

*The library users of the future:  
“Citizens libraries – libraries for citizens; needs and expectations”  
Library Conference, 6 and 7 September 2007 in Turku, Finland*

**The focus of the Nordic conference is today’s hard-pressed libraries and the methods they can employ to attract users in the modern information society.**

Falling visitor numbers, fewer borrowed books and increasing competition from digital media platforms such as Wikipedia, Google and YouTube: These are some of the challenges facing the country’s libraries; challenges which they must overcome if they are to survive in the knowledge society of the future. This is the conclusion of several experts who also stress that libraries must listen more attentively to users’ needs if they are to retain their position as a key knowledge and cultural institution in the future and to maintain their democratic role as a people’s library.

Therefore, Axiell Bibliotek, one of the world’s largest suppliers of IT systems and services to libraries, is holding a joint Nordic conference in Turku, Finland, on 6 and 7 September with the library users of the future as the general theme. Over 30 managers from some of Denmark, Sweden and Finland’s largest libraries will discuss ways in which to strengthen libraries in order to meet the needs of the users of the future.

*“Basically, libraries must improve their ability to attract users and make them aware of the offers provided by libraries. As a result of the revolution within the information society over the past 10 years, more and more users – especially the young – are increasingly seeking information via other channels. Therefore, we must find new and innovative solutions and, to a much greater extent, adapt to the needs of the users and make libraries more experience-oriented. There are many alternatives: We could apply different communication models, launch new projects or integrate various different services into the library’s current functions,”* says Lise Söderberg who is the coordinator for the conference.

The conference is backed by the Nordic Cultural Fund and the participants will have the opportunity to meet speakers and cultural politicians from Scandinavia and the USA, all of whom have advice on the way in which the library of the future should service its users. Lise Söderberg also hopes that the conference will pave the way for strengthened cooperation between the Nordic libraries.

*“The Nordic libraries find themselves in the same position. They all face closures and falling visitor numbers and they all need to redefine their function within society. Therefore, we must try out new initiatives and exchange knowledge across our borders so that our libraries can continue to function as society’s key provider of culture and knowledge.”*

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