

Central Library

# The Heart of the Metropolis – the Heart of Helsinki

Review Report

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# Long live the library!

Finland has long since adopted the learning and skills agenda. We want to continue to succeed, to prosper and to develop. A modern and dynamic metropolis is part of Finland's vision for a successful future. The question we are asking is, how does the library fit into this equation?

It is difficult to overestimate the significance of Finland's libraries. We consider the library system to be an important part of our society and value the commitment libraries make to public service and the promotion of social equality. Finland's libraries reflect the society in which they operate, lay open its values. They speak volumes of our appreciation for learning, for knowledge, for books. Outdated images of libraries as dusty, silent places dispensing books deserve to be scrapped for good. The libraries of today offer magazines, music, films, art and computers, they are hives of life and activity. Visitors can take their pick between meet-the-author events, exhibitions and children's story corners and much more.

Libraries are staffed by highly skilled and highly valued professionals who move with the times, generating new services and experimenting with new ways of making their collections attractive to visitors. The first challenge lies in doing away with any unnecessary modesty. Information professionals need to raise their profile. The second challenge is to reverse the decline in young visitor numbers. Finland's world-class libraries are making an undeniable contribution to our success as a country. Our li-

braries have collected, structured and made available to us the skills, knowledge and stories that underpin our current high standard of living.

This is an excellent background against which to reflect on the central library concept. But what is it that we should be building? A new Helsinki landmark? A warehouse of books? Would a simple search engine do? Let's start by taking a look at what the library is there to do.

**Libraries are for culture, learning and keeping up-to-date.** Do we want them to continue to be that in the future? Do we consider it important that, in a world that is increasingly international, complex and multi-cultural, Finns have access to extensive, reliable, high-quality information, a source of deeper insights and inspiration? Do we want to equip everyone in Finland with the wherewithal to succeed? If this is indeed what we want and if our vision for the future entails the world's best library, our mission is set and we can get to work.

The first libraries were the preserve of the privileged few that existed for the purpose of creating and storing works of literature. Libraries becoming a public service represented a major step change that paved the way for equal access to skills, knowledge and stories for all. The next step for libraries is to become a social hub and a multi-media node for these skills, knowledge and stories.



The library of the future is a living haven of culture, a hub of knowledge and inspiration. It is a multi-media node that people can access at life's turning points or come to just to have a good time, anytime. The library is a fascinating place, whether you are visiting physically or virtually.

**The library of the future is all about content.** The collection draws on all relevant media and their combinations. Books are at the very heart of the library and will remain so into the future. The library will be among the first to implement technological innovations.

**The library of the future is where people come together.** The collection is constantly evolving. The library is buzzing with activity. People gather. An event can be defined as a shift, a big or small occasion that generates interest and inspires people to visit the library. Events present an excellent opportunity for co-operation, offering an ideal setting for anything from meet-the-author events to country-specific thematic presentations and from class reunions to children's parties.

**The library of the future communicates.** It doesn't hold back. People are entitled to know what is available and what they are getting for their money. Active communications strategies and innovative marketing approaches invite people to come and sample what the library has to offer. Staff are the key to communication.

Engaging, relevant and teeming with activity, the library of the future draws on its own extensive, high-quality content.

The above sets out, in nutshell, the expectations and visions people have put forward during the review process. The future is the sum total of the decisions we take today. Can libraries be part of that equation? How much do we really value learning, culture and history? How keen are we to remain up-to-date with the world? We need to break new ground and set an example as we do so. The new central library to be constructed in Helsinki, Finland's metropolis could well be the opportunity to do that, both nationally and beyond.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my warmest thanks to all those who took part in the discussions, for their expertise, ideas and kind assistance.

Long live the library!

Helsinki 12 March 2008

*Mikko Leisti*

Review Chairman

# About the review

The central library review process was launched by Mayor of Helsinki, Jussi Pajunen in August 2007. The review remit was defined as follows:

*The aim of the review process is to further develop the project concept, with view to creating a locally, regionally, nationally and internationally attractive location where experiences, culture, learning and communications and the traditional library meet. The centenary year of Finnish independence in 2017 is the target completion date for the project as a whole.*

*The review is further tasked with continuing the development of the central library project on the basis of the interim report prepared by the working group established to examine the project's viability and to put forward detailed proposals on the concept of the ideas competition, funding partners, operational content and other further actions.*

In the course of further discussions on the review's remit, the Mayor expressed the view that the review's main aim would be to produce a conceptual reflection and preliminary proposal for the central library's operational model. In the event that decision is taken to implement the proposals, it is envisaged that more practical detail will begin to emerge during the eventual public debate, detailed planning and, ultimately, in the course of the project run-through. The objective set for the review was to forge a vision on the central library operational model, size, location and content. The first item on the review agenda was the eventual role of the library in our lives and in our hearts.

The review took as its starting point our needs and aspirations. What does the library mean to us and what do we want it to be going forward? What does the library need to offer in order for us to be proud of it? How can we continue to best benefit from it in future? Answers to these questions were sought through the following:



## 1 Interviews and group discussions

Broad representation from experts, policymakers, opinion leaders and library users.

## 2 Research and source literature

Research into libraries and library usage, urban science, leisure, well-being, future trends and other key topics.

## 3 Strategies

Additional familiarisation with Finland, the Helsinki metropolitan area and City of Helsinki-specific strategies

## 4 Visits

Visits to libraries in the Helsinki metropolitan area and elsewhere in Finland, to the Stockholm main library and Kulturhuset, the Sendai Mediatheque in Japan, Seattle library in the United States and Amsterdam and Rotterdam libraries in the Netherlands.

## 5 Survey

In preparation for the review process, a survey, titled The Library of My Dreams was conducted among Year 8 and 9 pupils in Helsinki.

## 6 Follow-up public debates in the media and online

## 7 Discussions with the central library working group

I

Libraries as an opportunity





# Libraries as the cornerstone of our success

The fundamental task of libraries is to offer people equal opportunities for lifelong learning, for enjoying languages, literature and the arts and for gaining new international perspectives. They also cultivate our civic skills, critical reading ability and media literacy, all of them crucial in today's world. Libraries are places of culture and learning that give us access to up-to-date and well-rounded knowledge about the world around us. In the information society the right to information is a fundamental one.

It would not be an exaggeration to describe Finns as great readers. Where the buying and borrowing of books and newspaper consumption is concerned, we are top of the world. Libraries are the most popular cultural service providers in Finland – and can rightfully be proud of their achievements. In 2006, 2.3m borrowers accessed library services in Finland, with loans reaching a total 102,579,181. Every year, seventeen titles are borrowed per capita in Helsinki. Loans in the city libraries are up by two thirds since the 1990s and the number of visits has almost doubled. In 2007, each

Helsinki resident visited a library 11.3 times, totalling 6.3m visits. The total number of loans in Helsinki was 9.6m. The City of Helsinki library online service received 6.4m hits. Approximately 205,000 Helsinki residents are library cardholders.

Finland boasts an extensive library network. In 2007, there were a total of 927 libraries. Of these, 409 were main libraries, with 449 branch libraries and 69 institutional libraries. The Helsinki city library network comprises the main library in Itä-Pasila and 35 local branches. Libraries in Helsinki, Espoo, Vantaa and Kauniainen are benefiting from three decades of successful cooperation. The metropolitan area libraries' HelMet network, with its annual loan rate of 18m, is one of the largest library systems in the world. The HelMet network consists of more than 60 branches.

Helsinki library premises are generally small. The Helsinki city library receives 178 visitors per m<sup>2</sup>. Space constraints have led to the libraries being unable to introduce new functions or services in any meaningful way.

People feel tremendous affection for the Finnish library system. Library staff are highly valued for their professionalism. A survey by the Association of Finnish Local Authorities found people to be overwhelmingly satisfied with the service they receive (74%), a result that is reflected throughout the survey period (1996-2004). We are proud of our libraries and consider them to be an important public service. Libraries are actively involved in joint working with other libraries and other sectors.

What does the future hold for Finnish libraries? Will they be streamlined into search engines? Will they be content with providing a storage, loan and return service for books only? Is there an in-between? The review has found that libraries have a key role to play as social hubs. On the right we set out what we perceive to be the some of the libraries' strengths, weaknesses inherent in libraries and the opportunities and threats that they currently face.

## Strengths

- Well-loved, highly valued service
- Equality: Free for all
- Mission: Culture and learning
- Source of reliable information
- Extensive collections and rich content
- Highly-skilled staff

## Weaknesses

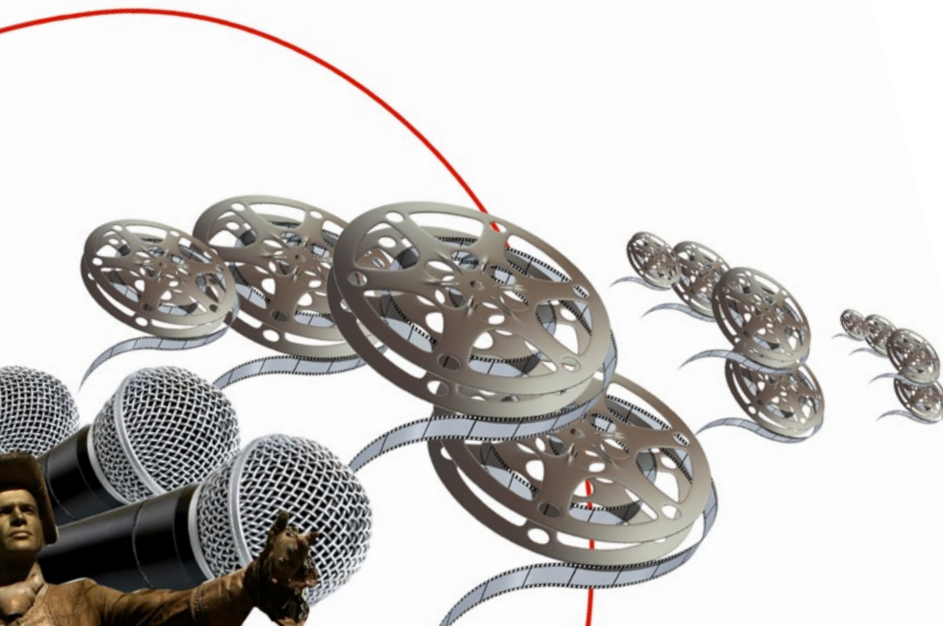
- Not accessed by half the population
- Insufficient utilisation of multi-media applications
- Marketing
- Slow to respond to change
- Lacklustre image

## Opportunities

- Best library system in the world
- Extensive role in the multi-media, multi-cultural future
- Contribution to international cooperation
- Cooperation partnerships with companies and other organisations
- Delivering social interaction as part of lifelong learning and well-being
- Highlighting Finnish know-how
- The library as a national hub for information, skills and stories

## Threats

- De-valued and under-resourced
- Over-digitalisation, reduced to search engine
- Excessive pragmatism, reduced to a warehouse of books
- Inability to adapt
- Passive role: not up-to-date with new phenomena, ideas and information





## Libraries around the world

Libraries are receiving increasing recognition internationally and are considered to have a growing role to play in our rapidly changing world. Many cities are planning, constructing and opening new city centre libraries. Libraries are seen as an opportunity for city centre revival due to the high number of visitors they attract.

