

## ***How to Raise the Profile for the National Library***

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The Latvian National Library has worked under the conditions of an independent state 31 years out of the 82 years of its existence.

In the 30s it had become a modern (for those times) and dynamic library, following the Anglo-American traditions of libraries.

As the result of two occupations the library lost half of its collections. In 1948 the last employees that had worked at the library during the period of state independence were dismissed; foreign literature, with insignificant exceptions, was received only from communist countries; a special fond of literature to be kept under specific conditions was established, special permits were needed for working with this collection. Approximately 500,000 volumes were taken out of the collection of the Library and destroyed.

Today (23.08.2001) is the tenth anniversary of the day when the Latvian Parliament declared the independence of the Republic of Latvia.

The main objective of the last 10-12 years has been the reintroduction of all the functions typical of national libraries, following the development tendencies of modern libraries.

In 1990 the State Library of Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic was renamed the Latvian National Library. The change of the name was the easy part, as easy as changing the names of Lenin Street and Karl Marx Street.

A more challenging task was to create a truly, full-fledged institution.

### **The decisive factors defining the place of the national library**

- **Historical**
- **Network**
- **Legislation**
- **Functions**
- **Services and products**
- **Co-operation**
- **PR**
- **Funding**

On this slide you see the factors that, to my mind, influence the process, which we could call - profile raising. In the language of marketing and management it could also be called brand building.

### **History and Traditions**

LNB and Jānis Misiņš Library, collection and functions

State Library of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic

Chamber of Books

Landesbibliothek

The Fundamental Library of the Academy of Sciences of the LSSR.

The history and the traditions at the origins of national libraries are of great importance. Latvia, which at that time was part of the Russian Czarist Empire, had no University of its own, since starting with 1632 it belonged to the Estonian part of the Baltic provinces - in Tartu. The University of Latvia was founded only in 1919.

The legal deposit copies of books printed in Latvian were sent to St. Petersburg, Moscow and Helsinki. They did not remain in Riga.

Therefore, collections of Latvian language editions depended upon private initiative. In 1885 this very valuable work was started by Jānis Misiņš, who is also the founder of the national bibliography.

In 1919, when the decision was taken to found the Latvian State Library and Misiņš was appointed as its manager, he was not ready to give over his most complete collection of Latvian books and periodicals for the foundation of the new library.

In 1925, Misiņš sold his private library to Riga City. This event to a certain extent influences the profile of LNB collection even today.

In 1940, the Latvian State Library was changed into the State Library of the Latvian SSR, which nevertheless retained the legal deposit copy.

But following the example of the Soviet Union national agency of bibliography – the Chamber of Books (*Kniznaya Palata*) was established. In 1959, it was separated from the State Library and transferred under the supervision of another ministry.

The German occupation administration in 1941 joined the Latvian National Library, Misiņš and Riga City libraries - one of the oldest public libraries in Europe that was founded in 1525. However, after the war the library again was divided. Taking the Riga Library as the basis, the Fundamental Library of the Academy of Sciences was established. In 1954, the Misiņš Library was joined to it.

A confusing model of two partly para-national libraries was created, and these divided between themselves the work of creating a retrospective national bibliography and union catalog. That created unnecessary competition and disputes.

### **The specific feature of the library network in the country and the capital Riga**

Riga and its suburbs - 50% of Latvian population

Riga City library network

The University of Latvia

Network of children's libraries

The profile of a library is defined also by the general library network situation. Riga has a population of 750,000 out of a total number of Latvian inhabitants - 2 million---95% of all the students study in Riga. Only 6 minor universities are situated outside Riga.

On the other hand, the network of Riga city libraries, which in traditional understanding should be the central library, has only 45 branches, one of which has been entrusted with the administration of the whole network. Thus a very specific situation has arisen - the centrally situated National Library is very popular with the general public. Therefore, it is open 74 hours per week, including Saturdays and Sundays.

The University of Latvia, as mentioned before, was established only in 1919. The only library of the highest educational establishment - that of the Riga Polytechnics, which was founded in 1862 during the First World War, was taken to Russia. In fact, for the second time the newly created collection of the University of Latvia Library is destroyed.

As a result, in difference to other metropolitan cities, the students of Riga universities basically use the collections of the National Library and the Academic Library (former Fundamental Library). The University of Latvia, the profile of which is dominated by social sciences and humanities, just like with the national Library, is located very close to the National Library. So in fact the National Library has turned also into the research library of the University of Latvia.

