

Towards a New Library System

Poster handout,
IFLA WLIC 2012, Helsinki

Tommi Jauhiainen

The National Library of Finland
tommi.jauhiainen@helsinki.fi

Sinikka Luokkanen

HAMK University of Applied Sciences
sinikka.luokkanen@hamk.fi

Lassi Lager

The National Library of Finland
lassi.lager@helsinki.fi

Jarmo Saarti

University of Eastern Finland
jarmo.saarti@uef.fi

Abstract

Finnish libraries are using different integrated library systems. Higher education libraries funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture are using the same ILS in three different installations on the same hardware. Special and public libraries are using several different systems. Many of these library systems are reaching their end-of-life phase. During the spring and summer of 2011 all the Finnish library sectors together with the National Library of Finland formed a joint committee in order to assess the feasibility of a new library system entirety, possibly an open source solution that would suit the needs of all the different types of libraries.

Introduction

Finnish libraries have been active in implementing modern library technologies (Saarti 2006 and Tuominen & Saarti 2012; see also Fig. 1). The modern era of library automation started in the 1970s when some of the largest public libraries started to implement library automation in order to manage lending of library materials. At the same time, university and some special libraries started to utilize digital technologies, especially in information searching.

The 1980's and 1990's saw the birth of online services. Libraries started to utilize internet technologies both in disseminating their resources and in providing internet access to the general public. During the 1990's, some of the most important Finnish centralized services were inaugurated.

First off-line loaning systems	Online loaning systems	Integrated library systems and database searching	Birth of the national library database services	Internet and the development of the digital library	Outsourcing, open access, open source, joint systems
The end of the 1970's	The beg. of the 1980's	The end of the 1980's	The beginning of the 1990's	The end of the 1990's	The beginning of the 2000's

Fig 1. Milestones in information technology between 1970 and 2000 (updated from Saarti 2006).

The most recent trend in Finnish library automation are joint library systems. These have been most extensively developed within the higher education libraries that have a joint library automation system. At the present, the planning of the acquisition of a new library system has started; the concept is to try to establish a joint system with common databases for all the libraries in all sectors willing to collaborate in this effort.

The aims of the new library automation system (UKJ) and enterprise architecture method

The aim of the process is to assess the feasibility of a library system entirety for all types of libraries in Finland. In the libraries in different library sectors in the daily routines, there are different traditions, domains of expertise, and social language. This will be the first case in Finland when representatives from different library sectors together formulate the hard core aims of the library system.

The project plan will specify the following:

- The necessary joint guidelines and culture (e.g., principles for lending and cataloguing)
- Products and functions based on library systems
- The opportunities and needs of joint databases (bibliographic, collections, customer and similar databases)
- Joint sections and tailored sections
- Standards and interfaces
- A risk analysis
- A financing solution and a cost-benefit analysis
- An administrative model and legal issues
- A timetable (for the first implementation projects for the new system in 2014)

The new Finnish legislation, passed in 2011, drives towards the interoperability of information systems that are funded by the government. To be in line with the legislation the committee decided to use enterprise architecture as a method describing the functionalities of the new library system. The enterprise architecture itself is a method for describing the operational processes of an organisation, information used, systems and produced services as one functional entirety. The decision to use enterprise architecture leads to a challenging learning process to almost all participants.

There are two parallel project entireties in Finland that have an influence in the new library system planning. First, The National Digital Library (www.kdk.fi/en/) is a national project set up and financed by the Ministry of Education and Culture. It aims to ensure that electronic materials of Finnish culture and science are managed with high standard, are easily accessed and will be securely preserved for a long period of time. The public interfaces (i.e. OPAC with more functionality) of the current and forthcoming library systems are planned to be the interface implemented in this national project.

Secondly, The National Metadata Repository project (www.nationallibrary.fi/libraries/projects/metadatarepository.html) will create a joint database for

all library sectors in Finland. The Repository will be based on LINDA, the Union Catalogue of Finnish University Libraries, which is maintained by the National Library. The project is managed by the Library Network Services of the National Library and also funded by the Ministry of Education and Culture. This project has an impact to the libraries' resources description processes. Fig. 2 describes the connection between these projects and also some functionalities, interfaces and data repositories linked to these projects.

