

ENTITLED KICK-OFF MEETING 5 – 6 February 2008
Anne-Marie Schmidt, Aarhus Denmark

Rob invited me to talk about public libraries, innovation, ICT and adult learning with a broader overview of current trends and experiences from the PuLLS project. I think that leaves us with subjects enough for a thesis or a conference, but I will try to give an overview.

I will talk about library development, development of staff competences, ICT both from users and the library staff's point of view and finally about innovation.

My starting point will be the strategy: 'From Information to Knowledge' published by the Danish Library Agency. My second focus point will be results of reports on European citizens' e-skills – why we have to strengthen both staffs' and citizens' e-skills. The third focus point is that development and innovation demands new skills and competences, how we can work with innovation and user-driven innovation in public libraries. I want to illustrate it with a few concrete examples from real life - how to give the staff members and citizens new digital skills illustrated by experiences from the PuLLS project.

National Library Policy

Denmark has a library act which was adopted by the government in 2000 and which states that the objective of public libraries is to promote information, education and cultural activity by making available books, periodicals, new digital materials such as music, electronic information resources, including internet and multimedia.

Changes in media, ICT, mediation of information, user demands, and needs for lifelong learning require an overall debate on the future of libraries.

In summer 2006 the Danish Library Agency published a new strategy: 'From Information to Knowledge'. The strategy points out that the traditional library we know from the industrial society is close to having had its day. A growing part of the library users ask for other services than the services libraries have chosen to offer. Some libraries have accepted the challenge, but it is the Agency's impression that a common and targeted effort is necessary in order to handle new demands from the users. We have to formulate new visions and new action plans for libraries in the knowledge society. In our opinion public libraries are central institutions in the digital age.

The publication from the Agency states that we want to define the library's role and strategy in relation to the needs of the knowledge society and it lists 11 points to reach such a definition:

1. We want to strengthen innovation and cohesion. We want to focus on librarians' competences instead of collections, networks instead of institutions, personal service instead of standard products, and develop information to learning and knowledge instead of merely providing access to information
2. We want more focus on virtual services
3. We want to move focus from collections to services

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4. We want to activate the physical library
5. We want to see the librarians out in society, meeting people in their everyday lives
6. We want a common platform of digital services
7. We want more national content on the Internet by digitizing collections, and giving access to databases
8. We want to develop an international catalogue of ideas for international lifelong learning programmes
9. We want to strengthen the citizens' participation in local democracy
10. We want to develop a better connection between the structured library and the chaotic Internet, e.g. by co-operation with Google
11. We will only be able to deal with the above mentioned issues if we work systematically with competence development, with continuing education and development of libraries as resource centres in the knowledge society's intellectual infrastructure.

The strategy 'From Information to Knowledge' has been and still is broadly discussed by library managers and others with an interest in library development and we use it for discussion and dialogue with library managers within our region in Mid Jutland. Right now publishers, writers and library staffs are discussing what libraries are for. I will get back to this topic at tomorrow's discussion.

Regional Library Policy

To expand and supplement the tasks which are laid down in the library act, Aarhus City Council adopted a library policy in 2005 for the years 2006 – 2009 with a number of political library objectives. We have started the work on the coming policy for 2010 – 2012.

As described in the policy the most important issues are that libraries are moving from focusing on collections of books and other materials to focusing on connections, connections between libraries, institutions and people and on networks, networks with other institutions, organisations and companies in the community.

The library policy focuses on 9 objectives:

1. Libraries must support the lifelong learning of the individual
2. Libraries must strengthen the democracy by securing free and equal access to information
3. Libraries must contribute to preservation and dissemination of the cultural heritage
4. Libraries must strengthen integration of refugees and immigrants
5. Libraries must take part in development and support of the subject knowledge and personal development of children

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6. Libraries must enter into partnerships with other institutions and organizations
7. Libraries must develop library services based on the newest technology
8. Libraries must ensure quality, topicality and diversity of their services
9. Libraries must be sustainable, open and accessible

As mentioned in the first objective, libraries must support lifelong learning - professional and personal development alike. They must assist both students attending educational courses and anyone who independently wishes to become more educated. This could involve supporting public information activities, individual, personal interests or inspiration to learning. I think libraries can play an important role in supporting the citizens' lifelong learning. That was what we wanted to demonstrate in the PuLLS project. PuLLS stands for Public Libraries in the Learning Society. The project was part of the EU's Grundtvig programme, the aim of the programme is to enhance the European dimension of lifelong learning and improve the availability and accessibility of learning opportunities for adults. One of the main objectives in the PuLLS project was to improve adults', especially disadvantaged adults', information literacy and active citizenship through informal learning by developing the concept of the public library as an open learning centre. One of the tasks was to develop a European model for open learning centres in public libraries which can develop and deliver ICT courses.

The aims of the PuLLS project were to:

- Share skills, knowledge and expertise across the partner institutions;
- Develop a model for supporting adult lifelong learning;
- Provide learning opportunities for adult learners, particularly those at risk of exclusion from the 'information society';
- Develop a range of training materials to be delivered in open learning centres.

