Library Statistics and Standardisation: Performance Measurement and Possibilities for Applying New Methods on Performance Measurement and Benchmarking in Estonia

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Abstract
The paper will focus on the following aspects:

• Effectiveness of a library’s development activities based on collaboration between Estonian libraries and other libraries with international co-operation
• Library performance measurement and librarianship standardisation
• Possibilities for applying performance measurement and benchmarking methods in Estonian libraries
• Library performance measurement and benchmarking: library statistics measures as a tool for library acquisition development

Collaboration with other libraries and international organisations
The changes in librarianship in the independent Estonian state are characterised by the shift from the indoctrinated library system to the democratic library system – from the deeply centralised management scheme to the decentralised responsibilities of each library relating to its service and acquisition profile, and performance. The distances between libraries, between libraries and suppliers, between libraries and their users are vanishing.

The development of information and communication technologies, taking place in Estonian libraries, provides preconditions for the co-operation and joint action of libraries in the areas of acquisition, resource sharing, and generating and managing databases (Valm, 2000).

During the years in which the role of the library in society changed, the principle mission of the library to be an international, educational and cultural centre was restored in Estonia. The restoration of independence in Estonia ten years ago challenged libraries to make their contribution to the development of statehood, economy, science and culture to secure the capacity to cope with international competitive pressure. The transition from a controlled economy to an open market economy, the accession to international organisations and conventions, the renewal of legislation in respect of international law, democracy, human rights, freedom of information and free competition, changes in science arrangements and higher education are the major factors which have had their impact on the development on librarianship in Estonia during the last ten years.

The effectiveness of a library’s development activities is closely related to the degree of participation in international projects, and is associated with awareness of European and international development trends in the library field. It also depends on the library’s readiness to participate in the work of international library organisations, and on its knowledge of the basic documents of these organisations which should form the basis for state library policy and for planning the library’s activities. The representation of each research library or library institution in international organisations depends on their
fields of activities, as well as their financial situation regarding paying the member fees.

Every state needs national documents that provide guidance for developing the activities of its libraries and the sphere of culture in general, however, their basic start points have to mesh with European and world library policy and development trends. The EU member states had begun to shape librarianship within the framework of European Commission programmes in the 1990s, aiming to enhance library co-operation and the initiation of national projects. Participation in the work of international organisations makes library co-operation and development activities more efficient. A major part of Estonian research libraries participate in the work of IFLA (International Federation of Library Association and Institutions), CERL (Consortium of European Research Libraries), LIBER (Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche), Bibliotheca Baltica, IAML (International Association of Music Libraries, Archives and Documentation Centres), EIA (European Information Association), ISKO (International Society for Knowledge Organisation) and several other international organisations.

Estonian research libraries also are members of different international organisations that have relevant profiles within their library type, such as:

- The National Library of Estonia is a member of CDNL (Conference of Directors of National Libraries) and CENL (Conference of European National Libraries); as a parliamentary library, a member of IALL (International Association of Law Libraries), ECPRD (European Centre of Parliamentary Research and Documentation) and ICA/SPP (International Council of Archives, Section of Archives of Parliaments and Political Parties); IPC (The Institute of Paper Conservation)
- Tartu University Library and the Medical Library of Estonia are members of EAHIL (European Association for Health Information and Libraries)
- Tallinn Technical University Library is a member of IATUL (International Association of Technological University Libraries)
- The Estonian Patent Library participates in the work of PATLIB (Annual Conference of Patent Libraries)
- The Department of Information Studies of the Tallinn Pedagogical University participates in the work of EADTU (European Association of Distance Teaching Universities), BOBCATSSS and EUCLID

The participation in the work of international organisations, and international projects has been an encouragement to Estonian libraries, and provided them with expertise with which to initiate national co-operation projects contributing to the work organisation of libraries (Nuut, 2000).

