



Profile Kristiina Hormia-Poutanen

Kristiina, who is currently Director of Library Network Services at the National Library of Finland, was appointed as LIBER's 11th President at their 2014 Annual Conference.

This appointment followed Kristiina's significant contributions to the development of LIBER during four years as Vice President. She has also been very active in other international networks such as the International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), ICOLC (International Coalition of Library Consortia), IGeLU (ExLibris User Group), and Europeana. Her appointment saw her become the first female President in LIBER's history, so *Insights* was keen to chat to her about her fascinating career and her new role.

In looking back at her first 100 days in office, your Editor was interested to know what Kristiina thinks have been her main achievements. 'I have had the privilege to contribute to the development of LIBER during the four years as Vice President. My focus during the beginning of my term as President has been to continue with the active work related to copyright reform and EU projects ... LIBER believes that text and data mining will increase the progress of science exponentially, so I'm proud to have contributed to the launch of The Hague Declaration on Knowledge Discovery in the Digital Age, which took place on 6 May 2015.'

The interview began with a look back at Kristiina's career to date. 'I have an MSc in agriculture and had worked as a teacher at Helsinki University during the few first years of my career. After graduating I received a grant to do research in Peru. There I lived together with my husband in the Amazon region and had the opportunity to travel by boat along the Amazon river, wander in the jungle and also visit many other sites in Peru, as well as other countries. Living in South America opened my eyes and understanding towards other cultures and different ways of living ...' she began (on an adventurous note), before adding, proudly, '... I have also encouraged my two sons to study and live abroad – and they have done so!'

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So, after such an adventurous start, what made Kristiina move into libraries? 'I entered the library world during my studies, where I worked on several projects. My first

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permanent position was in the Library of Agriculture at the University of Helsinki. I enjoyed very much those years as I worked close to my professional roots.’ She moved to the National Library of Finland (NLF) in 1997 and saw the character of her work change. ‘I started to build national infrastructures and enlarge my international networks. My first challenge was to launch national licensing for Finland.’ Kristiina remembers that ‘licensing was new to everyone at that time, including libraries and publishers. In Finland, I started working blind which meant, for example, building tools, principles for licensing, national networks, consortium and international networks.’ It definitely wasn’t plain sailing, as Kristiina recalls, ‘I was the only person doing the work at the beginning.’ Looking back, she reflects, ‘International collaboration, sharing experiences and learning from each other, has been the key to the success. Today we serve a consortium of around 80 research libraries and 340 public libraries ...’, before adding, ‘Nowadays, the Finnish way of organizing activities is considered by many countries as a role model.’

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Kristiina giving a recent presentation in Croatia

‘International collaboration, sharing experiences and learning from each other, has been the key to the success’

When asked what she believes she will bring to her new role, she said, ‘I’m tenacious – I don’t easily give up. I have experience in managing large networks and consortium activities, knowledge of strategy work both at network and organization level. Today Open Science is increasingly important at a global and, of course, European level, but also in Finland. It is a great possibility to be able to combine work at national level to European activities.’

‘My position at NLF has changed over the years. Today I am the director of National Network Services which provides services to all university and polytechnic libraries, special libraries and public libraries, as well as all archives and museums. Currently we also provide services to other public sector organizations as the Finnish state is developing national infrastructures, including its citizen platform.’

It is clear that Kristiina isn’t afraid of change or new challenges, so your Editor was interested to know what she sees as her major challenges in taking over as President of LIBER. Kristiina began by pointing out that ‘LIBER has a solid foundation in terms of organization, structure and finance’, before going on to say, ‘What I will change during my presidency is to build on those foundations and to strengthen the collaboration with LIBER libraries. I will pay attention to listening and learning about the needs of LIBER libraries ...’

10 With colleagues on the Executive Board and in the LIBER Office, I will focus on how we can track our libraries' needs and how we can implement LIBER's activities to meet these requirements.'

LIBER is a membership organization and Kristiina is focused on listening to the needs of member libraries. 'As LIBER is a pan-European organization there are many, sometimes conflicting, needs. LIBER's strategy is a good tool to direct the development of services. The current strategy was developed in collaboration with our members. We will start the preparations for the new strategy this year together with our LIBER members.'

The LIBER strategy for 2013–17 is quite ambitious, and includes working with national libraries. Kristiina was asked how she sees these partnerships working. 'Most, if not all, of the European national libraries are members of LIBER. The Conference of European National Librarians (CENL) and LIBER signed a Memorandum of Understanding in 2012. In practical terms, the collaboration has happened via activities of The European Library (TEL), Europeana, legal issues and EU projects', she replied.

Emphasizing the positive nature of these relationships, she added, 'University libraries can learn so much from national libraries and vice versa. National libraries are strong, especially in the development of standards, metadata and identifiers, which are crucial elements in the development of digital services. University libraries work closely with researchers and have knowledge of the needs of researchers and can provide support related to research and increasingly related to various aspects of Open Science. The collaboration between university and national libraries can bring so much to the development of solutions regarding open digital services.'

