

# Visit to HU-Libraries, November 2008

*Kirjastonhoitaja Agnes Balint vieraili Helsingin yliopiston kirjastoissa viime vuoden marraskuussa. Agnes kertoo lyhyesti kokemuksistaan täällä sekä peilaa niitä omaan kirjastoonsa.*

The situation of my home library very much resembles that of the HU-Libraries in that both have a trend of integrating different campus libraries and a history of embracing both national and university tasks. I found other similarities also concerning some of the projects being pursued by both institutions. Thus, I tried to concentrate on some of these specific topics during my 5 day visit, including adherence to the open access movement and achievements in open archiving, and digitization concepts of the National Library and information literacy issues at the university level.

In spite of the brevity of my visit, I found it very successful and stimulating. I am grateful for the efficient organization of my schedule and for the precious time many colleagues took from their serious responsibilities to spend with me.

I found the transparency of how the HU-Libraries function in every aspect very useful and informative. I was struck by the organizational hierarchy, the workflow organization, the definition of personal and shared responsibilities for ongoing projects, and the precision of all facts and figures regarding university and library performance. Quality assurance is undoubtedly a key factor in the achievements and the continuous improvement of HU-Libraries.

As far as the open access movement is concerned, I was impressed by the overall awareness of the university leadership of the benefits of OA and their readiness to adopt a favourable decision regarding publishing and archiving options. The “wisdom” of the mandate can be especially seen in the amount of time allotted to the preparation of all parties involved: university teaching staff, researchers, and library staff. Because of this, the HU-Libraries may well surpass the University of Debrecen despite the fact that, apart from this attitude on the part of the HU-Libraries leadership, the two institutions have gone through the very same evolution in using DSpace with very similar problems and results.

As the second national library of Hungary, the University and [National Library of the University of Debrecen](#) has a very different role in the library network of our country. Many of the outstanding achievements in terms of digitization of the National Library of Finland fall within the tasks and ongoing projects of the National Library of Hungary (NLH) in Budapest and it is a challenge for us in Debrecen to define a programme of digitization which complements what the NLH is doing. Until now we have focused on magazines of local historical interest and books connected with research performed at our university in our

library digitization programme. A project of digitization in co-operation with a copyright agency in order to provide a subscription-based service of scientific literature may be an option for us as well.

The effective spread of information literacy is a key issue for university libraries. In Debrecen, courses on information retrieval are part of university curricula and are taught by library staff. However, the way in which information literacy skills are tiered in HU-Libraries (entry level for new students, bachelor's intermediate level and master's advanced level) and the fact that they are integrated as a compulsory component into the thesis seminars and performed together with the academic teaching staff, appears to be very effective for students and librarians. It also fosters good relationships and mutual respect between teaching and library staff. The seamless co-operation of academic and library staff and academic and library leadership is well observed in the expedient funding of all new projects which helps to make possible a stable, high quality library service.



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