Estonian libraries and library institutions have an active role in several international co-operation projects whose aim is to develop an international library network and performance:

- to generate a centralised search engine to provide access to the digitised periodicals and online databases of Europe
- to analyse and develop acquisition needs of libraries
- to economise library work
- to develop library standardisation
- to analyse and evaluate library performance and quality
- to develop book and library history research
- to promote preservation of cultural heritage
- to encourage distant education and staff training

(International projects 2002)
Library standardisation

Library statistics are a valuable source for library performance measurement. Library statistics and performance measurement studies as a part of management process and decision-making support system have a long history in USA, UK, Canada, Germany, Australia, New Zealand and other countries. The gathering of Estonian library statistics was started in 1973 (in the beginning, only public libraries); in the 1990s it underwent major changes (included collecting data of all types of libraries). In the changing environment development and standardisation are inevitable – the EU project LibEcon2000 provided new goals and guidelines, new direction for data collection of library statistics, and for the development of performance measurement activities on the national level. A variety of studies on library economics, carried out during the project offered the possibility of comparing Estonian libraries within European context and of applying performance measurement and benchmarking methods on the national level.

Libraries’ work organisation and the flexible interaction of the library network as an integrated system depend on library standardisation. For years the validation of Estonian national library standards have been talked about; however, the last ten years of newly independent Estonian state have only brought along the acknowledgement of normatives of ISO international standards by the Estonian libraries. During the period of restoration of independent statehood the work of Estonian libraries was reorganised according to the IFLA and ISO standards; drawing up Estonian standards was initiated only in 2000.

The National Standards Board of Estonia (EVS) was established in newly independent Estonia in 1991 as a governmental institution under the administration of the Ministry of Finance for the purpose of directing and co-ordinating activities in the field of standardisation, metrology and accreditation in Estonia. Activities in the field of standardisation in Estonia were directed and co-ordinated by the EVS from September 1991 up to April 2000. The National Standards Board of Estonia was a correspondent member of International Organisation for Standardisation (ISO) and an affiliated member of the European Committee for Standardisation (CEN). In 1999 the Government order on establishing the Non-Profit Organisation Estonian Centre for Standardisation was issued and on 30 November, the founding documents as well as the Statutes of the Centre was approved. In April 2000 the Government of Estonia and the Estonian Centre for Standardisation concluded an agreement in which the rights and obligations in organising standardisation activities in Estonia were laid down more precisely and on 1 April the Centre as the national standards body started its operations as provided by the Technical Regulations and Standards Act (01.04.2000).

The Estonian Centre for Standardisation (EVS) is a correspondent member of ISO, associated member of IEC and an affiliated member of CEN and CENELEC. Membership of international standardisation organisations offers wider opportunities to the Centre for co-operation in the field of standardisation on the international level and to initiate adoption of ISO standards. Estonian national standards issued by EVS are voluntary documents and drawn up by Technical Committees or by working groups of co-operation. EVS approves and registers Estonian Standards.

In May 2001 the Advisory Board was established, which includes representatives from EVS, governmental institutions, associations, consumers and other interested parties. The Advisory Board functions as a voluntary organisation, approving proposals for the review and drafting of Estonian standards.
Standards, making proposals, concerning the membership of technical committees and consulting Centre members. At present there are 12 technical committees registered and operating in the Estonian Centre for Standardisation, including TC 4 (EVS/TK4) Information Technology. Technical Committees as well as co-operation partners have been mostly engaged in preparing the original Estonian standards and in the preparation of adoptions in translation method. They give comments on drafts of Estonian standards, and are informed by EVS on the current work of their corresponding European or international technical committees.

The Working Group of Standardisation on librarianship was established in the National Library of Estonia (NLE) in 2001. The aim of the working group is the adoption of international ISO standards and IFLA standards on librarianship. The main areas of standardisation are library statistics, library terminology, library acquisition, cataloguing, description, preservation and digitisation of library resources, and information technology.

NLE has good co-operation with EVS/TK 4 in the field of standardisation of Library Information Technology and was asked to become a full member of the Committee in autumn 2002.