One of the key aims, then, was to address the gap that exists in terms of *content* for adult learners. This is something of a departure for public libraries, whose traditional role has been to offer information about learning opportunities provided by others, and to offer supporting materials for individual study. Librarians as content developers is a relatively under-developed activity, although partners in the project had varying experience of this. The evaluation of the project was conducted by associate professor Trine Schreiber from the Royal School of Library and Information Science and the report can be found at www.pulls.dk

We know from various national and European reports, that a great percentage of the citizens lack ICT skills and literacy competences.

ICT skills

In 2007, the report "The citizens ICT-skills in Denmark" was published and it states that about 40% of the population lacks or has minor ICT skills.

The study shows that large groups in the Danish society have weak ICT skills. 20% of the population never use a computer and are part of the group at level 0. As a group, Danes are able to obtain information by using ICT, but they are not able to evaluate, handle and integrate the information. As a whole it is difficult for them to create new information by using ICT. The group of people who never uses ICT is characterized by a preponderance of persons with no or short term education, retired people and people outside the labour market. People at level 1 are characterized by having no interest in ICT, they use ICT as entertainment. Citizens at level 2 and 3 have moderate or good ICT skills and have a longer education. The study points out that it would mean large economic profits for the Danish society if the citizens were able to make better use of ICT. Citizens with good ICT skills can gain a lot of profit in connection with their job, lifestyle and every day life.

A Danish analysis from May 2007, "The Competence Map", focuses on the role of librarians, engineers, lawyers and economists in the digital administration in the future. The librarians' union asked 'the Centre of Digital Administration' to map the competences in the digital administration. According to the study it seems as if librarians have the broadest ICT competence profile. The public sector is undergoing a transformation from an analogue to a digital sector. According to the expected future lack of labour force within the public sector the government wants to develop digital self-service offers to the citizens and this means a growing demand of digital competences among public servants.

| Librarians in the digital administration | | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|-----------|
| Strategic competences | Contract management | | Demand for system | Digital management | Management of IT projects | |
| | Source review | Recognition of patterns | Categorization | Communication of knowledge | Learning Competence | Usability |
| Content Competences | | | | | | |

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|-------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|
| User Compete nces | IT- user competence | Search of informat ion | Simple system maste- ring | Advanced system mastering | | |
| | Technological competences | IT- architecture | Standar dization | System design | System develop- ment | IT- proces- ses |

Librarians have special knowledge within the group of competences called content competences: Source review, recognition of patterns, categorization, communication of knowledge, learning competence and usability. Furthermore librarians have a thorough knowledge within common user competences and by virtue of their education technological competencies as standardization and system design.

My conclusion on this point is that librarians are needed and qualified in the process of transforming the citizens from not-skilled to skilled users of ICT and information. If we are going to transform libraries from delivering traditional library services to becoming an active partner in the learning society, we need to develop libraries and integrate developing strategies. Furthermore, libraries have to develop a strategy of competence development of staff members.

In order to qualify the staff members, many libraries in Denmark have copied the concept of "23 things" from American libraries. It is an e-learning programme where staff members train the newest technology such as blogging, digital photos and images, rss feeds etc.

If public libraries want to develop new strategies, new services, and develop staff skills, they need to be innovative. Over the last 10 years, Aarhus Public Libraries have developed a strategy 'from development to innovation'.

In 1987, we established a development pool funded by a certain percentage of the budget. Since then we have run about 100 development projects, and 200 staff members have been involved in the process. In 2007, Aarhus Public Libraries received an award in the national innovation competition cup as the second best of public institutions in Denmark. In 2007, an innovation strategy was developed and published and a model for project management was developed. The model is based on the PRINCE2 model and is being integrated in the department of Citizens' Services and Libraries.

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Some of our recent innovative projects are:

Self-service delivering robots

Transformation Lab

The Interactive Children's Library: Have a look at "Children's Interactive Library" on You Tube - a project that explores the possibilities of combining the physical spaces in the children's library with technology and fantasy.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fu7XciJi6xY>

What is the difference between development and innovation: To generate ideas is to be creative; to convert ideas to results is to be innovative. Being innovative in an organised and user-oriented fashion is the essential competitive parameter of the 21st century. By Steve Jobs, Apple Inc.

In 2006 The Danish Library Agency conducted an analytic and strategic survey aiming at an effective process for redeveloping public libraries. The project – called the innovative library – covered the innovation competences of public libraries and is a part of this effort. The Danish Library Agency invited 12 different libraries to participate in the analysis in order to get some ideas of how libraries can reinforce their efforts and improve daily innovation.

Innovation is advanced by a swift process from idea to daily operation – and implementation in the organization.

Competences exist in networks; innovation processes involve competences from colleagues and national and international network partners.

Innovation is change

We use the innovation model '7 circles' and the process is described in the model.

Innovation is a playing and creative process. But innovation requires prioritised resources, a common pool is annually allocated and contributions from external funds are applied.

We work with innovation in all parts of the organisation; it presupposes great focus on utilisation and coordination of competences and experience across the organisation.

Replication of the results is most effective, if they can be broadly implemented.

The seven circles of innovation consist of:

- Markets and customers
- Idea generation
- Evaluation and planning
- Testing and prototyping
- Business Planning
- Implementation
- Innovation Fundamental