

Finnish Research Library Association Collections Group Meeting

The Collections Group of the Finnish Research Library Association organized a one day seminar on November 19th, 2013 in Helsinki. The seminar concentrated on an important topic which libraries face today-- library spaces and collections. In the morning we heard three lectures about the subject, and then in the afternoon six libraries presented their recent solutions for the topic.

Here are some of my thoughts about the seminar.

From the morning's sessions, the first lecture of the day where Päivi Litmanen-Peitsala presented that libraries offer to people: space, goods and services. If you search the web with the words: picture university libraries—it results in pictures from libraries where empty space and shelves are dominating the picture. At the same time the idea of collections is changing from physical collections to electronic resources. The statistics of libraries have focused on items—for example, how many times a book has been loaned or how many people as visited the library. There is not as much information about how people use the library. She proposed that when libraries are planning new library collection spaces they should look at what happens in everyday life, because that is the way people learn the use of space. Now there is a totally new kind of generation growing up with new ways of handling information. According Litmanen-Peitsala the new library buildings should be planned for the needs of this new user generation. She spoke also about the status of library professionals, who have been authorities in libraries and information, but this is changing. Library professionals have to find new ways of being useful in this new era.

In the afternoon we heard six presentations of different kind of library space and/or collection cases. Some of them are still in process and some are already completed and in use. I will focus on two projects which are completed and in use. In the Oulu University Library the students of architecture have been planning their library together with the library professionals. The process began, because architecture students have facilities far away from main campus, the opening hours of the library had been reduced and the traditional library was not so much used. The students felt that the library was only a place to borrow materials and pay for overdue loan fees. The students wanted to have user friendly a place where it would be easy to study. In Oulu they received money from a student association to organize a planning competition for architecture students. The

new library called media lounge is open 24/7, it is digital and there are different kind of places to study alone or in a group or to just relax in the space.

In the Lahti Polytechnic Library there are many parts of the organization working behind-the-scenes to support the work of the library, but the patrons do not necessarily know which part is supporting each service. The basis of the planning has been sustainable development. Also at Lahti students have been involved with planning the library, and as one example, the students have renovated and built some of the furniture. The collections usage statistics have been evaluated to see the loans patterns. The libraries have been designed to be where the students pass by, including restaurants or lobbies. After all this work, library visits have increased in all campus libraries.

Libraries are not just shelves or storage for books, and our collections are more and more electronic collections, which do not need the space. Also, we are in a time where our students need a different kind of place to use for studying. Involving our users in planning library spaces where they are able to study and able to find information and professional assistance is a good way to reach something new. These are only some impressions of the interesting seminar day. The full program with the links of presentations in Finnish are available:

<http://www.stks.fi/asiakirjat/koulutustenmateriaalit/materiaalit-kokoelma>.

Sirpa Janhonen

Member of the Board of the Finnish Research Library Association and its Collections Group

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Kirjoitus on alun perin julkaistu IFLA:n hankinta ja kokoelmatyöryhmän sivuilla osoitteessa: <http://www.ifla.org/node/8265>