During the course of the review, visits were made to libraries in Sendai, Seattle, Rotterdam, Amsterdam and Stockholm. They were found to share a similar background story, all five having been conceived of in response to changes in environmental and visitor requirements. Progress was not always straightforward but the projects all enjoyed the public's endorsement and people are now receiving the high-quality, functional service they were looking for.

Now up and running, these libraries are a source of pride for their respective cities. All of them are highly popular and imbued with their own distinctive character. All share a strongly collection-oriented approach and are located in areas with high footfall.

Of the five libraries, the **Sendai Mediatheque** is spatially the most open and flexible. Approximately 40 per cent of its 21,200m<sup>2</sup> total floor area can be adapted to requirements. The large, comfortable lobby with cafés and shops is airy and inviting. Modern, high-quality libraries are located on floors two to four. Floors five and six are available for events, exhibitions and corporate receptions. The studio on floor eight focuses on film and features an impressive music collection.

**Seattle Library**, the largest of the five at 38,000m<sup>2</sup>, has garnered worldwide attention. The project progressed from the initial concept to a referendum that endorsed the \$196.5m funding package and partnership agreement that brought in an additional \$100m. The funds were used to construct a brand new central library and to repair and upgrade 28 branch libraries. Characterised by genuine determination, first-rate communications strategies and excellent team spirit, high-quality design solutions were adopted throughout the project. Familiarising visitors with the new system is considered a challenge.



Operating in a building dating back to 1984, the **Rotterdam Library** (24,000m<sup>2</sup>) concept and layout represent an entirely new way of thinking. In the spirit of Erasmus of Rotterdam, the oldest public library in Europe exudes a warm and pleasantly dignified atmosphere that is not without bold touches and flashes of humour. Downstairs highlights include the best public toilet in the city, a box office, a tourist information office and a café and theatre complex. The entire library has only one traditional lending desk. All floors have staffed information desks, however, for visitors to seek assistance.

The newest of the five, **Amsterdam Library** (28,000m<sup>2</sup>) continues to deal with some remaining teething issues. Careful thought has gone into the design of each section of the library from the children's department and the multi-media space to the popular upstairs restaurant. The efficient operating concept enables year-round opening

hours from 10am to 10pm. The library is located in a new office and residential district behind the railway station and has already proved popular with residents.

**Stockholm Library** finds itself in an interesting phase in its development, the main library extension design competition winner having recently been announced. Stockholm residents have responded positively to the competition and the transparent approach to the planning process, which has helped to generate active public debate.

The centrally located **Kulturhuset** (24,000m<sup>2</sup>) is an excellent example of a proactive, up-to-date approach to library service provision. Its comics library, fascinating audio-visual collection and first-rate children's library attract the majority of the three million annual visitors that make Kulturhuset Stockholm's number one visitor attraction. Themed events and co-operation with on-site restaurants and shops offer benefits to all parties.

# Attractive and dynamic Finland

Finland wants to continue to build on its success. We are known for our highly skilled experts. Education and know-how are our key success factors. What Finland needs is a competitive metropolis to foster international cooperation.

## **Finland**

Finland ranks as one of the most competitive economies in the world<sup>1</sup>. This is due to our first-rate education system<sup>2</sup>, close cooperation between business and universities<sup>3</sup> and our sustainable approach to growth<sup>4</sup>. The State of European Cities Report (2007) published by the EU highlights Helsinki as a knowledge hub alongside major European capitals such as London and Amsterdam.

Finland is known for its pioneering work in the library field. In the first EU resolution on the role of libraries (1998), the Parliament recommends the adoption of a Scandinavian-style library system aimed at ensuring equal access to information and culture for all citizens, with particular reference to the Danish and Finnish systems.

Libraries have a significant role to play in achieving the aims of the information society. Library web services are as tools for fostering a sense of community and en-

sureing access to lifelong learning and electronic services for all citizens. The Finnish government's programme for 2007-2011 also recognises the key role of libraries as a multi-service system for learning, information management and culture.

Finnish libraries are engaged in a continuous process of joint working to develop their collections and services.

## **Helsinki**

In a joint vision statement, the Helsinki Metropolitan Area is described as a "fast-developing, world-class business and innovation centre built on scientific and artistic excellence, creativity and learning and offering high-quality services, whose success promotes the well-being of its residents and benefits Finland as a whole".

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<sup>1</sup> Ranked 2nd, World Economic Forum: Global Competitiveness Report 2006-2007

<sup>2</sup> IMD World Competitiveness Yearbook 2006, OECD PISA assessment 2000, 2003, 2006

<sup>3</sup> IMD 2006

<sup>4</sup> Ranked 1st, World Economic Forum Environmental Sustainability Index 2005

The city of Helsinki and the wider metropolitan area are at the very core of Finland's success. The region generates more than a third of Finland's GDP.

The current government programme sees the metropolitan policy as a tool for promoting business, internationalisation, multi-culturalism, bi-lingualism and the prevention of social exclusion. Plans are underway to strengthen co-operation and partnership working between central government and local authorities in the Helsinki area.

Helsinki is experiencing strong growth and development with many important development projects currently underway, including the development of the Jätkäsaari, Kalasatama and Keski-Pasila areas in central Helsinki. These projects are enabling significant volumes of residential and commercial construction and important traffic management projects are also ongoing. However, in addition to basic infrastructure delivery, the city must also invest in information and cultural services.

### **The international angle**

Finland and Helsinki enjoy a solid and interesting reputation internationally. Finland is a safe and in many ways unique country, offering opportunities for development and success. The City of Helsinki's international activities are geared towards

establishing Helsinki as a globally competitive city. For this to be achieved, the whole of the Gulf of Finland region must be developed as a successful and functional area for living and working. Tallinn, St Petersburg and Stockholm are significant partners for Helsinki. Metropolis-driven globalisation is gathering pace. All over Europe, cities are becoming the engines for growth and competitiveness.

Helsinki and its surrounding areas are a key tourist destination and a gateway to the rest of Finland. The vision put forward in the Helsinki tourism strategy envisages Helsinki as one of the most competitive city destinations on the world tourism market with a strong and unique brand image. Helsinki is already an attractive year-round leisure destination for domestic and international visitors alike. What it needs now are new, year-round visitor attractions that draw on the city's existing strengths.

### **The library**

The Finnish library and the cultural and learning opportunities it generates are products worth marketing internationally. A central library would provide Helsinki with an international hub for showcasing Finnish expertise and know-how.



Cultural and library services also have a key role in attracting international talent to Finland. The Finnish library system delivers on many of the objectives put forward in national action plans and strategies, including skills promotion, the prevention of social and economic segregation, increased cooperation, regional innovation and the promotion of population centres.

People today move easily between countries and cultures. Finland is easy to reach and easy to leave. The hope is that Finland will be experiencing positive net immigration in future. The international and dynamic Finland envisioned in strategies and policy documents could well become a reality. We have what it takes. The question is, are Finns willing to adopt this vision? Can we “do international” or would we rather go on the defensive?

Credible and trusted, libraries as places of culture and learning also have a key role to play where the international angle is concerned.

# A look into the future

Finland will continue to thrive if it can respond to future challenges in economical, socially and environmentally sustainable ways. The future is the sum total of the decisions taken today.

When it comes to choosing our path for the future, there are plenty of visions to choose from. Some see the world as a single global system with everyone listening to the same music and consuming the same soft drinks. Others see the local, not the global, as an emerging force for social change and for regional decision-making that will lead to more responsible and engaged citizenship. Also interesting is the cultural perspective that envisages national and corporate interests being overridden by fundamental cultural values such as language and religion. Some see only chaos and anarchy. Several more straightforward ideologies are of course also on offer, some of them proffering less than established bodies of evidence in support of their claims. Topics of common interest include population growth, the state of the environment and information proliferation and access.

## **The Population**

Parallel social developments, international cooperation and advances in communications technology are leading to increasingly globalised and homogenised lifestyles. Cultures are interlinking and meshing. Finland's population is forecast to reach 5.7m. During the next 50 years, the Helsinki Metropolitan Area population is expected to grow from the current 1.3m to 2m.

