

The National Library of Latvia, 2001–2008

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(UL) on management (MA), marketing (MA) and systems policy in libraries (MA), as well as international interlibrary cooperation (BA). Andris Vilks has publications both in Latvian and foreign editions. He is President of the Latvian National Commission for UNESCO and the Chancellor of the Latvian Chapter of Orders. He is involved in the work of various international institutions and is a member of the International Advisory Committee for the UNESCO Memory of the World Programme, Treasurer of the Conference of European National Librarians and ex-President of Bibliotheca Baltica.

INTRODUCTION

The article by Inese A. Smith and Andris Vilks 'The National Library of Latvia' was published in *Alexandria* volume 13(3), 2001. Since then notable changes have taken place. Latvia has become a member state of the European Union. Within the NLL, in its turn, dynamic development is underway – linked to legislation, funding, and technological development. The construction of the new Library building and the development of the National Digital Library 'Letonica' have started. The Library has officially obtained the status of a research and education institution.

The year 2009 is the ninetieth anniversary of the establishment of the Library.

LEGISLATION

Since 2002 the legislation relating to the function of the NLL has significantly developed. Thus, a special law on the construction of the NLL's new building and the establishment of the national united library information system was adopted in 2002. In 2006 a new law on the delivery of the legal deposit copy in the state was drafted: 'The Law on Legal Deposit'. For the first time its scope covers digitally born publications. In 2007 the law 'On the National Library of Latvia' was amended. In 2008 amendments were introduced to the Law on Copyright, setting out the procedure giving the right to the Library's clients to work with the resources of the National Digital Library 'Letonica'. In 2009 the 'Library Law' was also amended.

COLLECTIONS

During the last eight years significant changes have occurred also in the development of the NLL's collections.

The new law on the delivery of legal deposit copies envisages essential changes regarding the reduction of the number of libraries and copies. The Law provides that now instead of 13 copies, ten Latvian libraries, in accordance with their profile, receive up to seven copies.

In the framework set out by this Law, the NLL is entitled to receive one copy of each electronic edition and one copy of each online publication. The number of national publications during these years has ranged from 2,300 to 2,700.

The creation of the strategy for collection development on the basis of the Conspectus method was very significant both as regards the

current situation and the new building. An agreement on coordinating collections was signed with the Academic Library of Latvia (ALL) and the University of Latvia Library (ULL).

In the field of electronic publications the package of full-text databases, acquired in the framework of eIFL (Electronic Information for Libraries) project, is still the largest; it is funded centrally from the national budget with the mediation of the Ministry of Culture Agency 'Culture Information Systems' (CIS).

Even though the prices of publications have increased, the budget allocated for acquisition during these years has remained the same – €230,000 annually, although in 2008 the NLL was granted an additional €150,000. During recent years, in cooperation with the Latvian National Library Foundation several sponsoring programmes were initiated. Thus, for example, thanks to a Swedbank donation, the NLL has started to develop its own e-book collection: over 100 e-books on management, marketing, social psychology, creative industries and business etiquette were acquired.

In the period from 2001 to 2008, 522,914 items have been added to the library collection. 85,620 items have been transferred to other libraries in Latvia. A parallel work of weeding the collection is ongoing. In those eight years 757,964 items have been deaccessioned. The size of the collection has not changed significantly. However, the movement within it has been significant – by disposing of editions not in conformity with its profile and by adding new, high quality publications. The dominant approach – to collect as significant and important publications as possible, irrespective of the price. Unique treasures have been obtained during these years; these are found in the Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts, as well as in the other NLL special collections. In 2001–02, thanks to the care of Inese Auziņa-Smith, library scientist and an active member of the exile cultural community, living in the United Kingdom, the NLL collection of ancient maps was significantly expanded by the donation from the Daugavas Vanagi organization of the Collection of Latvian Cultural Values in Straumēni. It consisted of

Ringolds Mužiks' (1914–2000) outstanding collection of 118 sixteenth- to eighteenth-century maps. The general public could see it at an exhibition, and following the digitizing of the collection a CD and a calendar have also been published.

