The national bibliographic agency should take a lead in the updating and maintenance of national and international standards and principles and in developing all the bibliographic tools categorized under 11 above, including projects to develop and promote standards, guidelines and methods for authority control to facilitate the international exchange of authority data"(paragraph 13)

"Urgent attention at national and international levels should be paid to ensuring compatibility, convertibility and accessibility among the bibliographic exchange formats of the library, information and publishing communities, taking care that all elements are identified and none lost in the conversion process" (paragraph 14)

Cataloguing

In Iceland cataloguing is done according AACR and ISBDs. A short version of AACR2 has been translated into Icelandic, so has ISBN(M).

The Finnish cataloguing rules “Suomalaiset luettelointisäännöt” include several ISBDs translated into Finnish and Guidelines for the application of the ISBDs to the description of Component Parts. The part of AACR2 concerning headings, uniform titles and references is also incorporated in the national rules. Where the main entry in AACR2 is an entry never used before or very unfamiliar to Finnish cataloguers (e.g. spirits or ghosts as authors) title will be main entry.

The Danish cataloguing rules (Katalogiseringsregler og bibliografisk standard for danske biblioteker) are based on AACR2. The second edition from 1998 is a revision aiming at clarifying the relationship between cataloguing and access points. The concept of main entry no longer exists and there is no longer a restriction on the number of entry elements. In connection with cataloguing for the national bibliography the alternative “rule of three” is used restricting the number of entries. The Faroe Islands and Greenland follow the same rules, possibly with some adjustments.

The Swedish (Katalogiseringsregler för svenska bibliotek) and the Norwegian cataloguing rules (Katalogiseringsregler) are also based on AACR2.

Although there is a strong focus on the need for standardization and international exchange of data in the Nordic countries, the rules are generally speaking adjusted somewhat to fit the national needs. This especially applies to the recording of names. Rules that for one reason or another do not apply are removed, adjusted or replaced. ISO, LC and/or national standards are used for abbreviations, transliteration etc. As earlier mentioned the national cataloguing committees with experts from different sectors of the library community make sure that the rules are continually updated and revised. All libraries use the national cataloguing rules.

All countries are involved in the evolvement of Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records (FRBR) and attempts at FRBRizing the catalogues take place. The Nordic countries also follow the international revision work in terms of cataloguing codes closely.

Authority files

Generally speaking most of the library systems have their own internal authority control which means that most of the Nordic bibliographic data have been subject to authority control.

Norway does not have a national authority file as such, but all national bibliographic records undergo bibliographic control in the shared library system BIBSYS. In 2004 the Norwegian Archive, Library and Museum Authority granted funds to develop a national authority file for names of persons and institutions. The work is still in its very early stages.

The Norwegian Library Bureau has developed an authority file of names and subject headings. Most public libraries receive these data.

The Royal Library of Sweden has developed “Svenska ämnesord” (the Swedish Subject Headings System) based on LCSH. “Svenska ämnesord” is freely available on the Internet and can be used by all libraries. The national bibliographic records undergo authority control.

Iceland has invested in a new library automation system (Aleph 500 from ExLibris). In this connection the libraries have formed The Icelandic Library Consortium. The largest libraries are already participating and the conversion of data as more and more libraries join is a huge ongoing project. Eventually all or almost all of Iceland's 400 libraries will join Gegnir. This will open new dimensions for cooperation in the field of authority control. The general thesaurus in Iceland (Kerfisbundinn efnisordalykill fyrir bókasöfn og upplýsingamidstöðvar) is mostly used by public and school libraries but will be developed to suit also academic and special libraries.

In Denmark there is comprehensive authority control (names, subjects, titles) in the national library system Danbib. The national bibliographic records undergo authority control. The Faroe Islands have authority control of e.g. names and subjects.

The national library maintains the Finnish General Thesaurus (YSA) and its Swedish version Allärs (see <http://vesa.lib.helsinki.fi/>) YSA is used by the public libraries and most scientific and research libraries in addition to the national bibliography (Fennica). There are also name authority files for Fennica which means that the national bibliographic records undergo authority control.

Classification and indexing

In Iceland and Norway the system most widely used is Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC). An Icelandic translation of the abridged edition 13 was published in 2002. The Norwegian DDC was published the same year as the Icelandic. The Norwegian edition (DDK5) is a strange bird: an intermediary edition based on literary warrant in Norwegian libraries. It is mainly an abbreviation of DDC21, but also partly based on the abridged edition 13. Some research libraries in the two countries will use other systems e.g. Universal Decimal Classification (UDC) or National Library of Medicine Classification (NLM).

Sweden has developed The Swedish Classification System (Klassifikationssystem för svenska bibliotek (SAB-systemet)). The system is used by most Swedish libraries including the Royal Library and even by some Swedish public libraries in Finland (mainly Åland). The Royal library also uses DDC for continuing resources with ISSN. A preliminary study for considering using the Dewey Decimal Classification system and in the long run abandon the Swedish Classification System is on its way.

Finland and Denmark have classification systems originally based on the Dewey Decimal Classification system. Decimalklassedeling (DK) was first introduced in Denmark in 1915. The current version - DK5 - is very much a national system. It is used by the Royal Library, the national bibliography and by the public libraries. Some research libraries use the system as well as libraries in the Faroe Islands, Greenland and even Reykjavik City Library in Iceland. The Finnish application of Dewey Decimal Classification is called the Finnish Public Libraries Classification System (PLC, YKL, KAB). There is a Finnish, Swedish and English version at <http://ykl.kirjastot.fi/>. The first edition was issued in 1925 and it now differs very much from DDC. As the name indicates it is used by public libraries (except Helsinki City Library that has its own system and some Swedish libraries that use SAB). Most scientific libraries in Finland use UDC. The national bibliography uses UDC and the Finnish Public Libraries Classification System. There is no national UDC committee in Finland nowadays and UDC is not maintained in Finnish anymore. The latest version of UDC in Finnish was issued in the late 1980's.