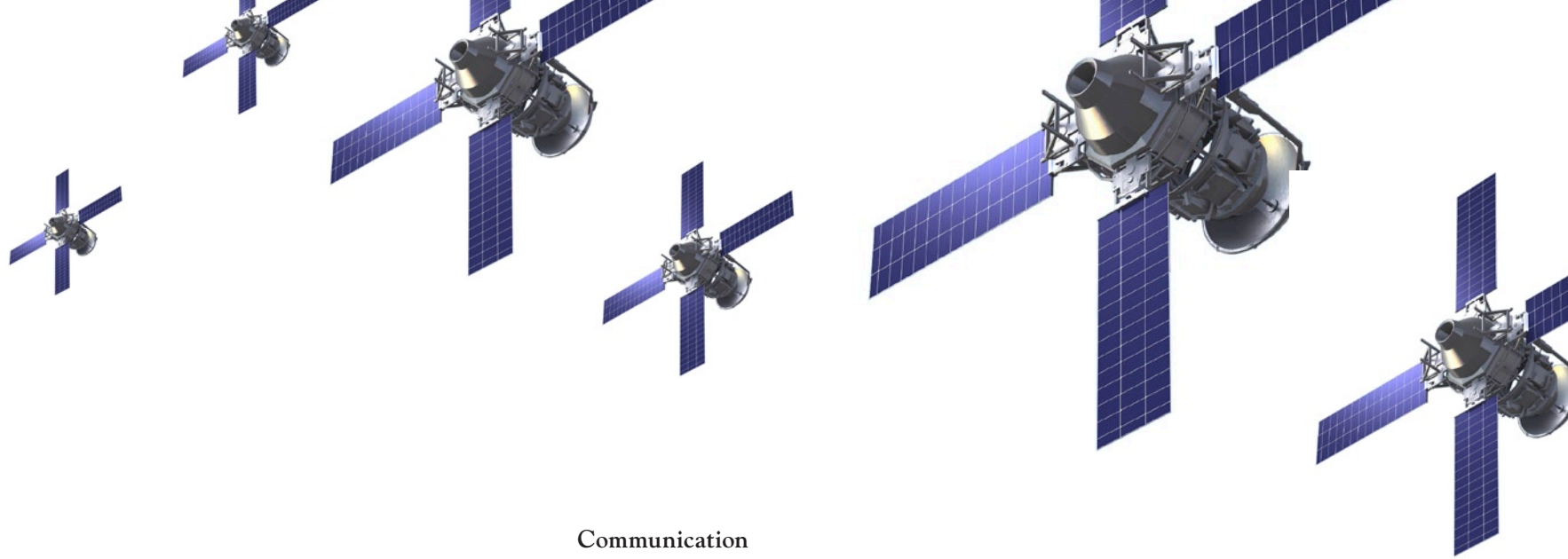
As the Finnish population ages, its needs evolve. The older generations are increasingly educated and affluent. Improvements in health and a move towards more active lifestyles mean that senior citizens are wielding increasing economic and social clout. From 2010 to 2025, the Finnish working population is forecast to decrease by 265,000.

Finnish culture is on its way to becoming increasingly diverse, both in terms of its worldview and its values. New communities will gain importance, our working lives will become increasingly specialised and we will see a rise in multiculturalism and generational differences with society becoming increasingly polarised. People will define their identities through new communities and social networks. It is essential that people have a sense of belonging and a determination to live and work together.

## **The Economy**

In the age of globalisation, the inter-dependency of regional economies and societies in a wider sense is on the rise. Scientific and technological advances taking place in the emerging economies mean that Europe and the United States may no longer remain the key centres for productivity and growth. These changes will have a considerable impact on Finnish employment and our technological and economic competitiveness. Asia's influence on the world economy is on the rise. More and more business sectors are going global. The competition for skills will intensify. An open and tolerant atmosphere and good living and working conditions combined with high-quality educational provision will be key to attracting both home-grown and international talent.





### **The Environment**

More than half of the world's population already reside in urban areas and this development trend is expected to continue unabated. Key environmental considerations include the problems generated by material growth, climate change and the dwindling of the world's non-renewable resources. There is more call than ever for long-term, sustainable solutions.

### **Science and technology**

Every day, we learn something new and wonderful about ourselves and the world that surrounds us. Information is immediately at our fingertips – thanks to the open content ideology, we sometimes even have access to it when it is still a work in progress. As technology continues to advance by leaps and bounds, we can only wonder at what developments we will see in the coming decades. Robotics, nano-technology, biotechnology and many other specialist fields are rushing to offer new solutions to make our lives easier. Wireless, mobile and ubiquitous technological solutions will be givens. New information and communications technologies will clear the way for a genuine 24/7 society where people work and have access to goods and services around the clock. Such societal changes will have a huge impact on people's perception and use of time.

### **Communication**

Our ways of communicating are changing and, in turn, new communications technologies are changing the world around us. Today's innovations tend to have a short shelf-life. The term mediatisation is used to denote the proliferation of media technology and to describe the growing role of the media as conveyors of experience. Our experience of the world and the way we understand it is increasingly being filtered through the media, which exert a significant influence on our values. They have a significant role in the development of social values. In future, the different media will coalesce into one multi-content entity broadcasting across the globe.

People will participate in this process by producing, evaluating and distributing content and internet applications as a community. Internet users are already grappling with the glut of content and sources and coming faced with the difficulty of reliably managing the information on offer. The internet and related services are viewed as comprehensive solutions providers.

**We cannot predict the future. What we do know is that the future will to a large extent be shaped by the decisions we make today. If, today, we decide that we want to have the best library in the world, we will make it happen.**

# Building skills

What characterises Finns is their willingness to learn and to know more. Skill can be defined as the ability to apply the knowledge you have gained in a practical situation. There are plenty of reasons for us to want to develop our skills and knowledge, some of them conscious, some of them sub-conscious: falling in love, doing well at work, a favourite hobby, the need to make a decision, an upcoming presentation, friends, an internet community, the school. Chance encounters also have a huge influence on our development. The discovery of an interesting book or magazine, an interesting conversation over coffee, a text message from a friend or a fascinating lecture can be the spark that awakens a long dormant need, helps you pin down an answer to a problem or reminds you of that great idea you once put on the backburner.

It is important that we have opportunities for giving and receiving criticism and encountering otherness. Our thoughts and ideas develop and gain depth. What is crucial is that the information we access is reliable.

## **We are constantly learning from each other**

Going to school and receiving an education are one form of learning. Our working lives and the society around us are changing at an ever-faster pace. Learning is becoming increasingly international and experts from across the world can generate learning material for people everywhere to share. People's dedication to their hobbies can also be a powerful force, with amateurs and enthusiasts often attaining a professional level of skill. The library of the future will encourage people to be independent, to search, to think, study and to create.

The proliferation of information and making it accessible to increasing numbers of people will have a huge impact on our future. A search engine cannot tell you where to find useful, reliable content. We still rely on other humans to produce meta data and to assess the quality of the information we use.

# Skills

## Information

Proficiency  
Reliability

Skill

Usefulness  
Change

Peer-to-peer knowledge

Home

Friends

Partners

Relaxation

Work

Hobbies

## Individual

Good space

Art

Experience

Literature

Encounters

Technology

Web

Performances

Web-community

Kindergarten

Club

World

Inspiration

Flexibility

Heritage

For all

Effect

Interest

Success

## Community

University

Business

School

Europe

Finland

City of Helsinki

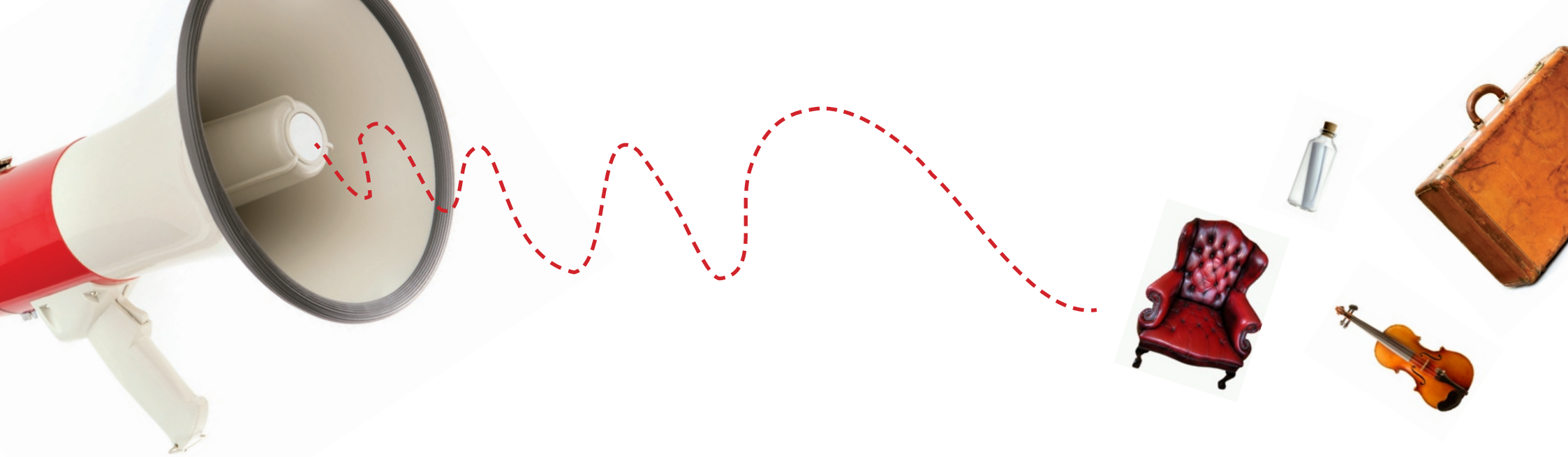
Helsinki Metropolitan Area

Determination

Curiosity

Enjoyment

## Emotion



We must ensure that people have continuous access to all current and up-to-date information and sources of inspiration available.

Knowledge is not just held by scientists and experts. It is in all of us. The challenge is to find a way to release our society's potential across the board, to tap into tacit knowledge. This development is underpinned by the open source concept whereby information is made freely available to all those who want it. The idea is that those users in return add to the information or improve the product to the benefit of all.

In order for our life skills and our professional skills to develop we need diverse, reliable and random encounters, that is, other people.

### **Well-being**

Well-being is one of the key factors affecting our future. Success takes much more than just efficiency. Our health, our relationships, our work, seeing ourselves as a meaningful part of the world around us and a belief in the future are all important. When we hit a rough patch, we also need ideas and inspiration and a supportive

social environment. The increase in psychiatric problems is both a health and economic risk factor affecting today's knowledge society and economy.

With traditional social structures in flux and the number of single households on the rise, social relationships are fast gaining importance. In Helsinki alone, more than half of all households are single. New communities are forming and are increasingly important to our well-being. The term neo-tribalism has been coined to describe the phenomenon of people constructing their identities through their chosen communities.

