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# **THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LATVIA PROJECT FOR THE NEEDS OF AN ELECTRONIC SOCIETY**

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### **Information Society – a Given or a Goal?**

Availability of information differs:

- individually
- occupationally
- socially
- regionally

### **The Value or the Price of Information**

Information is a resource.

It has great value for the needs of:

- all stages of education
- professional growth
- good business
- successful governance

### **Good things are not for free**

Information has a market value =

It has a price

It has turned into a commodity

Somebody has to buy (subsidize) it:

- individuals
- governments (central or local)
- service providers

### **Information must be available in order to have**

- qualified labor resource
- high competitive ability locally and internationally
- high living standards
- democratic, civic and inclusive society

### **The Government Policies in the information sector**

National Development Plan  
Concept of e-Latvia  
Concept of e-Governance  
Local Governments Information System Concept  
School Information System Concept  
Library Information System Concept

**All of them have libraries in them as end service providers**

### **Availability of Library Information Systems**

*Data of 2003, school libraries not included*

### **Availability of the Internet in public libraries**

*Data of 2003 (school libraries not included)*

### **The Castle of Light and The Lightnet**

The National Library of Latvia Project  
A new building for the National Library of Latvia – **the Castle of Light**  
Creation of infrastructure for the widest possible information services delivery  
Modernization of all public and academic libraries and uniting them in a network of data exchange, union catalogue etc – **the Lightnet**

### **Lightnet**

- 1000 universal information delivery points (public libraries)
- Minimum 5 PC user work stations per library
- The Internet
- Modules and programming for data exchange and compatibility
- Training of staff and users
- Digitally and electronically born content creation (Union catalogue, bibliography, home pages etc)
- E-governance and e-commerce services available
- Costs – LVL 12,7 mill.

### **2000-2002 pilot phase**

- Goal – to rehearse and approve cooperation models among:
  - ◆ state-region-community
  - ◆ several communities in a region
  - ◆ municipality-library-school etc
- 29 projects financed
- 131 libraries included

### **What does the law say**

The special law on the implementation of the project defines:

- The components
- The deadline
- The commissioning authority
- The supervisory authority
- The sources of finance nationally and internationally
- The fund-raising entity

### **Why is this project difficult for Latvia?**

- It demands a huge lump of the budget
- It is a long-term project and everybody expects improvement next morning at breakfast
- People want money spread per capita not invested in infrastructure
- And politicians pretend they can do both
- The average government longevity in Latvia is a year or less

### **Why is this project feasible for EU money**

- It is essential for the end user in every rural community and all social groups
- It is part of national policy planning
- It has a special law on implementation
- There is an elaborate project for both components
- It is managed and supervised well
- There is an independent public fund-raising entity working in close cooperation with the commissioning authority

### **If implemented, the project will**

- Provide facilities for availability of culture and information, as well as preservation of heritage
- Be a step forward in setting up information society
- Promote regional cohesion
- Foster a socially inclusive society
- Raise competitiveness of
  - ◆ each individual
  - ◆ every community
  - ◆ all Latvia
  - ◆ the whole Baltic Sea region