

Summary

In answer to the question **“Will the google generation sink the traditional library?”** *World of Libraries* main editor *Anna Mauliņa* says “no”, but only if libraries change along with changing times and customs. Results of UK and US research reveal some alarming and cautionary habits of this new generation. It is shocking to see their low level of information literacy and inability to orient themselves in the masses of information and databases; they want everything immediately, by the easiest possible route. This generation will never use the excessively complicated searching in library electronic resources or in the ALEPH 500, Voyager or LIBER online catalogues. Libraries need to considerably improve access to information, to simplify the enormous range of electronic and digital information, as well as increase the training of staff and users.

The lead article in *World of Libraries* no.44 **“Reflections about national libraries”** is an opinion piece by *Tomas Lidman*, who was the National Librarian of Sweden and Director of the Royal Library from 1995 to 2003 and is now Director of the Swedish National Archives. The author emphasises the functional differences of national libraries in different countries and discusses the considerable role of national libraries in small countries. They not only collect, store and provide access to the nation’s cultural heritage, but they are also significant suppliers of professional and general information and act as cultural centres. T.Lidman expresses amazement that the library community in Latvia has been able to sustain its conviction and faith in the necessity of the new national library building, despite the long battle against ever new arguments opposing it. He expresses approval of the analyses and planning activities that preceded its construction. Building a library as a monument to civilisation is difficult not only in Latvia, but anywhere in the world. T.Lidman reminds readers of the 21 year project for reorganising the Swedish Royal Library, the 20 years it took for the new British Library building, Iceland and other examples.

Uģis Šķēle provides an overview of information provision and statistics related to the **“Use of subscription databases at the University of Latvia Library in 2006 and 2007”**. 2007 saw an increase in the use of databases, which was mainly due to the implementation of the Virtual Private Network of the University of Latvia. This new development allows University of Latvia staff and students to connect to the databases from outside the university as well as internally. In the two years under observation, the most popular were two multidisciplinary databases: the e-journal database EBSCO and Latvia’s encyclopaedic database “Letonika”. It is known that one of the most heavily used databases is “LETA” (the National News Agency of Latvia), but unfortunately it is a database that does not offer management statistics. The author notes

that a decrease in search statistics does not always mean a decrease in a database’s popularity. It might be indicative of improvement of user information literacy and more precise information searching. Nevertheless, students still prefer the easiest and most comfortable way of searching, hence the continuing popularity of Google and Google Scholar, which simultaneously allows searching in a number of the university’s subscription databases.

In **“A ‘delegation’ of information from Austria and Switzerland at the Latvian Academic Library”** *Māra Jēkabsons* describes the Department of Austrian and Swiss Literature (*Österreich Bibliothek + Schweizer Lesezimmer*) that was established at the library on 13 September 2001. It was formed thanks to a quadrilateral investment. There was finance from the Austrian Federal Government and two Swiss foundations (“Pro Helvetia” and Gebert RUF Stiftung); the library provides staff and covers running costs. There are 52 such Austrian literature libraries in the world, but only three Swiss reading rooms (one in each of the Baltic States). Their main aim is to serve as an example of the two countries and to facilitate the exchange of culture and information between them and Latvia. There is a wide range of literature to interest all tastes and a variety of events. For example, in May 2008 there was an exhibition “New Switzerland, 1831–1900: Swiss emigration to the USA (Madison County, Illinois)” in the conference hall of the Latvian Academic Library. Contact information is provided at the end of the article.

Is a kinship of souls possible? Can one believe in a link between authors, books and readers? In her essay **“Soulmates: authors, books and readers”** *Ilona Misāne* convinces us that there are no good or bad books; there is only compatibility between books and readers, incompatibility or neutrality. A book on its own, without a reader, is just a thing; it becomes a Book during a dialogue with the reader, if there is a kinship of souls between then and a dialogue is possible. The author reveals her own favourite authors and is particularly excited about the works of the Latvian exile author Gunars Janovskis. Those who feel guilty about discarding a half read book will benefit from I.Misāne’s recommendation to note the ten “rights of readers” as formulated by the French educator Daniel Pennac: the first is “the right not to read” and the third is “the right not to finish a book”.