Networks are vital to human well-being and allow us to amass social capital. The more social capital, participation, trust and peer support a person has, the healthier they feel. Studies have found that people who engage in social interaction are more satisfied with their state of health than those who do not.

The world is becoming increasingly individualised. It is project-oriented, course-based, narrow. Loneliness is on the increase. Is this what we want? Communities direct people's behaviour. Going into the future, what kind of community is going to have the greatest impact on our choices?



### Making the right decision, taking wise action

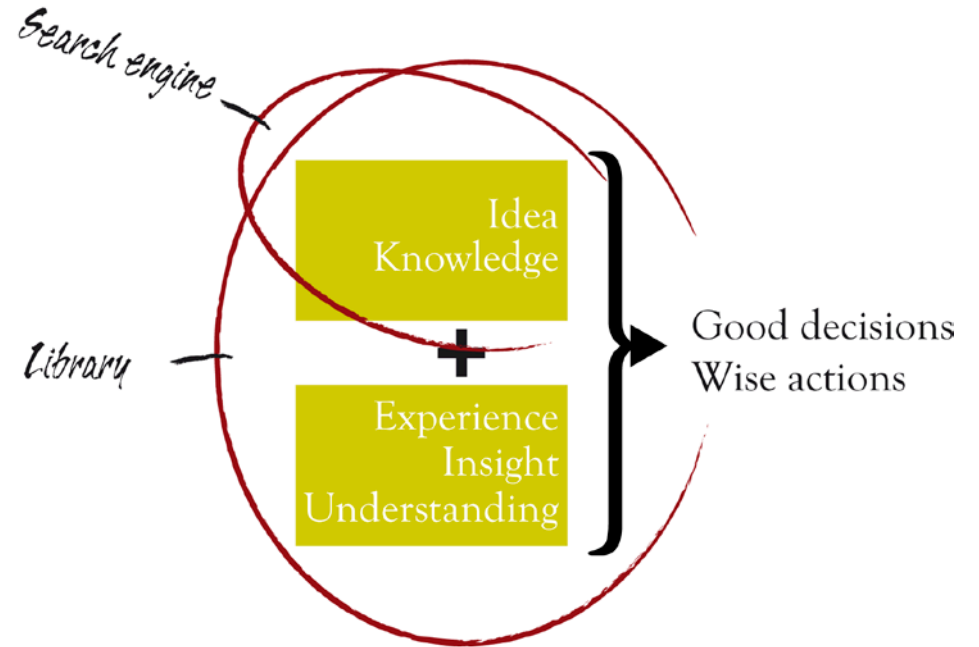
Human encounters have a significant role to play in the process that turns knowledge into skill. It is not always possible to find the piece of information or peer group that can help you make the correct decision or take a wise course of action.

It takes a flash of inspiration, a performance, another human being, perhaps peer-to-peer information for knowledge to be converted into skill, for the mind to be set on the right frequency.

Skills, whether they be professional skills, media skills or even cooking skills, allow people to feel happy, take an active role in life and to assume responsibility for their actions. People experience well-being when they feel in control and are able to have a direct impact on the world around them. This generates a self-sustaining life skills cycle.

In order to be successful, Finland must ensure that these meaningful encounters can continue into the future.

The library is ideally placed to be the reliable hub of knowledge, skills and stories in Finland.



# Libraries are for everyone

Libraries are for everyone. Different audiences have different needs, however. Users are the starting point for service planning. Under the Finnish Library Act, the objective of our public library and information services is to promote equal opportunities for literary and cultural pursuits among Finland's citizens. An accessible service is available for all, offering experiences and opportunities for participation.

## **For children**

Libraries are an important service for children. Children's needs must be taken into consideration during planning and construction. The UN Convention on the Rights of the Child already requires that children be heard in matters affecting them. High-quality resources and events need to be available to children and families. Children need space.

The library is the nation's shared memory. Making history accessible to children outside of the school curriculum is crucially important. Finland has garnered recognition for its high literacy rates but the challenge to be met now is media literacy.

## **A place for young people**

Not all branches of the City of Helsinki Library manage to cater properly for young people. They lack spaces where young people to come to read, socialise and relax. In many libraries, collections aimed at young people and teenagers are located in the children's department although they could quite legitimately lay claim to a department of their own.

Almost half of all 10 to 25-year-olds in Helsinki have a library card. However, only a quarter of girls and a tenth of boys use them. Worryingly, over a period of three years, approximately 26% of 13 to 17-year-olds have not taken out any loans.

It is no longer a given that young people will re-discover libraries at a later stage in their lives. There is now much more competition for their attention and custom. Young people have a lot of free time and enjoy long holidays. A comfortable, functional and safe meeting place, the library has the potential to become a natural, everyday part of young people's lives. The library of the future will work in close cooperation with other youth services. Cognisance should be taken of the fact that the needs and aspirations of children and young people of different ages will differ markedly.

*“The library would have these big glass “bubbles” that you could, like, go into. They’d open up like a bread bin. The bubbles would be sound-proofed and have mattresses and lots of pillows on the floor. There’d be two different kinds of these bubbles. Ones where you could listen to music and chat with your mates and ones where you could just read a book and chat with your mates. They’d fit about six people. The library would have different colour rooms. The children’s section would be pale green. Lots of light and lots of glass/ plastic (clear plastic).”*

Extract from the Library of my dreams survey conducted among Year 8 and 9 pupils in Helsinki



### **Libraries and working life**

Libraries also have much to offer to people during the working years of their lives. For people visiting in their free time, see the library as a source of information and new experiences. In their working lives, people are required to undertake continuous professional development. This is where the library can offer help and support.

The world of work is undergoing rapid change and becoming increasingly specialised. Networking is crucial. This means that employees will be required to possess more diverse skills than ever before. Throughout their working lives, people are expected to develop and update their skills. This calls for flexible, individually tailored lifelong learning services.

Professionals hope to be offered a diverse range of services and benefits to professionals. Seminars and discussion events could bring together and foster debate between consumers and cultural operators. The library could also provide a venue for companies wishing to exhibit their core competencies. Library content and know-how can bring added value to many people's working lives.

### **Quality for senior citizens**

As the population ages, a growing proportion of library users will be senior citizens. It is estimated that within the next two decades 194,000 people aged 65 and over will be living Helsinki, Vantaa and Espoo, representing an increase of 86,000 in comparison with today. Improvements in health, higher levels of education, increased financial stability and more active lifestyles mean that senior citizens and

the elderly are enjoying a better quality of life than ever before. They have hobbies, they travel and pursue study.

The library must offer a variety of services aimed at providing senior citizens with opportunities for learning and enjoyment. Libraries have a key role to play in fostering lifelong learning. Active seniors value library staff know-how and the high-quality materials and services on offer. With extensive life experience and plenty of free time, they will expect the bar to be set very high indeed. Senior citizens could assume the role of mentors of the national cultural heritage.

### **Multi-lingual and interactive**

Multiculturalism is central to Helsinki and Finland in general. In 2007, non-Finnish speakers made up 8 per cent of the working population. By 2015 this is expected to have risen to 18 per cent. It is estimated that 100,000 new immigrants will settle in the Helsinki metropolitan area by 2025.

The right to maintain and develop one's own culture is enshrined in the Finnish constitution and the Act on the Integration of Immigrants and the Reception of Asylum Seekers. Integration is defined as "the personal development of immigrants, aimed at participation in work life and the functioning of society while preserving their language and culture." A viable cultural identity is a means to integration. Libraries have a key role in this process. The City of Helsinki library is the national centre for multi-lingual library services in Finland. The new central library would facilitate genuine dialogue between cultures.





## Conclusion

Finland wants to remain on the cutting-edge, now and into the future. The Finnish library system is a rich platform offering knowledge, skills and stories for all, regardless of their age or background. The library is the heart of the metropolis and the heart of Helsinki, a social hub open to all.

Skills are the mainstay of Finland's strategy for the future. Finland benefits from a democratic, accessible, educational and unique asset that is culturally, socially and politically endorsed by all – the library. It meets with high expectations – and is the stuff dreams are made of. Libraries are also a very highly regarded internationally: the hallmark of a highly educated nation with a will to embrace a wide and far-reaching future.

Reaching your goals, learning new things, experiencing success and feeling empowered to make a difference are the keys to happiness. Whether you are researching a historical novel, writing an autobiography, planning your child's birthday party or preparing for a new job, the library can help you discover new perspectives and points of view. What is needed are extensive, credible and challenging resources, a supportive atmosphere and opportunities for encountering new ideas and other people.

We see, and want to see, a future of opportunity. We feel that this is a good time for making decisions that will have a lasting impact on that future. In an ideal situation, our future needs and today's dreams and decisions will one day converge. What role do we want our library to have? Should it be a search engine? A warehouse of books? Or a hub where knowledge, skills, stories and people meet?

The latter part of this report will examine the latter option in more detail.

II

The heart of the metropolis – the heart of Helsinki

# The library of the future

Libraries are for culture, learning and keeping up-to-date.

A successful central library will make a significant contribution towards fulfilling this role. It will be an entirely new kind of library where knowledge, skills and stories meet, a laid-back and reliable place to come to whether you are just after some quiet reading time or want to engage with other people.

It will be a living library, a library that is the first to draw on the latest media and technological innovations, generating new perspectives and ideas, in cooperation with its partners and users.

A library opens up new vistas for us, adds depth to our perception. It is a source of joy and inspiration and provides us with the resources we need in our everyday lives. It helps us to cope, makes us think, helps us to work together.

The library of the future is a haven of learning and culture – a hub of knowledge and ideas. It is a multi-media node that we visit, both physically and virtually, at life's many turning points. Or at any time, in fact, because it's fun, it's fascinating and it's accessible.