The Estonian Centre for Standardisation is registered for participation in the work ISO/TC 46 and ISO/TC 171 as an observer member. NLE has good relations with the Estonian Centre for Standardisation. In January 2002 the co-operation agreement was concluded between NLE and the Estonian Centre for Standardisation with the purpose of encouraging library standardisation, participating in seminars and training courses held in the Centre and having information about ISO standards, standards drafting and approval, receiving EVS Bulletin, and so on.

For information about Estonian Standards in the field of librarianship, adopted by Estonian Centre for Standardisation and the Work Programme of the standardisation WG of the NLE in 2002 see Annexes 1 and 2 below.

The methodology used in the library economic surveys was based on ISO standards ISO 2789 and ISO 11620. Some new measures were included in the EU project LibEcon survey, which provided some piloting experience (Sumsion 2002).

The LibEcon2000 project made library performance evaluation and measurement, and the studies of library economics, library standardisation, and the gathering and analysis of library statistics more efficient. The typology of Estonian libraries, and the gathering and analysis methodologies of Estonian library statistics were better arranged in co-operation with the project leaders of LibEcon2000, and thanks to the good co-operation within the project, several national projects for library work evaluation and performance measurement were initiated and an ISO standard 11620 was adopted as an Estonian Standard.

The principles, guidelines and recommendation of the UNESCO, ISO, IFLA and EBLIDA have been followed in finalising the methods of quantitative analyses of library performance and in establishing the basis for gathering and analysing library statistics. In recent years, the questionnaire forms and instructions for collecting library statistics have been improved according to international recommendations for keeping statistics and statistical definitions and the processing of the data has been altered according to the recommendations of the EC project LibEcon2000.

The most valuable information is published in the survey of the EC project LibEcon2000 Millennium Study, which makes it possible
for every included country to compare their country data with European Library Economy survey results, and to recommend it to national policy makers and financing bodies (Sumson et al, 2001)

**Possibilities for applying performance measurement and benchmarking methods in Estonian libraries**

Estonian libraries have started performance measurement analysis; however, this has not yet developed into a systematic and regular process to support the development of organisational activities, provide a basis for planning activities, development policies, state financial policy and the procurement of state resources. The need to draw up a library development policy and financial basis, based on research, exists. Performance measurement and quality appraisal are important and useful for every library. However, as each library has specific objectives, goals and responsibilities, there is a need to develop specific performance indicators for every library type adequately reflecting their performance, quality, quantity and effectiveness adequately. The results of the evaluation process should form the basis for the library network and library system development.

Library statistics are used as management information in the study survey of Estonian research libraries Library Performance Measurement and Assessment: Study survey of research libraries 1995-2000 (based on collections, acquisition, librarians’ qualification, and expenditure, cost analysis). The financing of research institutions, universities and research libraries is a difficult task for a small country like Estonia. There is a need for targeted financing from the state budget to purchase and acquire scientific information, and relevant financing policy. There is also a need for elaborate acquisition policy and development and defining of Estonian research library acquisition areas avoiding duplication (Nuu, 2001).

Based on funding from the Estonian Science Foundation Grant, a project concerned with performance measurement and the evaluation of research libraries in Estonia (2000-2002) was carried out by the Chair of Librarianship at Tallinn Pedagogical University (TPU), Estonia. This was a joint activity of TPU, the National Library of Estonia and Tartu University Library (Lepik, 2001). During the project an optimality analysis of the performance of research libraries belonging to the state system of information dissemination was carried out under the present economic and financial conditions, and the econometric analysis and model work organisations of the libraries and benchmarking models were extended.

Tartu University Library (TUL) carried out a study survey on the library expectation of the university faculty – the user survey, aimed at the faculty of the TU, including lecturers, researchers, managers of teaching, development and research work, specialists, and graduate students in both Masters and Doctoral programmes. The library definitely has to continue submitting well-grounded applications for acquisition sums and financing for the building of electronic library. From the viewpoint of authoritative group of library users, these are the very areas that need serious development activities.