Ingrīda Kalinka presents the results of an express-survey distributed to 140 participants at the **“5th Congress of Small Rural District Librarians “Small Rural District Libraries in the Whirlwind of Regionalisation and Digitisation”**”, which was held on 29 April 2008. The survey was designed by the Library Research and Information Department of the National Library of Latvia. It asked about the most

significant events and urgent questions in libraries, librarianship and the country from the point of view of librarians and their opinion on the role of libraries in the cultural politics of the country was sought. There were also questions about the digital library "Letonika" and its significance for the future of Latvia, how they thought library work was valued by society, the progress of the project "Trešais tēva dēls", the newly formed Library Portal of Latvia, and other current questions.

In "**Evidence-based librarianship**" *Vita Juraga* emphasises the necessity to integrate research and practice. The problem, she then contends, is that even though theoretical and practical research is carried out in libraries and educational institutions, the results of this research are rarely endorsed in library work. Librarians look for answers from various sources, but most often rely on the experience of colleagues, even though it has been shown that results based on research can differ in quality from those given by personal experience. What are the obstacles to the implementation of evidence-based practice? Researchers mention several: the divide between research and practice; insufficient finance; librarians' work overload; lack of time; insufficient basis for research; low quality of research; limited access to research; lack of skill in analytical evaluation. The implementation of evidence-based practice would allow optimisation of library work and avoid errors.

At the beginning, blogs were compared with diaries, then later with websites, but nowadays there are more frequent parallels drawn between blogs and traditional journalism. In the section "Computerisation, digitisation, internetisation" *Māra Jēkabsons* explores the origin of blogs and compares them with journalism in her article "**To each his own blog**". She also describes the deficiencies and possibilities of blogs. Several blogs are mentioned, as well as how to set up and manage blogs. The author concludes that blogs are playing an ever increasing role in the development of social networking between libraries in Latvia.

June 2008 marked the end of the first phase of the project "Trešais tēva dēls" (3td). In his article "**Current activities in the "Trešais tēva dēls" project**" under the heading "The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation in Latvia" (BMGF), *Kaspars Rūklis* reports that the project will be continued until March 2010. It will include development of new electronic library services and provision of unlimited access to them. There are details on the visit to Latvia of Deborah L. Jacobs and Jessica Dorr, BMGF Global Libraries Initiative in October. The State Agency "Cultural Information Systems" has signed an agreement with the IT companies "Tilde" and "Komercentrs DATI grupa" for the production of a documentary about the free access to the databases "Letonika" and "NAIS" in all 874 local government public libraries in Latvia. K.Rūklis also describes the visit of colleagues from Poland, who came to see how Latvia had planned, managed, popularised and evaluated

the impact of the Latvian Government and BMGF co-funded Public Library Development Program.

Under the heading "Conferences, seminars, meetings" *Elita Lazda* has an article about the Fifteenth Jubilee International Conference "Crimea 2008" on "**Libraries and Information Resources in the Modern World of Science, Culture, Education, and Business**", which was held in Sudaka 7–15 June 2008. Papers included: free access to archive information; the integration of library resource systems and networks; the role of the Internet in improving library services; copyright; the functionality of electronic libraries; professional education. Reports from the Latvian delegation are also summarised. The article concludes with some history of Crimea and Sudaka, as well as a good-humoured account of behind-the-scenes experiences at the conference.

Daina Gulbe provides information on the Baltic States Academic Library International Conference "**Bibliopolis XXI**", held in Moletai, Lithuania, 2–5 June 2008. The conference programme included: collection development; digitisation of manuscripts and printed materials; the creation of electronic libraries and databases. The conference also discussed practical issues, e.g., involving researchers in the evaluation of information resources.

Under the heading "Children and young people in libraries", *Tatjana Zahare's* article "**Information literacy of Daugavpils secondary school pupils**", convinces us of the necessity to develop information literacy in children and young people. She reports on the research project "The teaching needs of children's library users", which surveyed not only pupils, but also library and IT specialists. The readiness of young users to search in varied information resources was studied, and librarians' and pupils' suggestions about the feasibility of organising training in children's libraries were compiled. T.Zahare acknowledges that information literacy should be included in the official education programme. However, barriers are lack of finance, work overload of school librarians and their lack of knowledge and experience in the area.