## **Objectives**

- To be a relevant service actively used by all Finns and Finnish residents
- To bring people together with knowledge, skills and stories. To provide new and fresh perspectives on life.
- To be the best library in the world



*Commercial services*

*Encounters*

*External events*

*In-house events*

**THE LIBRARY**

# New perspectives

**The vision:** A multimediatric hub for cultural encounters on a human scale. An ideal blend of knowledge, skills and stories. The perfect place for a quick dip or total immersion, quiet reflection or spirited brainstorming. Book loans, internet access, enlightening lectures and user-generated content all have their place and generate new perspectives. It is a genuine learning and cultural experience to equip us for the challenges the future has in store. Unparalleled services and content.

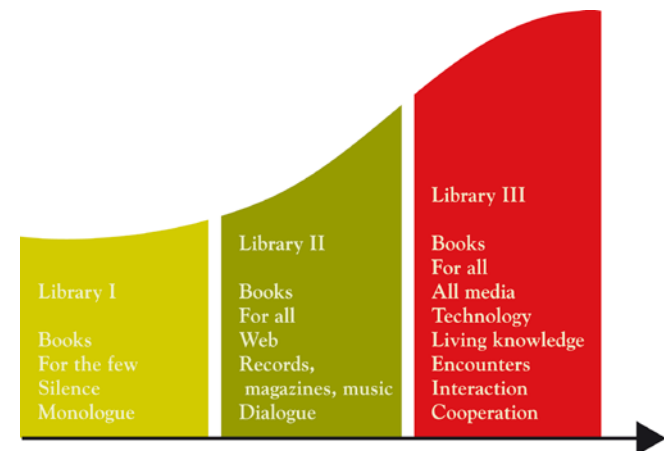
**The library of the future is all about content.** The content draws on all the relevant media and media combinations. Books are, and should remain, at the very core of the library. Full use is to be made of technological innovations.

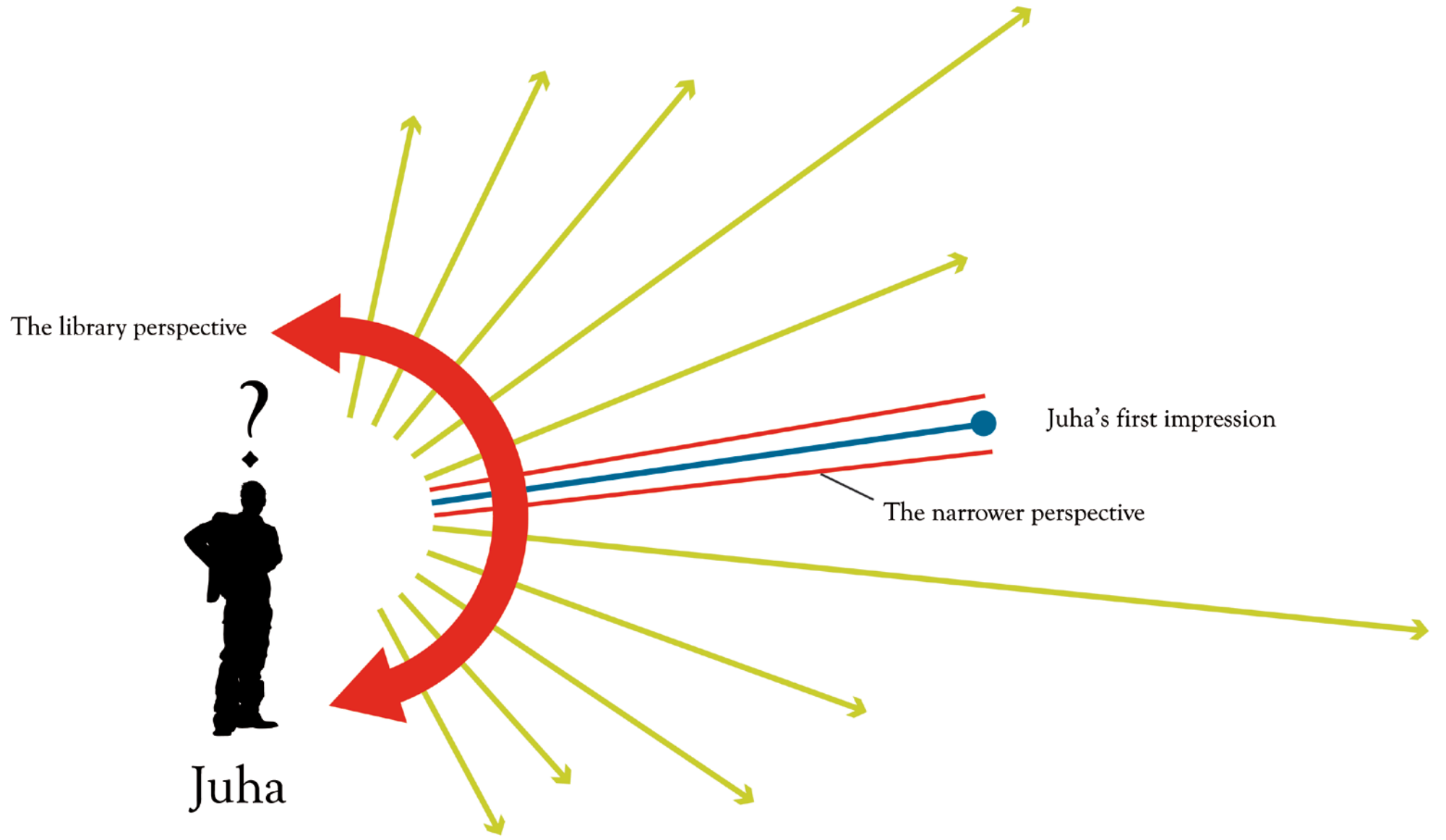
**The library of the future is a social hub.** The collection is constantly evolving. The library is buzzing. People gather. An event marks a change. It can be a big or small occasion that generates a buzz and inspires people to visit the library. Events are an excellent opportunity for cooperation, from meet-the-author evenings to country theme weeks, from class reunions to children's parties.

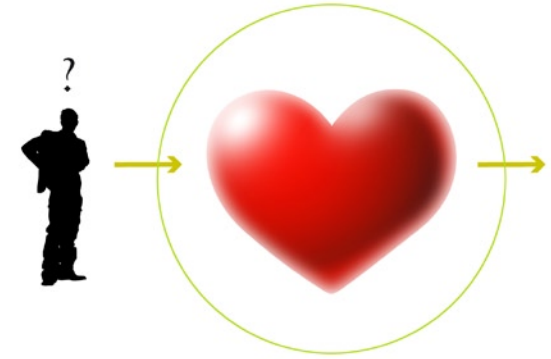
**The library of the future communicates.** It doesn't hold back. People are entitled to know what is on offer and what they are getting for their money. Active communications strategies and innovative marketing approaches invite people to come and sample what the library has to offer. The staff are key to communication.

**Engaging, relevant and teeming with activity, the library of the future draws on its own extensive, high-quality content.**

**The central library is the image of the library of the future.** The library of the future is an all-round multi-media powerhouse of knowledge, skills and stories. It promises quality and delivers surprises, unexpected and serendipitous encounters. It is a people's place, a place where meetings lead to insights.







# A happening cultural hub

The central library is a welcoming, accessible hub, a place to come to at life's turning points. It is not a destination in itself but a place we pass through on our way from school to university, from childhood to adulthood, from work to retirement, from unemployment to work, from passivity to active engagement.

The library is a meeting place where you can enjoy encounters with knowledge and other people, find your future partner, have a wild adventure, discover new and familiar stories.

## **A library for all of Finland**

It makes sense for the planning and implementation of the new central library to take place in close cooperation with Finland's entire library network. This

will generate benefits and opportunities for all involved. The central library is a library for everyone in Finland, whether you access its services on-site or electronically.

The central library is accessible for all. Items from its collections can be borrowed and downloaded anywhere in the world. Events are recorded and broadcast in real time on the internet. This allows everyone to make use of the information and materials generated by and in the course of the events. New technology makes it possible for the resources to be used anywhere, at any time. The events programme will be developed in cooperation with external partners and the benefits and new working practices that arise will be made available to libraries across Finland.





music Urban Ethical Blend  
Lovely and professional staff Finland Open sou  
Encounterst Good book Lasting  
Openness Local Art Movies  
Internet Benefit Global  
Playe? Fantastic lunch Knowledge Meeting  
Young people Senior citizens  
Digital New ideas Experiences Wirele  
Inspiring technology Friends Multi-ca  
Intelligent History For all Hobby  
Democracy Grows Encount technob  
Communi

# Content: resources, encounters and communication

**The central library is always open.** The staff are knowledgeable and cutting-edge. They know their resources and always put visitors first. Multiprofessional staff maximise the range of services on offer and will be on hand to provide guidance and instruction to visitors. New technologies are constantly introduced and there is always something new to learn.

The trend is for increasingly interactive library services. The library actively reaches out to its users through the events and services on offer. Users play an active role in the development of the library's services and resources.

## **State-of-the-art resources**

Resources at the central library will be state-of-the-art. The collection and books remain at the core of the library service provision. The library will always provide the latest, most up-to-date resources available whilst also offering historical depth and perspective. The central library is not just a warehouse for books. Its collections reflect a dynamic, cutting-edge reality.