Thanks to the Embassy of Poland the Library received an impressive collection of books on Poland. The 30-volume encyclopaedia *Wielka encyklopedia* should be noted especially, alongside several outstanding editions on art and culture. The Embassies of Switzerland, France, USA, Germany, Ukraine and other countries have also donated to the Library.

The collection has been structured in connection with the new building project. The concept of the legal deposit archive collection, free-access collection, specialized collections, the relationship between the holdings and the Repository, as well as reserve and exchange collections, has been developed.

PRESERVATION

The NLL turned to book restoration and preservation comparatively recently. Under the conditions of rather limited resources and equipment, attention was more focused upon the development of staff skills. From 2002 to 2004 the NLL experts performed for the first time the restoration of a unique incunabulum – *Clemens V. Constitutiones* (Basel, 1476).

Simultaneously, while preparing for work in the new library building, the experience of mass preservation is being studied. In cooperation with Zentrum für Bucherhaltung (Conservation Centre for Libraries, Archives and Museums, Leipzig) the NLL has developed the concept of establishing a national, perhaps even Baltic-level centre, envisaging the following functions:

- Mass deacidification by **papersave**®
- Paper stabilization
- Freeze drying treatment.

DATA

The years 2001 to 2008 have been very productive both as to the creation of bibliographical data

and the development of standards and technologies. This work is carried out by the NLL Institute of Bibliography.

The national bibliography database (approximately 100,000 entries annually) is published only online, since in fact all Latvian public libraries have excellent Internet connections. As a parallel activity in cooperation with the company Exigen, the concept and software for retro-conversion has been developed, based on optical character recognition, with automatic tagging of elements of description in MARC format and downloading to the Aleph500 system. At present already more than half a million entries have been converted, covering all books ever published in Latvia. The conversion of other catalogue information is also underway; the most recent software version, Retro 3, also envisages distance data processing.

The work on a corporate union catalogue continues. It is a union database, in which every library can replicate the catalogue of its collection. During this period it has become clear that a national union catalogue in the traditional understanding of the concept cannot be implemented. Therefore the concept of a catalogue system has been developed, focusing upon bibliographical quality control. To implement it, enormous standardization work has been done. In the course of eight years all bibliographical standards that are in international circulation have been prepared and approved. Sizeable information on authorship has been created – persons, subjects, places (toponyms).

In addition to that, the Institute of Bibliography continued to provide the official publication statistics and ensured the operations of the ISBN, ISMN and ISSN agencies. The facility to obtain ISBN numbers in an online regime is an innovation.

SERVICES

Significant changes have affected the sector of reader services. The basis of reader services is the quality of the collection, data and staff skills. In 2006 a uniform reader's card was introduced; it allows the use of the major libraries in Riga and setting up a uniform reader register

in research libraries. The number of distance clients has experienced fast growth, and corresponding services have been created. A national system for document delivery has been set up, as well as distance reservation of literature established. A reading room of electronic resources was equipped, and a well-equipped Internet point near the Library entrance set up. The number of physical clients in 2001 had reached more than a thousand per day; the coming years saw a gradual decrease. However, the general trend is obvious – the amount of distance clients and services is increasing, the number of readers and visits is increasing, but the number of physical loans is decreasing. There are several reasons for that. The public libraries network of Riga City and several libraries of the UL Departments of social studies and humanities now have improved facilities. Moreover, by developing a more targeted collection development profile (according to the Conspectus method), major libraries in Riga have improved their coordination in collection development. Since 2008 a rapid increase in the number of visitors has been again observed. Since the departmental libraries, as well as Riga public library branches, now have better opportunities, the needs of the NLL target audience have also changed.

Fast access Internet points have been set up in the lobby zone of the main Library building. Various forms of user training in searching the electronic library resources and on the Internet are developing.

The NLL ensures both domestic Interlibrary loan (ILL) and International Interlibrary Loan (IILL) services. Since IILL services are for a fee, the users are offered the possibility to use a more expensive, but faster document delivery service (SUBITO), or a slightly slower, but cheaper service by using other European document delivery centres. The NLL has approximately 30 foreign libraries as its IILL partners. The number of domestic ILL partners is approximately 800 libraries. The demand for electronic delivery of domestic documents has grown rapidly; the main users of this service are public and school libraries in the regions of Latvia. Thus far this service has been free of charge. At the beginning of the

century the NLL developed a system of electronic document delivery for national publications, and now all clients can receive their copies electronically.