Concerning indexing, some of the systems have been described under the paragraph on authority control. Apart from these there are numerous thesauri and indexing systems. In Finland many thesauri are bilingual (Finnish-English or Finnish-Swedish). The Nordic libraries also use international thesauri like MESH.

MARC

All Nordic countries developed a national MARC-format in the early days of library automation. In connection with the investment in new library system software Finland, Sweden and Iceland started applying MARC21. Finland decided to adjust their national MARC-format – FINMARC – to MARC21 and developed what was called MARC-21-Fin. There are now plans to change the format entirely to MARC21.

Norway and Denmark have both quite recently evaluated whether they should move to MARC21. The arguments in two reports are remarkably similar. By moving to MARC21 the countries would be using a mainstream tool more detailed and in most respects more sophisticated than the existing formats. One concern is that present MARC-formats are more adjusted to the national cataloguing rules and have some special features that are valuable to e.g. public and music libraries. There is reason to believe that cataloguing in MARC21 will be more expensive than in the national formats. Other major concerns are the fact that there will be changes in MARC21 as a result of current catalogue revision of AACR and the general FRBR-ization of catalogues. This has led the Danish Library Authority to conclude that a change to MARC21 will not benefit Danish libraries at present (Projektgruppen vedrørende sammenligning af danMARC2 og MARC21 for Biblioteksstyrelsen 2003). The Danish Bibliographic Centre has developed conversion tables between the two formats.

The report (unpublished) of the Norwegian Committee on Cataloguing has been sent to the steering group of the programme the Norwegian Digital Library (<http://www.norskdigitalbibliotek.no/englishindex.html>). To my knowledge no final decision has been made yet, but the recommendations are that MARC21 with Norwegian adjustments should be used as the exchange format and that conversion tables between NORMARC and MARC21 should be developed. One still depicts that NORMARC will be used as a format for cataloguing and storage within the library systems.

In addition to the main formats I have described here, other MARC-formats (subsets or variations of national formats) may exist within the countries.

Identification systems

The Nordic countries use a variety of identification systems such as ISBN, ISSN, ISMN, URL, PURL, NBN (National Bibliography Number) and URN (Uniform Resource Name).

In Denmark the Danish bibliographic Centre hosts an ISBN-office, the Royal Library the ISMN and ISSN agencies. The Finnish, Swedish and Norwegian national libraries host ISBN, ISSN and ISMN agencies. Iceland has ISBN and ISSN agencies; the Faroe Islands an ISBN office. The ISSN office at the Royal Library acts on behalf of the Faroe Islands. Publishers from Greenland are also served from Denmark.

Metadata

The Danish Bibliographic Centre has used Dublin Core (DC) in connection with experiments. The Helsinki University Library/the National Library of Finland uses Dublin Core in their digital objects management system (ENCompass DOMS). The National Library of Sweden

has agreements with several publishers for automatic delivery of publications and their metadata (DC). The library is currently testing a metadata generator and an URN resolution service. The National Library of Norway receives metadata on broadcasting from the Norwegian Broadcasting Corporation.

The use and creation of metadata is of course far from restricted to the national libraries. Institutions such as NetLab at Lund University Library or BIBSYS (a shared library system for research and university libraries in Norway) have contributed in the field. Special mention should be made to the Nordic Metadata project. During its first stage it created basic elements of a metadata production and utilization system based on the Dublin Core Metadata Element Set. It also produced other metadata tools, such as a URN generator (plus user guide). In the second stage of the project a Dublin Core to MARC converter was a central element as well as the enhancement of existing Dublin Core specifications. The project was funded by NORDINFO.

Some concluding remarks

In the Nordic countries there are some major shared library systems such as Gegnir (Iceland) (<http://www.gegnir.is/F>), LIBRIS (Sweden) (<http://websok.libris.kb.se/websearch/form>) and DanBib (Denmark) http://www.dbc.dk/top/top_danbib_eng.html . Shared systems have made cataloguing more efficient and have created awareness on the need for standardization and cooperative effort. The data from companies such as the Norwegian Library Bureau or Bibliotekstjänst have also played a role in the standardization in bibliographic data. Another example of cooperation and standardization is the Faroe Islands where the National Library is responsible for purchasing and cataloguing books for most of the public and school libraries. The trend is to catalogue from scratch as little as possible and reuse what others have already created.

In terms of retrospective conversion many major libraries e.g. university libraries, major public libraries and the national libraries have been converting their card catalogues into machine-readable form. Even though some of the conversion programmes are really impressive (e.g. the conversion of the national bibliography of Finland) there is still work to be done...

Almost all library catalogues in the Nordic countries appear on the Internet. There is a trend to link catalogues together on the web to form regional catalogues. The Danish union catalogue DanBib is available for all citizens for searching and obtaining material (<http://bibliotek.dk/>). Sweden has created a similar service (<http://bibliotek.se/index.html>). Even the union catalogues have been linked in a project called SVUC (Scandinavian Virtual Union Catalogue) (<http://www.lib.helsinki.fi/svuc/>).

In this paper I have sought to give an overview of bibliographic control in the Nordic countries. The countries, though similar in many ways, also have clear differences, and it is not easy (or recommendable) to generalize too much. As always some aspects could have been added to shed more light on Nordic cooperation and bibliographic control. Still I hope my paper leaves the impression that while we live in the outskirts of Europe we want to be more centralized in terms of bibliographic control!

Note: In compiling this paper I have received invaluable help from Nordic colleagues, and would like to thank them all. Nevertheless, the author takes full responsibility for the content of the paper.

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