Whether you are looking for a hardback or an e-book, all texts in the central library collection are offered in all the relevant formats. Although the e-book has

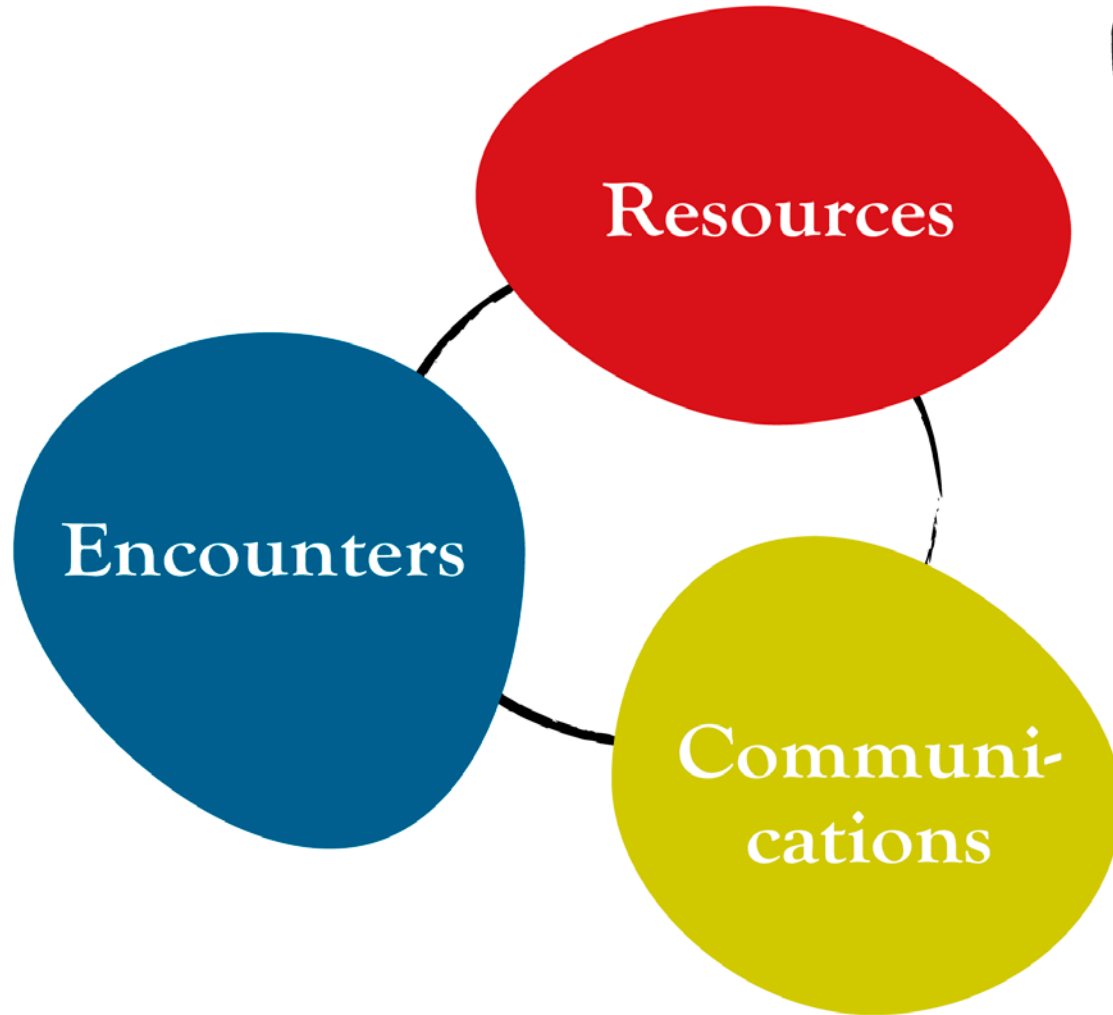
not gained ground as quickly as expected, it is likely to become much more widely used in future.

An extensive news section will be one of the key features of the new library. Hundreds of newspaper annuals, online magazine subscriptions, databases and article archives will be at the users' disposal. Historic archives provide access to newspapers dating back to the 18th century. New media allows visitors to watch newscasts from around the world. Music, film, audio books and other audiovisual materials are also available. A professional information retrieval service will help users to access the information they need.

## **A dynamic place**

Events set the beat of the central library. The library is a place where knowledge, skills and stories meet. An active programme of events attracts visitors. Users can influence library content and define the needs the central library's services respond to. Expert professionals are in charge of all programming and events are realised in close cooperation with other operators. The library collection is engaged in a continuous dialogue and interplay with the events programme, creating new depths of perspective.

*Lively*



*Cutting-edge*

*For all*

# A look at the Central Library events programme in 2020

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
<b>Atrium</b>	Product demonstration: Helsinki pinball	Veg of the year, press conference and exhibition	Southern Karelian dance	HKL Journey planner presentation	HKL Journey planner presentation	LAN gaming	LAN gaming
<b>Great Hall</b>	Tempera Quarter album launch event	Finnish Sculptors Association seminar	Interview: Johanna Sinisalo	Discussion event: Politix Association	Channel Five new season launch event	Mattokutomo Ltd, 100th anniversary celebration	Jazz concert
<b>Hall</b>	Evening class: Fine art and parenting	Kynnys Association press conference	Suomenlinna Summer Theatre promotional event	Album preview: Yölintu	Viapori Jazz festival programme launch	Lecture: Music, nature, environment	Folk music concert
<b>Cinema 1</b>	Film series: Spinal Tap	Film series: Hillary and Jackie	Film series: An American in Paris	Film series: Control	Film series: Rocky Horror Picture Show	Film series: La Vie en Rose	Film series: De-Lovely
<b>Cinema 2</b>	Kotwica: Black Ice, subtitles in Russian	Kotwica: Black Ice, subtitles in Somali	Kotwica: Black Ice, subtitles in English	Parent and baby screening: Jarva: Olympian Holiday	Year 1920. Karu: The Engagement	Year 1920. Puro: Ollin oppivuodet	Year 1920. Karu: Sotagulashi Kaiun häiritty kesäloma
<b>Restaurant 1</b>	Helsinki Conservatory Wind Ensemble	Helsinki Conservatory String Ensemble	Helsinki Conservatory Piano Ensemble	Helsinki Lifelong Learning College Choir	Sibelius Academy Folk Music Ensemble	Brunch: Sibelius Academy Jazz Ensemble	Brunch: Pop&Jazz Conservatory singers
<b>Restaurant 2</b>	Philippine theme week	Philippine theme week	Philippine theme week	Philippine theme week	Philippine theme week	Philippine theme week	Philippine theme week
<b>Café</b>	Magazine of the week: Vauhdikkaat vekottimet	Portuguese conversation class	Parent and baby book club	Knitting Club: Liza Marklund reading	Motor sports enthusiasts' gathering	International student gathering	Sing-a-long: 1950s songs
<b>Meeting room 1</b>	Celiac disease support group: recipes	Lifelong Learning College: creative writing	Finnish Business Culture (in English)	Travel literature book club	University Photography Society meeting	Lecture: Philippine Cuisine	Bodyfat measurement service
<b>Meeting room 2</b>	Finnish Sumo Association presentation	Nature photographer meeting	French Cartoon Appreciation Society	Lecture: Finnish Proverbs	Finnish conversation class	Lecture: Disposables vs re-usable nappies	Tove Jansson Society meeting
<b>Meeting room 3</b>	Song lyric interpretation, facilitated by a translator	Sibelius Academy: Instruments – the oboe	Couples seminar meeting	Weightloss Club meeting	Debating Society	Finnish Chilli Association meeting	Inspector Palmu Book Club meeting
<b>Meeting room 4</b>	SOS Children's Village Board meeting	Apollonkatu 27 Co-operative meeting	Basketball Club Flowerbasket Annual Meeting	Finnish Wind Orchestra Association meeting	Prostate Cancer Association meeting	Lecture: Art Treasures of St Petersburg	Sci-Fi and Fantasy Book Club
<b>Children's corner</b>	Theme of the day: Book illustrations	Theme of the day: Poetry	Theme of the day: Cartoons	Theme of the day: Adventure	Theme of the day: Song and dance	Theme of the day: Animals Non-stop storytelling	Theme of the day: Board-games Non-stop storytelling
<b>Arts &amp; crafts</b>	This weeks themes: watercolours and felting	This weeks themes: watercolours and felting	This weeks themes: watercolours and felting	This weeks themes: watercolours and felting	This weeks themes: watercolours and felting	This weeks themes: watercolours and felting	This weeks themes: watercolours and felting
<b>Soapbox corner</b>	Political debate	Open floor: MPs today	Open floor: Finnish immigration policy	Open floor: Arts education in schools	Open floor: Ethical tourism	Open floor: Sports and young people's well-being	Open floor: Gaming – benefits and pitfalls

## Event programme-related resources:

<b>Non-fiction:</b>	The weighty history of Sumo wrestling Suomenlinna
<b>Music:</b>	Yölintu Edith Piaf Jacqueline du Pré The history of jazz
<b>Food:</b>	Philippine cuisine Gluten-free recipes
<b>Cinema:</b>	Musicals forever The Finnish Cinema Golden Age Inspector Palmu
<b>Arts:</b>	Finnish Photography Watercolourists
<b>Fiction:</b>	Johanna Sinisalo Liza Marklund
<b>Young people:</b>	Fantasy, sci-fi Gaming-related literature Young people and politics
<b>Children:</b>	Poetry Best loved children's book illustrators
<b>Travel:</b>	Portugal Philippines
<b>Miscellaneous:</b>	French cartoonists Teach yourself Portuguese

The library is split into spaces of many different shapes and sizes, giving people opportunities both for quiet reflection and active debate. The central library is not run on a 9 to 5 mentality; it offers something for everyone – 24/7. Whatever the day, whatever the hour, something is always going on.

The library's events programme keeps people posted on what is going on around them – through information, inspiration and ideas. It picks up on the latest trends and updates the old. The events gather together the citizens of Helsinki to experience, to examine and to debate. At the central library, people can also find out about other public services offered by the city. At the central library and the Suomi Experience exhibition space showcasing Finnish know-how, visitors can find out more about Helsinki and the rest of Finland.

The central library is a venue for public and private sector press conferences, exhibitions, meetings, seminars, lectures, launches, films, concerts and other events. Some of the events will be generated in-house, others by external organisations.

**The events are designed to offer information in an interesting, attractive package.** User diversity is reflected in the events programme. Extensive, long-term programming will be complemented by one-off events. Annual, monthly and weekly themes carry the programme forward. The events offer information and inspiration on current affairs, other countries and cultures, Helsinki organisations, interesting hobbies, and new and emerging cultural trends.



The central library facilitates exploration and learning. Cultural operators will visit the library to give lectures, performances and tastings and to provide background on collections in cooperation with the library. Film screenings and discussion events run at the library's cinemas, facilitating joint working with film festivals and archives.

