

COUNTRY REPORT OF THE LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SERVICE OF THE FINNISH ENVIRONMENT INSTITUTE (SYKE)

The Finnish Environment Institute (SYKE) is the national environmental research and development centre of the environmental administration. Research and development in SYKE deals with changes in the environment, cause and effect relationships, means of resolving environmental problems and effects of policy measures. SYKE is the national environmental information centre and provides expert services and takes care of certain national and international statutory tasks. There are 600 persons working in SYKE and 2 000 persons working in the whole environmental administration of Finland.

The library and information service of SYKE is a scientifically specialized library on environmental issues open to everyone and also for outside customers. The library works in close co-operation with the experts of the environmental administration and with other specialized libraries, too. There are 10 people working in the library. We also have a library in the Ministry of Environment. Finland is divided into 13 regional environmental centres and there is a library in each of them.

A new project for SYKE has been as a partner of European environmental research centres.

The other partners are Green World Research Centre in Netherlands, Centre for Ecology and Hydrology in United Kingdom, National Environmental Research Institute in Denmark and Centre for Environmental Research in Germany. Last August the research centres had a meeting at the Finnish Environment Institute. This alliance should, for example, develop and promote common strategies at the institutional level and develop a formal agreement to work together in selective areas.

In the Finnish Environmental Centre we are also experiencing "the sea of change" and those changes impact on the library. At the moment our institute is divided into 13 divisions and the library is situated in the Information and Education Division. From the 1st of January 2002 we will only have four divisions and the library will belong to the Information centre together with technical ADP, electronic publications and network services. I think this change will be very a suitable solution for the library. Other changes in SYKE will include renewing of our Internet web pages and Intranet system as well as our logo and the whole graphic, visual images will be changed. We will also get a new text editing system. A big change will be of course the new currency, Euro. Last year was a very successful period for the library and information service. We have received a new task and the library is now the information portal of the data registers of SYKE. This means that we have to take care of information services of the data registers concerning, for example, water quality and hydrology. Also, if outside users want to get a user licence for the registers, the library takes care of the agreements. We also maintain the network of information providers of the registers. On the whole, our activities have developed together with other network information and knowledge

management tasks in the environment administration. Especially I am very happy about the progress in the libraries of regional environmental centres. At the moment we have a working group whose task is to develop a new strategy for the library and information activities of the environment administration. In the area of electronic journals we have made progress with Elsevier journals. The Finnish Electronic Library, FinELib, is at the moment negotiating an agreement with Elsevier. It seems that from the 1st of January 2002 there will be a new consortium in Finland and we have 1 200 Elsevier journals in our collections. Currently we already have those journals in use because we have a test period in progress.

The environment administration has made an agreement about publishing every fourth year a product concerning the state of the Finnish environment. Thus there has been published a new CD-ROM multimedia called *The Finnish Nature : State of the Environment* in our division. That product has been published in Finnish and in Swedish and it's the result of a project that lasted for four years. The product has been very popular, for example, in schools.

One setback we also have is our library ADP system. We have a common system in the whole environment administration and it's now nearly ten years old. We have fought to get a new tool but have not succeeded. Now it seems that we will get a new system the 1st of January 2003. Fortunately anyway, some years ago we got a new application to the old system and it made it possible to create the search forms of our databases on the Internet.

What about our national matters? The university libraries have started to use a new library ADP system called *Voyager*. The old system, *VTLS*, was in use for ten years. The role of FinELib, the National Electronic Library, has continually become stronger. Its aim is to support research and teaching in Finland. FinELib acquires Finnish and foreign electronic material for Finland, such as scientific journals and databases for specialist fields. FinELib manages the complicated licence negotiations with the information producers. After that the libraries can form a consortium and buy those information products.

The Finnish Virtual Library Project has been developing all the time. It is a subject gateway service, which offers descriptions of Internet resources by subject field. It has been constructed to serve the Finnish science community from students to researchers: the material included complies with strict selection criteria.

This era is also a period of strategies as everything is changing all the time. National strategies concerning libraries and information services called higher education policy in Finland, Education, training and research in the information society and political program of Finnish libraries have been developed.

In Finland we have also discussed the new competencies of our professions a lot. Our work has changed so dramatically that the old professional standards are no more valid. Electronic publishing is in a very good condition and an everyday routine in Finland. The new concern now is how to guarantee the availability of those electronic products even after 50 or 100 years, when the ADP programs and hardware have changed. The University of Helsinki - the National Library of Finland now has a working group to clarify the difficult problem of archiving system.

The situation of special libraries has become better and better all the time. Now a lot of improvements have happened. We have a working group of special libraries inside The Finnish Research Library Association. We have arranged seminars and excursions, provided information about tasks, role and importance of special libraries and developed a position of special libraries in the national strategies. I think our work has been very important and succesful.

Our concern up until now has been the Finnish library policy for university and public libraries, yet not a policy for special libraries. From the national point of view it is a big setback that the Ministry of Education is not to be responsible for the whole national information policy. Unfortunately it only takes care of the role of university and public libraries.

The new trend is to establish large university campus libraries and connect separate special libraries of research centres with them. Perhaps those operations save money but, at the same time it has resulted in a loss of valuable special collections and skilled staff. In the long run the level of national library services is likely to get worse at the expense of efficiency and economy.

Anyway, it is very fascinating to work with environmental information, with the new challenges, in the sea of change.