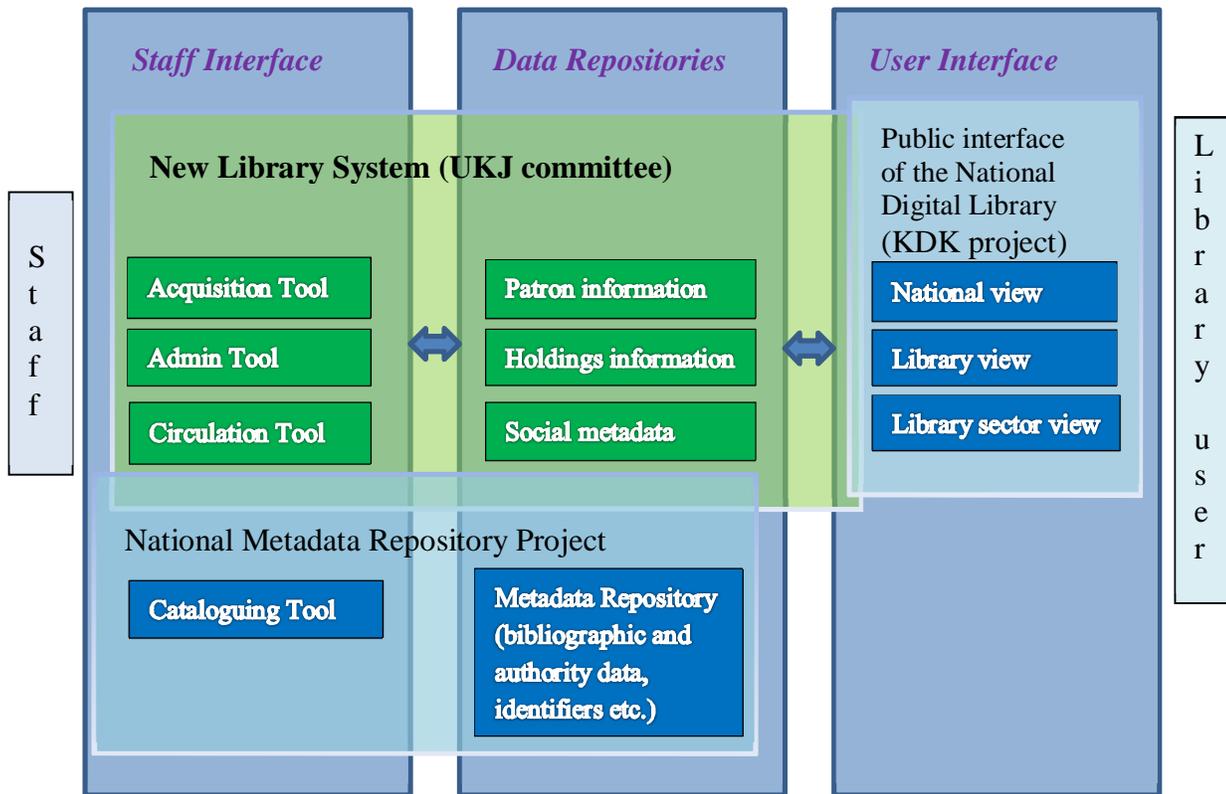


Fig 2. The new library system planning is linked to the National Metadata Repository Project as well as the National Digital Library project.

Collaboration and tools used in the planning

The joint committee decided to keep the assess process as open as possible, from the project point of view enable all librarians to joint, and still hold on to the goal and timetable.

Several working groups were formed from all types of libraries to do the actual hard work. The working methods include wiki-collaboration, email-lists, web meetings, face-to-face meetings and workshops.

The focus areas of the working groups are those traditional ones like resources description, circulation, interlibrary loans, access to electronic resources, acquisition and life cycle surveys of all kind of material (i.e. printed, electronic, monographs and serials), but also co-operation with other systems and resources (i.e. financial, staff and student administration systems).

Timetable and Results

The first phase of the process 2011-2012

- 08-09/2012: deadline for the enterprise architecture descriptions (made by different working groups and lead and compiled by the joint committee)
- 12/2012: deadline for the project plan

The second phase of the process 2013-2014

- Beginning of 2013: primary decisions how to continue.

The result of the first phase is not only the project plan. There will be many librarians who will have a first-hand experience of co-configuration working and learning process.

Time will tell how many libraries and library sectors will continue to the second phase.

References

Saarti, Jarmo (2006). Libraries without walls: information technology in Finnish public libraries from the 1970s to 1990s. *Library history* 22 (1), pp. 33-43.

Tuominen, Kimmo & Saarti, Jarmo (2012). The Finnish library system - open collaboration for an open society. *IFLA Journal* 38 (2), pp. 115-136.

Want to know more?

Check the project wiki site: tinyurl.com/ukj-ifla

... or contact the authors of this poster!