The National Library of Estonia analysed Estonian Public Library statistics 1997–2001, using similar methods as those used by LISU (staff, public library use, lending issues per user, lending issues per capita, visits, collections, acquisitions, additions per user and expenditure: staff expenditure, total expenditure per capita, distribution of current expenditure, capital expenditure etc (Saul, Jõgi, 2002).
Library performance measurement and benchmarking: Library statistics measures – as a tool for library acquisition development

Financial resources remain an issue for libraries in all areas. Insufficient resources, downsizing, funding cuts, increased costs, outsourcing, fees and co-operation between libraries have been the main subjects for discussion in the recent years. Libraries in Eastern Europe have faced special challenges because of changing political environments. The political and economic disruption, along with the new models which managers had to adopt in response to the disappearance of financial guarantees, rules, regulations, and the government above them all bring the need to review the efficiency of operations. Thus needs arose to start the modernisation of library operations and to balance their fiscal reality and budgeting.

The hope that electronic access to information will reduce the cost of library materials has not been realised in libraries. There is an increasing interest in developing theory and applying quality management principles and techniques to the library and information sector. Quality, and the associated concept of value are not new ideas for librarians: they have always been concerned with them. It is a valuable concern to define value not only in terms of the quality of service, but also of the impact information was on its users. It shows us that costing a service without identifying its value to users can prove damaging, and it concludes that the consequence of our focusing on the cost of providing services without being able to demonstrate their value and quality is that we leave the initiative to the people whose chief concern is the cost control or profit: the founders and vendors. This constitutes an important reason for library managers to concentrate on developing a quality approach to every aspect of their financing, and to acquisition (to develop an acquisition policy and increase acquisition expenditure).

Performance measurement, quality evaluation and benchmarking all play an important part.

References


### Annex 1

**LIS Standards Issued By ISO and Adopted as Estonian Standards**

  
  ISO/FDIS 2789:1999 involved into working plan 2002 of the WG of standardisation of Estonia in the National Library. Will be translated into Estonian and draft given to the WG for comments, application for adoption as Estonian Standard to the Centre for Standardisation.

  **ISO 2789:2002** is included into State Standardisation Plan for 2002 and Work Programme of Estonian Centre for Standardisation (EVS) for adoption as Estonian Standard by translation method. The project leader is National Library of Estonia (NLE).

- **ISO 3166-1-2000** Codes for the Representation of Names of Countries and their Subdivision Part 1 *(Adopted as Estonian standard EVS-EN ISO 3166-1:2000)*


  
  Translated into Estonian.

  The adoption of ISO standard ISO 11620 as Estonian national standard was initiated by the Library Science and Development Department of the NLE. The aim of adaption of the ISO 11620 was to promote activities of library performance measurement and quality assessment in Estonia. The ISO 11620 was published as an Estonian standard in April 2000 and was in the TOP 10 of Estonian standards sold by the ECS in 2000.

Annex 2

WORK Programme 2002

Standardisation Working Group of the National Library of Estonia

1 Drafting of Estonian standards

1.1 State Programme

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ICS Group and designation of the draft</th>
<th>Name of the standard</th>
<th>Reference document</th>
<th>Project leader</th>
<th>Stage</th>
<th>Next stage</th>
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<td>ICS 01.140.20 prEVS-EN ISO 2789</td>
<td>Information and Documentation. International Library Statistics.</td>
<td>EN ISO 2789:2002</td>
<td>NLE</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>30 (depends on availability of FDIS)</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICS 01.140.20 prEVS-ISO 11620 muud 1</td>
<td>Information and Documentation. Library Performance Indicators.</td>
<td>ISO 11620: 1998/Amd 1 Additional indicators</td>
<td>NLE</td>
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<td>30 (depends on availability of FDIS)</td>
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1.2 Work Programme EVS

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2. Drafting of NLE standards

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<th>Reference document</th>
<th>Project leader</th>
<th>Stage</th>
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Other tasks:

1 Participation in the work of ISO/TC 46 and ISO/TC 171 and its subcommittees

2 Participation in the work of the EVS technical committee EVS/TK 4 Infotechnology