EVENTS

Travelling exhibitions in Latvian libraries and other institutions are among the essential aspects of the Library's work. The NLL is also actively involved in creating international exhibitions, reflecting topics that are closely linked to the processes of the Latvian culture scene. In 2006–07 the exhibition 'Art Nouveau in Latvia' was very successful abroad. In 2007–08 an exhibition 'The History of Latvia in Caricatures' was dedicated to the ninetieth anniversary of the state of Latvia. A significant exchange of exhibitions has taken place with the national libraries of Estonia, Lithuania, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Hungary, the Netherlands, Wales, Russia, Germany and other countries.

An exhibition dedicated to the architecture of Gunārs Birkerts, the author of the project of the new NLL building and a globally recognized architect from the USA, was very interesting. Exhibitions dedicated to various communities in Latvia, relations between Lithuania and Latvia between the wars, literary links with the Czech Republic spanning five centuries, the role of Tartu University in Latvian culture, education and science, and Latvian book design and poster art gained public acclaim.

In 2009 the NLL became actively involved in the centenary events of Riga-born British philosopher Isaiah Berlin. During the opening of the exhibition, attended by the former President of the State, Vaira Vīķe-Freiberga, the Library received as a gift the bust of Berlin (artist – Anthony Stones).

In 2006 the NLL as a member of the Latvian delegation participated in the Prague Book Fair, and in 2008 in the Gothenburg Book Fair 'Bok og Bibliotek'. Latvia had the official status of a guest at these events.

The so-called regional days at the NLL are exceptionally popular and splendid. These are exhibitions and various cultural events dedicated

to a particular region or city in Latvia – Sēlija, Latgale, Gulbene, Suiti region; their original traditions are included in the register of UNESCO oral heritage, as well as cities – Liepāja, Cēsis, Līgatne.

The public discussion 'Gutenberg Galaxy' has become stronger during this period; many well-known authors, educators, publishers, employees of memory institutes, and so on, have been among the speakers. The audience consists of both professionals and interested persons from the general public.

Since 2007 the NLL has participated in the Night of the Museums. In 2009 the NLL for the second time participated also in the Night of Science.

To mark its ninetieth anniversary the NLL, together with six other institutions also established in 1919 (the University of Latvia, the National Opera, the National Theatre, the State Archives, and the Academies of Music and Art), organized a city festival in the central park of the city; the event was very highly appreciated by the public. At the end of 2009 a conference, initiated by the NLL, will be held on the past and future significance of nine institutions of national importance in education, research, culture and the economy, established soon after the proclamation of the state in 1919 (the seven aforementioned institutions and also the news agency LETA and the Latvian Railway).

Two discussions, in which approximately 40 Latvian bloggers participated, may be viewed as belonging to the most interesting innovations. These are fascinating real-time talks about distance resources, clients and services.

The Library has developed a strategy for the new building with regard to services and events and its users in real space and virtually, to a great extent implementing the ideas of Library 2.0. In the new building the Library will proceed even more to promote interactive events between contents, library and people.

LIBRARIES IN LATVIA

Latvian libraries are one of the most important target groups for the NLL. The Library

Development Institute (LDI) of the NLL has traditionally carried out much coordination and advisory work in the sector of public libraries. The meetings of the directors of the main regional libraries (32) are held biannually. In autumn these are organized in Riga, but in spring – in one of the regions of Latvia, usually choosing as the venue a place where recently a new library building has been built or has been substantially reconstructed. It is important that meetings with the leaders of the local government are held as part of these events, and an insight into the local cultural life is offered. Since 2007 the heads of research libraries also participate in these meetings. Every year meetings dedicated to local history are held, as well as seminars for those library specialists who provide advice to the smaller libraries in each region. In cooperation with the Association of Latvian Librarians (ALL) every year summer camps are organized; these gather up to 100 experts from all regions. The NLL in cooperation with the Association of Latvian Librarians also regularly organizes congresses for librarians of the parish libraries.