Latvia does not have a central library for children. Riga has such a library. During the Soviet period the methodological center for children's libraries was situated at the State Library. As presently there is no other institution that might take over the coordination of the work of the children's and school libraries, the Center of Children's Literature of the National Library is doing this and other duties, first of all with the aim of popularizing reading and cooperation with the authors and publishers of children's books.

### **Legislation**

Laws of 1922 on the State Library and Central Book Catalog

Law on the Latvian National Library (1992)

Law on Legal Deposit Copy (1997)

Law on Libraries (1998)

One of the tools ensuring raising the profile of the national library is legislation.

In 1922 the Latvian parliament adopted two laws - on the State Library and Central Book Catalog.

The first law defined the well-known functions typical of a national library, as well as set some other less significant tasks.

The other law in fact laid the foundation for the national union catalog and defined the responsibility of the National Library for its management.

In 1940 these laws, similar to the rest of the legislation of the Republic of Latvia, were no longer valid. Neither the activities of the State Library of the USSR, nor the state libraries of the Soviet republic were defined by specialist laws.

In 1992, when the Republic of Latvia was reestablished, the Law on the National Library was passed that eliminated the ambiguities of status regarding the national library. This law served as the basis for reuniting the Latvian National Library with the Institute of National Bibliography, as the Chamber of Books had been renamed in the meanwhile.

The law of 1997 on Legal Deposit Copy identified those libraries that had the rights to receive free of charge the copies of all books published in Latvia, previously this was regulated by a decree of the Cabinet of Ministers. A completely new norm was the responsibility of the National Library to control the collection of all the legal deposit copies and their distribution.

Law on Libraries, without overlapping with the previous one, defined the responsibility of the National Library for the Latvian National Union Catalog.

### **Basic Functions of the National Library**

Legal deposit copy

National bibliography (See. [www.vip.latnet.lv/lnb](http://www.vip.latnet.lv/lnb))

National union catalog (See. [www.linc.lv](http://www.linc.lv))

The main objective of the National Library in recent years was strengthening its basic functions.

An impressive status as regards receipt of the legal deposit copies was achieved. At the beginning of the 90s, when the book-publishing sector turned private, the library did not receive almost half of the publications, now it receives 85-90%. Audio recordings and electronic publications now also have the status of legal deposit.

A united legal deposit archive is under construction, it now has much better storage facilities.

For the creation of a national bibliography, a library information system has been purchased, on-line access is guaranteed, printed bibliographical editions are scanned and data retroconversion was started, as well as uploading of the existing recordings to Aleph 500.

Up till now there were various manual catalogs (foreign editions, foreign periodicals, exile editions, ancient prints, *Letonica* collection, music publications, etc.). Now with the introduction of Aleph500 (LNB used to have VTLS), 8 libraries simultaneously were given the possibility to create a joint digital catalog. All members of the system enter data in one database, after that receiving replications of their catalogs.

During Soviet times the Latvian National Library was an institution of supervision.

### **Services and Products**

Users

Collection

Services

Products

Services rendered to other libraries and their readers

The number of regular users of the NL has grown from 20,052 in 1991 to 44,6000 in 2000.

The average age of the users has changed from 38 to 27. It is explained by the fact that the number of students in Latvia has doubled, new spheres have been established (finances, foreign policy, management and marketing, defense), in which both the students and the staff need completely new knowledge. Only 5% of the users use LNL for recreational purposes. The priority is studies, professional education and professional needs.

The Latvian National Library, respecting this situation, made a considerable effort in order to, first of all, increase the book acquisition budget (from 30,000 to 300,000 US\$ annually). Secondly, a detailed collection development plan was drafted with the aim of meeting the needs of LNB target audience.

A similar increase was observed in the number of visits (from 271,441 to 464,661) and copies issued (from 1,535,458 to 3,254,530). LNB covers 75% of the ILL in the country. Reader service is even more important, though it is more difficult to assess. As a piece of self-criticism it has to be admitted that distance service - delivery of national documents and other services are only being developed, as well as the training program for library users.

LNB has started building a digital library. It consists of 6 separate projects - national bibliography, provincial newspapers till 1940, maps, art posters, old Riga postcards and pre-war records.

LNB is paying great attention to the services needed by libraries. A Standards Department was established in the mid-90s. Now all the necessary bibliographical standards have been developed and approved. Apart from the Institute of Bibliography that was already mentioned (including ISBN, ISMN and ISSN agencies), the department of the Union Catalog, ILL, the department of Restoration and Digitalization, and the Center of Children's Literature, important advisory and research work is done also by the Library Service and Research Department. The Center of Continuous Education of the University of Latvia and the administration of LINC are also located on the premises of the National Library.

