Research as a strategic tool for a research library

Antti Leino ⟨leino@cc.helsinki.fi⟩

August 9, 2012

Introduction
Some history

- Research libraries an integral part of the research community
  - The National Library founded 1640 as the library of the Royal Academy of Åbo (now the University of Helsinki)

- Over time, several changes in the environment
  - technological, like the printing press
  - social, like the suffrage of universities from the church

- The digital era is the latest of these changes

Introduction
Dawn of the Digital Era

- Changes at all levels of academic life
    - teaching
    - research
    - publishing

- Role of libraries is changing
    - new material published digitally
    - old material digitised
    - users expect digital services

- How to keep up with the times?

Role of Libraries
Proactive Approach

- A library exists to serve its users
  - not just current but also past and future ones!

- Emphasis on the needs of scholars
  - should be obvious for a research library
  - but must not forget the rest of the clientele

- Goal: to stay relevant
  - what do people need from the library?
  - what *will* they need?

Role of Libraries
Needs of Future Users

- So, what do scholars need from the library
    - as a source of research papers
    - as a source of research material

- Focus on the humanities
    - sciences and medicine have their own sources for data

- Focus on digitised material
    - natively digital not to be forgotten, though

Staying Relevant
Taking a closer look

- What does the digital revolution mean?
  - especially for a research library
  - not easy to see in detail

- Several areas worthy of study
  - digitising old material
  - metadata collection, annotation
  - uses of crowdsourcing

- Should a library do this?
  - well, yes!

Staying Relevant
Collaboration

- Digital humanities

- Symbiosis between faculty and library
  - how can the library serve scholars
  - how can the scholars help the library

- Joint project
  - library experience
  - digital archiving
  - research methods
  - software engineering

Action Plan
Interested Parties

- National Library
  - digitisation centre in Mikkeli

- University of Helsinki
  - research in language technology and data mining
  - representing entity for CLARIN ERIC

- Mikkeli Polytechnic
  - programme in digital archiving

- Mikkeli University Centre and DigitalMikkeli

Action Plan
Joint Research Group

- Set up a research group in Mikkeli
    - professor in digital corpora (UH, NL)
    - 1–2 Ph.D. students (UH)
    - 1–2 Ph.D.-level teacher/researchers (MPoly)
    - expert in digitising (NL)

- Time frame: 2013–16
    - long-term goal to have permanent collaboration
    - funding currently finalised for 2013–14

Action Plan
Projected Research Areas

- Ways to increase the quality of data
    - crowdsourced annotation, metadata collection
    - making the data available

- Methods for using the data
    - data-driven research
    - leveraging language technology for other fields

Thank you