The Centre of Children's Literature (CCL) for many years has not only been developing a special model reading room for children, but also cooperating closely with children's libraries, school libraries and their Association. One feature, which is not typical of national libraries, is the CCL's close cooperation with the authors, translators, artists, and publishers of children's books and centres for reading promotion in Latvia and abroad. The CLL is also leading a very successful national project, 'The Children's Jury'. As part of the project every year 17,000 children in Latvia participate in local, regional and national assessment of new books. In 2008 the CCL launched a new programme for two and three years old children and their parents, 'The First Encounter with a Library'. These programmes receive the permanent support of the State Culture Capital Foundation (SCCF). The Foundation also supports the programme managed by the NLL, 'Book acquisition for public libraries'.

A few years ago the LDI also established

an advisory point for the sector of research libraries. Its main activity is cooperation with the Association of Latvian Academic Libraries (LATABA).

Reading room Z, located at the LDI, is intended for library and information specialists. The Training Centre has been established for the purposes of distance education; it is officially registered on the Register of Institutions of Education at the Ministry of Education and Science. Approximately 30 employees of the NLL serve as trainers for the public, school and other libraries' staff. An exceptional amount of work was done during the last three years, when the project '3TD' ('Father's Third Son') was implemented, using a grant from The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation. Five to six hundred librarians from the whole of Latvia are trained every year at the Training Centre.

PUBLICATIONS

Starting with 2008 the publication of current bibliographical editions in print and on CD was discontinued (all information is available online). However, some very significant traditional editions are worth mentioning, for example a work of encyclopaedic quality *The Index of the Authors of Latvian books – 1523–1919* (Bočarova, 2005), as well as the bibliographical index 'Ojārs Vācietis (1933 – 1983)'. It is dedicated to one of the most outstanding Latvian poets of the twentieth century. The information included in the index significantly exceeds the limits of a traditional bibliographical tool.

Since 2000 a specialized magazine for the library sector *World of Libraries* has been published. Because of its broad and diverse content it is highly appreciated not only among library professionals. Starting with 2009 the magazine is published only in electronic form.

One of the greatest achievements for the NLL during the recent years has been the professional Internet portal *biblioteka.lv*. Its technical maintenance is ensured by CIS. Its contents are created, maintained and developed by the LDI staff.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

In 2007 the Research and Development Department was established; it promotes research linked to the processing, perception and multi-functional use of texts. The semantic approach or Web 3.0 environment is facilitated. In cooperation with the UL a course on computer linguistics has been developed and lectures are read to the groups of library science and other specialisms. Together with a total of more than ten academic institutions, appropriate state agencies and the private sector, the concept of the Latvian language corpus, based upon the resources of the digital library, has been developed.

In 2008 the Research Council of the NLL was restored, it consists of NLL employees, representatives of the academic community and foreign experts. At present seven Ph.D. degree holders and six postgraduate students work at the NLL. Studies of the history of book publishing and libraries continue. Professor Viesturs Zanders' monograph *Riga Latvian Society (1868–1940) as the centre of national book publishing* (Zanders, 2006) was published. The Department of Rare Books and Manuscripts has prepared a collection of articles *Rarities*, its authors are not only the employees of the department, but also researchers, patrons of the NLL.

Regarding the subject of work on behalf of the whole library system, it should be emphasized that in fact all NLL units provide advice and support in the most diverse fields of library work – collection development and coordination of acquisitions, data export and standardization, digitization (online Handbook), management of specialized collections, ILL and document delivery, exhibition activities, and so on.

ARCHIVES, LIBRARIES AND MUSEUMS (ALM)

The Library has always promoted the closest cooperation between kindred institutions. In February 2001 NLL hosted the first discussion on the cooperation between memory institutions. This resulted in grants from the Latvian Culture

Capital Foundation, as part of a special sub-programme, for several years.