### **The status of "leading" library and leadership**

Public library network  
Intersectoral council of LNB  
LATLIBNET  
Library information network consortia (LINC)  
The project of the National Library

During the Soviet period public libraries or, as they were called at that time - mass libraries, were under the supervision of the Ministry of Culture, in fact - under the supervision of the State Library. The law on local authorities stipulated that now all the responsibility for

public libraries was transferred to municipalities. That was a shock both to public libraries that were used to working under the guidance of the National Library and also to the Library Service that was used to carrying out this supervision.

Meeting the needs of public libraries, advisory activities, research, seminars and conferences came into the foreground. The situation is similar also in research libraries, the director of the National Library automatically was also the head of the intersectoral council of the National Library. But the time when the position of leadership could be assumed without demonstration of competence and innovation had gone. In 1993, the council was liquidated. After the Law on Libraries was adopted, a National Library Council was established. It has the status of advisory body to the minister of culture of the Republic of Latvia.

The National Library joined many projects of cooperation on an equal basis. There was the library digitization project, LATLIBNET, the concept of which was taken as the basis for preparing the request for the State investment project and a Mellon Foundation. Even though the National Library headed this work, all the libraries were equal voters. The next step was consortia of 9 libraries (LINC) with a Board and a council of directors.

Now there is large-scale project that joins the new building of the National Library with the creation of a joint library information network for the whole country. It defines the National Library as the node in the infrastructure of library network.

### **Public Relations**

0 budget

Quality of service

Media

Interdisciplinary conferences

Support Foundation for the Latvian National Library

UNESCO resolution on the project of the Latvian National Library

It is understandable that modern management, marketing and PR building have entered library life.

In order to reach our goals - the general - to compete in the information market, or the more specific one - the construction of the new library building, we need PR technologies.

The Latvian National Library, which receives its funding from the state budget, has no special resources for this purpose, therefore the PR strategy has to be based on a zero budget.

The most important weapons are rendered services and their quality. The users themselves helped to achieve an increase of funding for acquisition of information resources - approximately 1,200 signatures were collected that were handed over to the government and the parliament. The activity generated so much publicity that starting with 1997 we have been able to plan the annual sum in the state budget that is comparable to the budget of other EU candidate states.

The National Library has developed good cooperation with the mass media. No week passes without TV, radio or the press mentioning the name of the National Library.

One of the directions of activities ensuring greater awareness by the public are regular international interdisciplinary conferences on topical themes - culture during the two occupations, censorship in contemporary world, etc.

The help given to the National Library by its Support Foundation cannot be evaluated too highly. Its primary goal is to achieve the implementation of the project of the new National Library. During the second reading at the Parliament, a favorable vote was achieved regarding a stable funding mechanism for it.

The Support Foundation also works in order to realize the present needs of the library. The Honorary President of the Foundation is the Former president of the Republic of Latvia, Guntis Ulmanis.

The project of the Latvian National Library was supported by UNESCO. An International Council of Experts was established, several directors of national libraries agreed to act as its members: Vladas Bulavas, Esko Hakli, Roch Carrier, Tomas Lidman, Erland Kolding Nielsen, Bendik Rugaas, Winston Tabb, as well as Jekaterina Genieva.

### **Conclusion**

Raising the profile of the National Library is proven by:

- the increase in the number of users, visits and copies issued.
- the growth of the annual budget from ..... in 1995 till ..... in 2001, notwithstanding inflation.
- the draft law about the mechanism of funding the implementation of the project of the Latvian National Library has been sent for a third reading to the Parliament. It envisages construction of the new building of the National Library and establishment of a joint library information network infrastructure.



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Slide 2

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## History and Traditions

- NLL and Jānis Misiņš Library, collection and functions
- State Library of the Latvian Soviet Socialist Republic
- Book Chamber (Agency for national bibliography)
- Landesbibliothek
- The Fundamental Library of the Academy of Sciences of the LSSR.

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## The specific feature of library network in the country and the capital Riga

- Riga and its suburbs - 50% of Latvian population
- Riga City library network
- The University of Latvia
- Network of children's libraries



## Legislation

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- Law on the National Library of Latvia (1992)
- Law on the Legal Deposit Copy (1997)
- Law on Libraries (1998)

## Basic Functions of the National Library

- Legal deposit copy
- National bibliography  
( [www.lnb.lv](http://www.lnb.lv) )
- National union catalogue ( [www.linc.lv](http://www.linc.lv) )



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## Services and Products

- Users
- Collection
- Services
- Products
- Services rendered to other libraries and their readers

Slide 8

## The status of “leading” library and leadership

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