

## Visit of the Finnish University Librarians

According to the High-Level Colloquium on Information Literacy and Lifelong Learning held in Alexandria in 2005, Finland can be viewed as a model for other countries for having succeeded in making their political decision-makers aware of the importance of IL. The CILIP Community Service: Information Literacy Sub Group was delighted therefore, when the Finnish Information Literacy Network contacted them to arrange a visit to discuss possible cooperative projects.

The meeting took place on Monday 17<sup>th</sup> December 2007. 5 Finnish librarians and a student representative from the Universities of Helsinki, Tampere and Kuopio met members of the CSG IL committee in the morning to hear about our projects and then the afternoon session was opened up to other IL specialists to discuss the Finnish initiatives and possible cooperative ventures between our two countries. At the end of the day, all present realised that there were both similarities and differences in how librarians in both countries are approaching IL. A key outcome of the day was to map areas of interest and to match these with interested parties, with the aim of exchanging knowledge and the creation of collaborative projects.

There is not one professional body for librarians in Finland but different associations for each library sector. As in the UK, in Finland IL is often seen as highly important in the higher education sector and is less recognised in the public sector. However, public libraries in Finland may have "Pedagogy librarians" who work closely with schools in providing a school library and teaching students IL. The University Libraries' network has 21 university libraries that collaborate quite actively. This appears to be similar to SCONUL. (There are plans to reduce the number of universities in Finland through merger.) The network has been undertaking several collaborative projects. These include: a competence map for staff to 2010, Collection mapping, Information Literacy, a study on finance structures & practices and Quality & impact assessment. The National Library of Finland provides a portal of information to research libraries in Finland and have procured the Library catalogue and Library portal for all the academic libraries (Voyager and MetaLib).

The Information literacy project (2004 - 2006) was funded by the government and aimed to raise the profile of IL by:

- Informing decision makers at all levels
- Integrating IL into academic studies
- Testing the implementation of IL with different projects.

The group feel that the project has achieved its aims. For example the Ministry of Education has recognised that libraries have a role to play in the development and teaching of study skills and that IL skills are vital. See [http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2004/liitteet/opm\\_190\\_opm08.pdf?lang=fi](http://www.minedu.fi/export/sites/default/OPM/Julkaisut/2004/liitteet/opm_190_opm08.pdf?lang=fi). In the UK representatives of CILIP Community Service: Information Literacy Sub Group have met government ministers, but a lot of work needs to take place before a similar statement is made here.

IL was also placed in the strategy of the Council of Finnish University Libraries. The Council recommended to the universities that IL competency should be embedded in the new degree structures. An IL framework that included examples of IL modules for different levels of study was included. See

<http://www.helsinki.fi/infolukutaito/english/recommendation.pdf>. These were based on the Information Literacy Competency Standards published by the American Library Association in 2000.

All universities in Finland have been reviewing their curriculum so that their degree structures map onto the Bologna Process. The Bologna Process aims to create a European Higher Education Area (EHEA) by 2010. The EHEA aims to allow easy and equitable access to high quality higher education. Further information is available from [http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/bologna\\_process/index.cfm](http://www.europeunit.ac.uk/bologna_process/index.cfm)

Library staff, especially of smaller universities found the recommendation from the Council of Finnish University Libraries beneficial when negotiating for time in the curriculum. There has been a slight change in university practice, but the increase in IL modules has not been as high as hoped. A Masters student is currently undertaking a project to discover how IL has been embedded in the higher education curriculum across Finland. The results will be available next year.

Examples of how IL is embedded in the curriculum are as follows:

- a) An ICT Driving Licence and information seeking module is offered at Helsinki University. The course is embedded into the curriculum of all 1st year students and aims to introduce students to computers and IL. Students must pass the course to continue their studies
- b) At Kuopio University IL is embedded into all the Masters programmes. The course is assessed and students must pass the module to progress on their masters. Kuopio University library is currently developing web IL courses.

The project group feel that collaboration is essential. To this end they have:

- a) A network of specialists
- b) Provide seminars & conferences on IL. The next conference is called "Creating knowledge V: Information behaviour on the internet - challenges for the libraries" and is taking place on 20 - 22 August 2008
- c) Input into the NordInfoLit website at <http://www.nordinfolit.org/default.asp?nid=13>
- d) Developed a Finnish IL website that can be found at <http://www.helsinki.fi/infolukutaito/english/index.htm>
- e) Been collaborating with librarians from Croatia, Slovakia, Australia and America.

The Finnish university libraries have undertaken several IL projects. These include:

- a) Web-SeaL (Web Searching, Information Literacy and Learning) - a project that is studying the relationship between Web searching, information literacy and learning.
- b) Klaara Question Bank: exam questions for information literacy was developed at the Tampere University of Technology but is shared across all the universities. It assesses students IL proficiency and can be used as summative as well as formative assessment. It is delivered via Moodle.
- c) Infoavain is a website that is designed to help the libraries share their teaching material. The website was developed between 2000 - 2005 and lists what is available. It is no longer updated.

### **Actions from the meeting**

All present agreed that the meeting had been very useful and interesting; and were therefore keen to ensure that the momentum was continued. Therefore, areas of interest where collaboration could be possible were identified:

- Advocacy
- Wider community, e.g. government ministers [Debbi Boden]
- With own stake holders (embedding strategies, liaison with academics, marketing & promotion) [Sheila Corral and Alison]
- Student involvement [Lyn Parker, Alison, Bob Glass, CILASS]
- Web 2:00 and what it means for IL [Peter Godwin, Jane Secker, Bob Glass]
- IL question banks [Ruth Stubbings, Debbi Boden, Bob Glass]
- Best practice in teaching IL (Pedagogy, teaching teachers, learning materials) [Gwyneth Price, Nigel Morgan, Mark Hepworth, Chris Powis]
- Assessments (formative & summative) [Lyn Parker, Graham Walton]
- Liaison between the two groups
- Competency map of staff [Ruth Stubbings, Debbi Boden, Lyn Parker, Nigel Morgan]