Maija Krekle's article "**The bibliographer Kārlis Egle and the Misiņš Library**" under the heading "Past times and reflections" offers some reasons why the Misiņš Library founder Jānis Misiņš chose K.Egle as his successor. The author gives us a glimpse of the library's daily activities and the outstanding bibliographer's work, as well as describing the amusing, bickering relationship between the two distinguished individuals, which, nevertheless, did not lack sincerity. The basis of K.Egle's achievements to a great extent was his personal characteristics: goodness, the ability of convince people and gain their confidence, decency. However, these same characteristics were his downfall during the Soviet period and led to him losing his job. K.Egle's greatest regret was that, despite his desperate efforts, he was not able to keep his promise to J.Misiņš

— that his library would remain independent. In 1954 it was incorporated into the Fundamental Library of the Latvian SSR Academy of Sciences and all of K.Egle's efforts to restore its independence were to no avail.

In April 2008, 50 librarians from Latvia participated in a professional visit to Greece. In her article **"Words with biblio- come from Greece"** under the heading "Abroad" *Anna Mauliņa* shares experiences from the five-day trip. Greece is a land of contradictions: the phenomenon of ancient civilisation and the world of "The Odyssey" and "The Iliad" is juxtaposed with inflation, corruption, "strawberry wars" and other 21st century realities. *Museion* libraries and *scriptoria* are described side by side with the modern library system. A large part of the article is devoted to the activities of the National Library of Greece, and the work of the Library of the Athens University of Economics and Business and the European Documentation Centre are also described.

As in previous issues, there is an extensive section under the heading "Abroad", starting with *Elita's Lazda's "Overview of overseas library events (April–June 2008)"*. She reports on a new acquisition by The National Trust for its Lyme Park exhibition hall, the unique 15th century *Sarum Missal*, which cost over £ 465,000. An electronic version of this pre-Reformation prayer book is in preparation. She tells about the opening of a literary underground train in Moscow, that intends to popularise books and reading. There is a similar event in Stockholm, with the development of mini libraries in the underground stations. E.Lazda also looks 298 years into the past, when the *Statute of Anne* was ratified in 1710, giving the first clear legal definition to the concept of copyright and setting up legal deposit. She also mentions the 75th anniversary of the last public burning of books in Germany.

Jana Dreimane starts with the news that the University of Chicago new library building has received a significant donation of \$ 25 million from one of its graduates, Joe Mansueto, who is Chairman and CEO of Morningstar, Inc. UNESCO officials rashly destroyed printed materials in 2004–2005. Even though fire devastated the Architecture Faculty of Delft University in the Netherlands, the library, which is one of the most significant resources on information about architecture in Europe, was saved though many first editions were destroyed. "Living Library" an interesting and innovative project at Swiss Cottage and other London libraries is discussed. It provides the opportunity to "borrow" a person for a chat rather than a book in order to discuss controversial topics.

Jana Dreimane's publication **"A research about information literacy of google generation"** report on research into the *google generation* born since 1993 reveals their information literacy levels as a challenge to libraries.

"The section "Old and new book trade" has *Lilija Limane's* article **"The Latvian book trade in 1908 as reflected in the press"**. At the beginning of the twentieth century, the intelligentsia tried their utmost to combat literature that was considered of low quality. Therefore, newspapers and magazines regularly carried opinions evaluating literature, reviews and analytical essays about the contents and quality of new publications. Their goal was the fight against romance and adventure literature, which was constantly offered to the public by publishers eager for profits. The author reflects the situation of the book trade in Latvia at the time by giving a detailed analysis of book production statistics and explaining the problems of popular science and research literature. She also emphasises the attempts of the intelligentsia to improve the quality of books.

Under the heading "Miscellaneous information" there is **"A list of awards presented by the Latvian Ministry of Culture for outstanding achievements in librarianship in 2007"**. The section also has *Elita Lazda's "A review of library events in Latvia (April–June 2008)"*. *Kristīne Deksnė-Jerohina* provides a list of **"New acquisitions in librarianship"** for the same period.

Translated by *Inese Auziņa-Smith*