**The events are created through cooperation.** The events function at the central library will be headed by an Events Director. A highly professional team will curate the programme comprising film, music, lectures, science events, children's events, exhibitions and much more. Venue hire is available for seminars, meetings, press conferences and exhibitions. A dedicated technical unit will be set up to coordinate furniture and fittings, equipment and lighting, sound and staging. The events department will work closely with the acquisitions and IT and communications departments to ensure joined-up thinking in all areas. The events function will be managed in continuous dialogue with other operators and partners, such as universities, arts organisations, sports clubs, festivals and commercial sector representatives.

The central library's task is to offer its visitors, both physical and virtual, the latest information across a wide variety of topics. The library must ride the crests of trends to provide its users with the latest on anything from underground club culture to football and philosophy. To do this, the library will form a network of ex-

perts from a variety of fields and specialisms. Tips and suggestions from these partners and other library users will be used to guide acquisitions, generate event ideas and to tailor communications.

### **Engaging everyone**

Communications form another key service alongside the library's resources and events programming. The central library is the physical and virtual hub and gathering place for people and knowledge.

The future is even more diverse: multi-culturalism, new and innovative leisure activities and technological advances will have a huge influence on how people choose to spend their free time. This changing environment will impact directly on the central library's communications strategies. The challenge is to remain visible to the users and other stakeholders. All communications will be designed to motivate people to seek out the library.

The central library brings people together. Its communications are an invitation to participation. The key is to provide the right information at the right place, at the right time. Contents and formats will be thought-through and needs-driven. The central library communications will keep people up-to-date, surprise and generate debate. Above all, they are reliable.

Marketing communications are part of the overall communications package. They are aimed at creating a buzz – both literal and metaphoric. The library's

brand keywords are credibility, inspiration and proactivity. An uptight obsession with image is not the way forward. The key is to keep things real, to stay edgy.

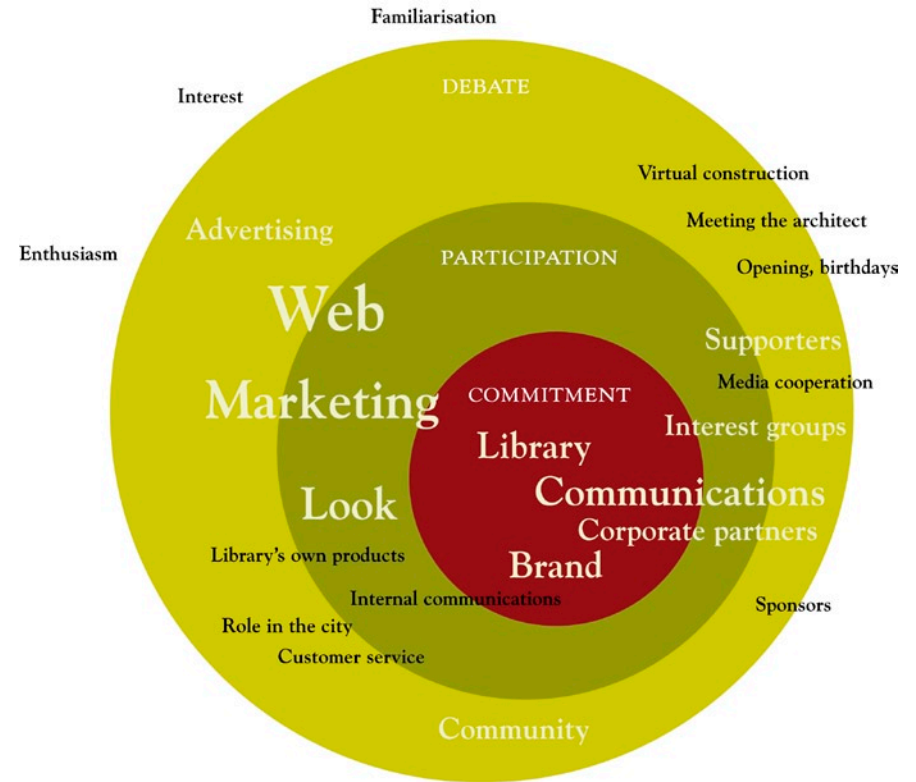
Communications should be suitably loud and attractive. People are receptive to messages that are open and natural and delivered in ways that are tailored to the users' lifestyles and ideas. The library's role is to promote a culture of dialogue.

This dialogue is to be accessible to all library users. Everyone has an equal voice. Everyone can participate and everyone is entitled to a response. The central library is also an excellent listener. It is tolerant. The diversity of views and opinions will be seen as a richness. The library of the future is a place for active participation, not silence.

The focus will be on creating dynamic, personal and long-term customer relationships. Knowing the target audience needs and expectations is paramount.

A dedicated team will be set up to head up the central library's communications function and to work with the network of partners and other stakeholders. Marketing and communications professionals will support all planning and implementation. Successful communications require realistic resources. A promotional campaign launched well in advance of the library's actual opening day would be a good future investment.

The central library's communications strategy will be designed to ensure that the public know what is happening at the library and that visitors can make the most of the resources and events on offer.



# The central library – the heart of the metropolis, the heart of Helsinki

The library of the future will claim its place in people's hearts and everyday lives. The cutting-edge resources will be joined by the library's strong role as a social hub. The daily events programme draws on the library's resources for ideas. Proactive communications strategies will be key as the library seeks to fulfil its role in the community. In future, people will not be visiting library just to borrow books and read magazines. The library of the future will be the setting for children's parties, city presentations, butterfly exhibitions, performance art, housing co-operative meetings, model plane conventions, media debates, crafts competitions, society meetings, video game exhibitions and product presentations. The library is organic, vibrant, alive.

Visitors will have been given information about upcoming events well in advance and those who are popping in on impulse will be able to find about what's going in reception and in other areas. No one leaves the library empty handed. Public spaces, open to all visitors, are perfect for a quiet read. In addition, there are other spaces: small meeting rooms, lecture rooms, restaurants for sustenance and socialising, music studios, video conferencing areas, simultaneous interpretation booths, a storytelling room for Finnish stories, a hologram room, a cinema, a performance corner, the list goes on...

The atmosphere is switched on. Visitors know that the knowledge on offer is reliable and the events are interesting. The library and its communications can be accessed on-site or electronically. The interior will be inspiring yet dignified, the architecture and design stylish and imbued with a strong sense of vision. International and multi-cultural services form an integral part of day-to-day interaction. The library is in perpetual flux, a space that is constantly changing and developing in response to visitor requirements, the seasons, the hour of the day. The library and all its facilities are proactively made accessible to all, underpinned by the latest technology, the latest customer-service philosophy and the events programme. The library is to be a physical and spiritual hub. Throughout our lives we need access to knowledge, skills and stories whether it be on marriage, choosing a pet, DIY, the early works of a recent Nobel prize winner or the origins of life. Some days, we might just be looking for laid-back place to relax, meet friends, chat and have a cup of coffee.

Combining the strong library brand with the Finnish proactive approach to leisure, creates a whole new style of urban space. Visitors can choose to enjoy the library's peaceful ambiance or experience the many exciting events on offer. The strength and potential of this library of the future lies in the presence of these two complementary worlds in the same space.





**THE LIBRARY**



III

*A joint effort*

# Implementation

The large new central library to be built in Helsinki will be a hub of knowledge, skills and stories. What's new is the proactive role assumed by the library itself. It will be a dynamic place that reaches out and communicates with its audience, offering opportunities for culture, learning and keeping up-to-date. The aim is to create a functional and popular service.

It is estimated that 1.5m users will visit the library annually. Daily visitor numbers are forecast at 5,000. Loans are expected to reach 1.5m per annum. The target occupancy rate for the library and event facilities will be 80 per cent, rising to 100 per cent for the commercial premises.

## **The library building**

The library building is to represent architecturally significant, cutting-edge design. The principles of sustainable development will be observed throughout, in the design, administration, materials, usability and the use of energy and other natural resources.

Social sustainability is a key value for the new library. A shared public space open to all fosters a sense of equality. Stakeholder groups will be consulted throughout the planning process.

Built to a high specification, the library will be robust and stylish. Its appearance and finish will stir interest, provoke debate and motivate people to visit.

Accessibility, style, user-friendliness, flexibility, daring and originality will characterise both the exterior and interior.

It is envisaged that the new central library will comprise some 25,000sqm.

## **Space allocation**

A central library serving the needs of an entire city requires space. Helsinki City library experts have estimated that a world-class library will require a gross floor area of some 12,000sqm. The gathering spaces described in the concept outline would take up an additional 8,000sqm. Some 5,000sqm would be required for commercial activities, bringing the total to 25,000sqm.

Placed in context, the Finlandia Hall comprises a total of 18,000sqm and the Sanna House some 40,000sqm.

NON-FICTION  
FICTION  
MUSICAL AND AUDIO VISUAL COLLECTION  
MULTIMEDIA  
WORK STATION  
**Library 12,000m<sup>2</sup>**  
NEWSPAPERS AND MAGAZINES  
READING ROOMS  
WORKING AND SOCIAL SPACES  
CHANNEL HEAVEN  
STORAGE SPACE  
CHILDREN'S AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S LITERATURE

EXHIBITION SPACES  
CRAFTS  
SUOMI-EXPERIENCE  
THE STORY SPACE  
FREE SPEECH CORNER  
SOCIAL SPACE  
CINEMA  
STUDYSPACE  
**Meeting spaces 8,000m<sup>2</sup>**  
BRAINSTORM  
CHILDREN'S SPACE  
STUDIOS  
AUDITORIUM  
ATRIUM  
GAMING ROOM  
CONSERVATORY  
THE PODIUM  
MEETING ROOMS

RESTAURANTS 1&2  
CAFÉS 1&2  
MARKET  
**Commercial premises 5,000m<sup>2</sup>**  
KIOSK  
SHOPS  
GALLERY



## Location

The location of the central library has emerged as a central consideration in the discussions held so far. It should be positioned in the city centre along popular pedestrian routes easily reached by public transport. A key requirement is that visitors must be able to drop by. The central library is intended as an accessible meeting place and useful thoroughfare. Ideally, other services, both public and commercial, should be on offer in the vicinity. A versatile service offering together with a unique ambience will inspire people to visit.

The interim report by the Central Library Working Group examined six preliminary locations. Three of these were considered to offer the type of setting and features that meet the requirements and aspirations generated by the central library concept.