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According to their website, LIBER is 'Re-inventing the Library for the Future', so your Editor asked Kristiina how she personally sees the role of the library changing in the future. She was clear that the main role will be to continue to support research and education, but added, 'Our environment is becoming more and more digitalized. New digital services to reach users in a meaningful way are essential. New collaborative models to help in the planning of innovations and implementing new services are crucial. Combining different expertise (IT staff, researchers, lawyers and librarians) can facilitate the development of the services.'

She continued, enthusiastically, 'Open Science and research will gain momentum in the future and libraries need to have the expertise to be able to support Open Science. There will be new roles in libraries and also new knowledge is required. Knowledge of research cycles, research data management, IT expertise, legal expertise and communication skills are examples of the skills that will be required. Broader collaboration (national, European, global) and participation in international projects will be essential for the success of libraries.'

When asked what she thinks are the major obstacles to be overcome to attain that vision, she replied, 'The main obstacle can be the reluctance to accept the rapid change of our digital environment. We will need to face the change and live with the uncertainty. We need to update our work processes in libraries and develop new services to meet the needs of our users.'

'face the change and live with the uncertainty'

The collaboration with the European Commission regarding Horizon2020 and the legal issues in particular has been crucial. Continuing our fruitful collaboration with the European Commission is essential for LIBER and for all our libraries to be able to meet the needs of researchers, teachers and students and meet the challenges brought by the changing environment.'

11 In the face of all these challenges, how does Kristiina relax after a hard day at the office? 'I'm very much an outdoor person. We have our summer cottage, which has, of course, a sauna. I ski, cycle, paddle and do gardening. I also have a family with whom I like to spend time.'

Open access (OA) is uppermost in Kristiina's mind, so she was asked where she sees OA sitting in LIBER's strategy as she takes over the President's mantle. 'The concept of Open Science and fostering Open Science will be a central focal point of the new LIBER strategy – open access is one of the key elements of Open Science. The Berlin Declaration on Open Access to Knowledge in the Sciences and Humanities was launched in 2003. OA development has taken more than ten years. Today in Europe there are a few countries which have advanced policies, infrastructures and practices in place (Spain, Sweden, Netherlands, Portugal). In most European countries much more needs to be done and, in supporting the libraries, LIBER has a central role.' LIBER's current OA projects include EUDAT, FOSTER, OpenAIRE, PASTEUR4OA and ReCODE.

Inevitably, the management of article processing charges (APCs) features on Kristiina's radar. 'How much is published in gold OA journals and how much is paid to cover the APCs is mostly unknown. This knowledge is needed all over Europe. LIBER is co-ordinating an APC pilot as part of the OpenAIRE project. The information we are gaining is insightful and significant.'

Returning to Kristiina herself, your Editor asked her what have been her career highlights, and she responded (very positively), 'There are many more highlights than low points. During my career I have been keen on development activities, involvement, networking and leadership, including strategy work ...' and she singled out the development of a national licensing structure (FinELib) as a prime example. She went on to say that 'We received comments like "... this is the best that has happened in decades".' Kristiina added with pride, 'The service has been chosen by the Finnish Academy of Science for the research infrastructure roadmap twice, the current term being 2014–2020.'

However, Kristiina is very conscious that this type of development does not take place in isolation. 'It is important to liaise with organizations which share the same values and objectives. LIBER has signed Memoranda of Understanding with CENL, CERL, COAR, EBLIDA, EIFL, IFLA and SPARC Europe, and will continue to form such strategic alliances as a way of strengthening the Foundation's position', she added. 'Development of national licensing would not have been possible without international collaboration with libraries, library consortia (ICOLC) and publishers.'

More recently, Kristiina has been heavily involved in co-ordinating the development of IT infrastructures. The National Digital Library (NDL), for example, 'is an infrastructure which serves libraries, archives and museums. One element in the initiative is the Finna discovery system (finna.fi), which is based on open source development at NLF ... Another example of IT infrastructures developed under my leadership is the Finnish thesaurus and ontology service, Finto (finto.fi) ... A third example is a brand new project, "Understand", which is a sub-project of the Finnish Open Science and Research initiative (openscience.fi). This project will involve national OA repository development, a study on Finnish APCs – topics which are also very relevant for LIBER.'

'In Finland we have the tradition of collaboration, which makes Finland different from many other countries. The development of several library infrastructures is based on work division between libraries and the National Library ... It has been a privilege to work with the Finnish libraries and to develop new services together.'

'In Finland we have the tradition of collaboration'

When asked if there have been any low points during her career, Kristiina picked out the failure of some national projects, but added, 'It is part of my character never to give up. New solutions have been found after careful thinking and planning.'

12 Your Editor thanked Kristiina for her time, and, bringing the interview to a close, asked whether there was just one thing that Kristiina would wave a magic wand and fix in the information environment. She replied, 'I'd remove the obstacles to Open Science and enable the potential of Open Science to be realized. LIBER can have a central role in overcoming the barriers through raising awareness of Open Science. The task of advocating the need for legal reform especially regarding text and data mining (TDM), participating in policy discussion regarding the European-level incentives and development of infrastructures; being active in project bids and providing a network for our members so as to increase their knowledge of different aspects of Open Science.'

'It is part of my character never to give up'

Main photo courtesy of Britt Vuorio, Talousteema.

Kristiina was interviewed for 'Insights' by Steve Sharp.

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