In 2002 NLL organized a conference 'Cooperation of Museums, Archives and Libraries in the Electronic Era – Experience, Reality, Strategies for the Future', with the participation of specialists from the memory institutions of the Baltic and other states.

The library standardization committee, initiated by the NLL, was the basis for the ALM standard committee. In 1997 the 'Library Information Network Consortium' was established. It supported the implementation of the LATLIBNET project by Latvian research libraries, funded by a grant from the A.Mellon Foundation. In 2004 it was transformed into the agency 'Culture Information Systems', with the purpose of creating the 'Network of Light'. The Consortium continued to manage archive and museum computerization projects.

'LATVIAN INSTITUTE'

During the last 10 years the NLL has been working intensely as the Latvian Institute. We have mounted exhibitions and presentations, often simultaneously with the visits of the President of the State to Belarus, the Czech Republic, Denmark, Estonia, France, Germany, Hungary, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, and Sweden. The NLL has organized seminars for the former USSR countries on the TEL (The European Library) project's activities. The NLL together with the Ukrainian centre for distance learning has provided training in Georgia.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY

The beginning of the twenty-first century has been exceptionally notable in terms of the IT infrastructure progress. The optimum equipment of workstations for the readers and the employees has been ensured, with the necessary number of PCs, copying machines, scanning and other equipment.

Fast Internet connectivity, as well as wifi has been ensured. In cooperation with Exigen,

software for the retroconversion of the printed bibliographies and card catalogues, created over three generations, was developed. In cooperation with Lursoft, several new electronic services have been created to ensure better access to the e-collection of contemporary newspapers and for distant ISBN registration. A digital object management (DOM) system for the Latvian National Digital Library 'Letonica' has been created in cooperation with Microsoft Latvia. The DOM system 'Fedora' was also mastered, to convince ourselves and the users of the prospects for digital libraries. Equipment for high resolution digitization of large-size objects has been purchased, and also for the scanning of vinyl records. The ICT concept for the new Library building has been developed.

HUMAN RESOURCES

Thanks to the strategy of the Ministry of Culture to prioritize the work of national cultural institutions in the state, the salary fund of the NLL grew considerably in the middle of the decade. This allowed the Library not only to increase the salaries of the incumbent employees, but also to attract new specialists from other sectors, which is very topical for a contemporary library. These are ICT, PR, and project management specialists. The majority of them had no LIS education. At the same time many young specialists graduating from LIS BA and MA programmes have joined the Library. The employees who at the beginning of the 1990s had left the library and had very successful careers in other institutions, returned to the Library. Thus a very strong team for dealing with the problems of ICT and establishing the Digital Library was set up from the 'old' and the 'new' employees. The public relations have been improved, both with regard to the content and the services (for example, 'the bloggers' club'), numerous projects have been successfully managed, the Training Centre and the R&D working group have been established. The young specialists are more open to new technologies and services. The set-up of the financial and maintenance services was also consolidated.

THE NEW LIBRARY BUILDING

Since the previous article published in *Alexandria*, there has been significant progress in the project of the new Library building.

In 2002 Gunārs Birkerts' design for the new NLL building (Figure 1) was presented at the Venice Architecture Biennale. The Law, adopted by the Saeima (Parliament) in 2002 on the implementation of the NLL project, defined a procedure for funding, for project management and supervision, and state guarantees for the funding were enshrined.

A special project management group was set up at the Ministry of Culture; later several other cultural infrastructure programmes were brought under its supervision, and the agency 'The New Three Brothers' (The National Library, the Museum for Contemporary Art, and the Concert Hall, Riga) was established. The agency did an enormous amount of work, so that the state would be able to take over the territory on the left bank of the Daugava River, exactly opposite the Old Town, already reserved for the Library in 1968. Denationalization of the buildings and apartments was carried out in accordance with the legal provisions, paying market value compensation for them.

The contract with the project managers Hill International, which in 2007 finalized the technical stage of Gunārs Birkerts' design, was renewed. Architects and engineers from the USA and Latvia have been equally involved in the technical preparation of the project. In 2008 a contract was signed with the National Building Association (consortium), established by the three largest construction companies in the state – Skonto būve, RBS Skals and RE&RE. Hill International supervises the construction and architecture.