As the operational concept and strategic intent gain momentum, the respective qualities of the different locations will be emphasised and will therefore warrant further consideration.

**Lasipalatsi Square, Lasipalatsi and the Turku barracks** are located in the very centre of Helsinki along busy pedestrian routes. The area links in with the Kamppi centre and the Narinkkatori as well as the Salomonkatu pedestrian street. The land is owned by the City of Helsinki. The building complex can be accessed from different directions (Mannerheimintie and the Kamppi Centre).

Lasipalatsi and Turun kasarmi are both architecturally and culturally valuable buildings, where both the exterior and the interior are protected. The current gross floor area comprises 7,400sqm. The buildings' listed status means that opportunities for alteration are limited. Any extension would need to be located underground. The area currently offers potential for the construction of two additional floors. The option of further underground extension is to be explored in more detail at a later stage in the project. In the event that this location is selected, the area will require re-zoning. Developing the Lasipalatsi Square and underground construction offer potential for the creation of a distinctive style and identity for the library.

This option would create an interesting blend of old and new in the Helsinki city centre. Architecturally, this would be highly challenging but potentially very rewarding option.







**The Post House's** strength is its central location. The building can be accessed from several different directions (railway station, Eliel Square and Mannerheim Square). The Kirjasto 10 library is currently located in the Post House and attracts a large number of visitors.

The building is owned by the Ilmarinen insurance company. Ilmarinen has expressed its interest in continued discussions and views the central library as an interesting negotiating partner. A city plan from 1996 is currently in place, designating the area for commercial use with a permitted building volume of 28,600sqm. Some permitted building volume remains and the inner courtyard offers potential for covering. The ground floor facing the street will need to be reserved for use as shop premises and customer service areas. The building has protected status due to its architectural and cultural significance. The listing also extends to the building's interior. Particular note is made of the building's customer service area, entrance halls and stairwells. Due to its listed status, the building offers little potential for alteration. This would limit the creation of a distinctive new look for the central library.

The building has a traditional office-style character. In order to work as a central library space, the building would require a more open and attractive street entrance. It is currently built on a pedestal and allows no visual access from the street.

At **Töölönlahti**, one plot owned by the City of Helsinki remains available. The 2002 Töölönlahti Plan designates the land for commercial use. It would be possible to construct a new building at this location.

The Töölönlahti block 2014 is situated opposite the Helsinki Music Centre, north of the Sanoma House building. It would be possible to allow entry into the building from a number of directions (Makasiinipuisto Park, Eliel Square and Töölönlahdenkatu). In future, the area will be frequented by people visiting the park, concert guests and music students.

The area is zoned for a building of up to 14,000sqm gross of which 8000sqm gross would be located underground. The underground areas to the south of the block are reserved for a city centre tunnel. A new building and landscaping the Makasiinipuisto areas to the front of the block would allow for the creation of a distinctive look for the central library. However, the central library concept requires a greater floor area than is available in this block. Access to the adjacent, central government-owned block (16,000sqm gross) would provide a solution.

This option provides a clear vision: a new building in a new area. The project's success here is linked to other projects at the Töölönlahti area and to how lively the area will become as a result of the regeneration efforts.



Central Pasila, the east wing of the Helsinki central railway station and the Rautatientori area were also put forward as possible locations in the interim report by the Central Library Working Group. However, on the basis of discussions held thus far, it appears that these are not viable options. The Central Pasila vision is a fascinating one but Helsinki city centre has been judged to offer a livelier and safer alternative. The eastern wing of the Helsinki central railway station is of course a possibility but VR, the state railway operator, has many other uses for the premises and the space available would not necessarily afford the library the emphasis it deserves. Rautatientori is an interesting location but due to the so-called Kluuvi crush, experts have judged construction there to be extremely challenging, if not impossible.

### Costs

According to experts consulted, the location of the central library will not have a significant impact on construction costs. Depending on the area, different cost components will be emphasised. Current options include new-build, renovating an existing building or a combination of the two.

Assessing site costs is most straightforward in the Töölönlahti option. The block is zoned for commercial use and the land is owned by the City. The cost for this option therefore equals the loss of ROI. The block is currently zoned for development of up to 14,000 gross sqm, meaning that a state contribution is required, not just with regard to the project financing but also to secure the necessary land for development. The Lasipalatsi area is also owned by the city, with an old 1906 area plan in place. The Post House rental level is determined by negotiation.

With the regard to the **construction cost** estimate, the average cost at the desired specification is currently at €4,000/m<sup>2</sup>. Market variation is calculated at +/-20%. The total cost for a building comprising a floor area of 25,000m<sup>2</sup> is therefore estimated at €100m.

**Start-up costs** take account of items such as furnishings, fittings and equipment. On the basis of the 2006 report, it represents a cost of €6m with a further €6m required for the remainder of the premises, yielding a total of €12m. Commercial enterprises operating in the building will be responsible for equipping their own premises.

**Operating expenditure** is calculated to include rent, staff costs, material costs, maintenance and repair costs, cleaning and electricity.

Rental estimate based on the City of Helsinki Real Estate Department formula: the triple net rent for the central library premises estimated at 25,000m<sup>2</sup> is €18.70/m<sup>2</sup> (including land lease) and facilities management costs at €3/m<sup>2</sup>, giving a total of €21.70/m<sup>2</sup>. The estimated annual rent is therefore €5,425,500. The estimate is based on the City of Helsinki capital interest rate at 5.31% and the internal facilities management cost incorporating repair and maintenance and heating. The cost estimate for electricity and cleaning services is €600,000 per annum.

The rise in staff costs is due to the creation of approximately forty new posts. The grant allocation needed to cover this expenditure is €1.6m per annum. The additional expenditure on materials is calculated at €500,000. The added cost of utilities as regards the Helsinki city library budget is in the region of €6.5m.

The division of operational responsibility must also be considered: operating costs for the rest of the premises will be shared between occupants and the commercial premises operating costs will remain the liability of the tenant.

### Funding

The construction of the central library could be jointly funded by the state, the City of Helsinki and other metropolitan area cities. This arrangement allow for the participation of cooperation partners whose financial contributions facilitate and bring added value to the project.

### Cooperation partners

- Founding partners will contribute to the financing of the construction project. The financial input will be considerable and will entitle the partner to significant presence in the new central library. Suitable partners include foundations, companies and societies. A diverse network of cooperation partners is fundamental to the central library concept and a pre-requisite for its success.
- Operational partners bring significant input to the concept and make a targeted, fixed-term contribution to the resourcing of a specific area of operations. Operational partners may include the National Audiovisual Archive, YLE and lifelong learning colleges.
- Sponsors, such as companies, societies and foundations, support the work of the central library through fixed-term cooperation.
- Public donations. A Central Library Foundation can be set up to receive public donations.
- Other national and international partners as required.

### Income

- Rental income from commercial tenants: restaurants, cafés, shops
- Venue hire
- Events revenue
- Grant funding
- Operational support from foundation
- Sales income from commercial products and services

Ancillary services form an integral part of the central library operations. They have a direct bearing on visit quality and duration and are therefore key to the central library's appeal and lifespan.

### Administration

The central library will be administered as a mutual real estate corporation, owned by the state, the City of Helsinki and other metropolitan area local authorities. Real estate management companies set up by the respective city authorities are to act as shareholders.

The corporation is to be responsible for the construction and securing funding. The corporation will levy rent on the premises by separate agreement. The start-up costs and operating expenditure will be partially borne by the tenant, as agreed separately. Restaurants for example can fund the entire cost of furnishing and fitting their own premises.

The owning parties will be represented on the corporation board.

### Central library project implementation pre-requisites

- Citizen buy-in
- Central location
- Accessibility – physical and virtual
- Role as technological innovator
- Flexibility
- High-quality content
- High-quality economic structure
- High-quality partnering arrangement
- High-quality plan
- Dedicated leadership



# Next steps

## Going forward

- Consideration by management and recommendation for further action
- Presentation to City of Helsinki Board
- Board to vote on further action/ consult relevant departments
- Appoint director and management group
- Targeted study to assess need
- User consultation and survey
- Technical reports and estimates on three key locations
- Define operational concept and determine location
- Launch two-phase design competition

## Competition process

1. The first round is an open international competition. Freer and more conceptual in approach, it aims to identify the ethos for the project. A minimum of ten and a maximum of twenty candidates to qualify for the second round.
2. Define space allocation and competition brief
3. The second round is more comprehensive and solutions-oriented. SAFA may be the ideal competition organiser. Budget estimated at €200,000.

Sufficient resources should be allocated to the architectural competition to ensure thorough groundwork. The competition programme should inspire participants to aim high and to draw international interest.

## Other key elements

- Management group to push the project forward and to assume overall responsibility
- Planning group to conduct needs study and to draw up a spatial plan and operational plan
- Consultation with users. Internet pages in Finnish, Swedish and English. Organise seminars and working groups to develop concept further.
- Negotiations with cooperation partners underway. Partners to be closely involved from the beginning.
- Name

## Project Timetable

2008	Decision
	Project assessment
	Design competition launched
2009	Architect appointed
2010	Design completed
	Estimates
	Call to tender
	Tender submissions
	Decision
2011–2012	Construction begins
2016	Construction completed
2017	Centenary of Finnish independence
2117	200th anniversary of Finnish independence



# Interviews

Aalto Henrik, Mindworks

Aaltonen Mika, Docent, Helsinki University of Technology

Aarnipuu Tiia, City of Helsinki Council group chairwoman, Left Alliance

Aho Esko, President, Sitra

Aho Jonni, copywriter

Aho Tuulikki, Director, City of Vantaa Library Services

Aimonen Tomi, Head of Real Estate, Ilmarinen

Akar Ahmed, Director, Caisa International Culture Centre

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Aurén Birgitta, Director, City of Vaasa Library Services

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Grönholm Juhu, Architect, SAFA

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Hiilivirta Helena, Planning Director, Helsinki Music Centre

Hiltunen Arto, Chief Executive, S Group

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Hyvärinen Helena, Designer, Forum Virium Helsinki

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