On 20 June, 2008 a capsule was cemented into the site, and the construction works commenced. On 20 September, 2009 the fifth level construction works were already underway.

From 2004 to 2006 the second stage of the Repository, located outside Riga, was constructed. Now the capacity of this storage facility has increased from half a million to one million units of storage.

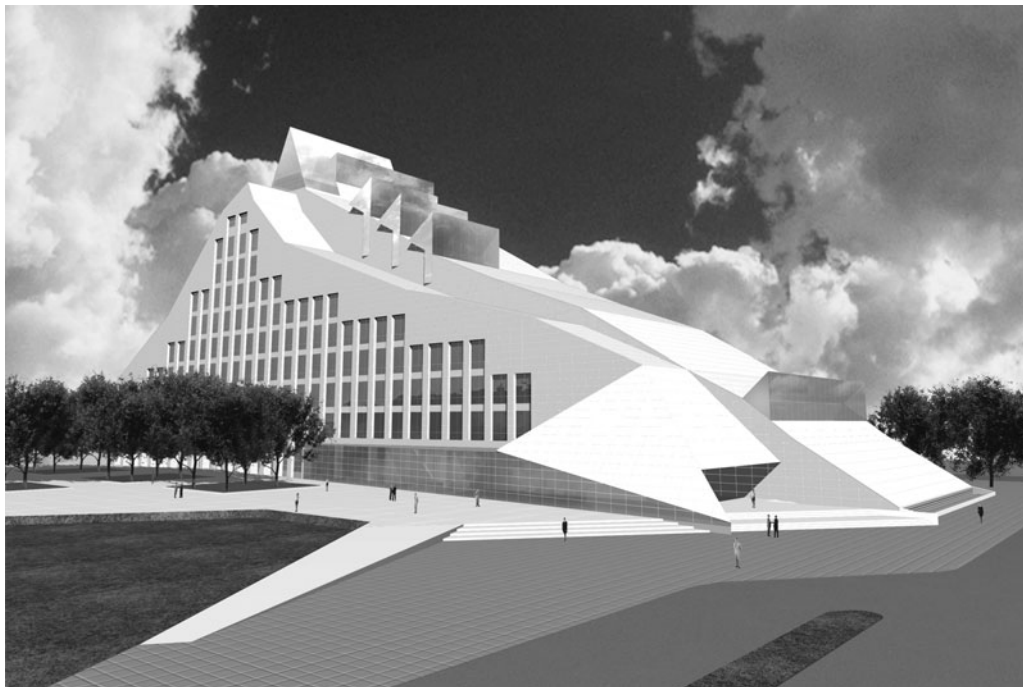


Figure 1: National Library of Latvia – Design for New Building

UNESCO SUPPORT

In 2001, following the invitation of UNESCO Director-General Koichiro Matsuura, an International Committee of Experts was established. Its members were Vladas Bulavas (1936–2004) (the National Library of Lithuania), Wim van Drimmelen (former Director of the Royal Library of the Netherlands), Ivi Eenma (Estonian Parliament, former Director of the National Library of Estonia), Ekaterina Genieva (the Library of Foreign Literature, Russia), Professor Esko Häkli (former Director of Helsinki University Library), Tomas Lidman (Director General of the State Archives, Sweden, former Director of the Royal Library), Erland Kolding Nielsen (Director of the Royal Library, Denmark), Bendik Rugaas (Ministry of Culture Norway, former Director of the National Library), Winston Tabb (Sheridan Dean of University Libraries and Museums of the Johns

Hopkins University, former Associate Librarian of the Library of Congress).

Since its establishment six meetings of the committee have been held. During the meetings the committee evaluated the architectural design of the new Library, the organization of the construction management, the funding model, the projects of the national uniform library information network and the digital library, collection development, ICT, human resources development, services, the museum of the history of the book, attracting of resources, and other specific strategies for the new building.

THE LATVIAN NATIONAL LIBRARY FOUNDATION

The Library project receives continuous support from the Latvian National Library Foundation, which was established in 1998. Throughout this period the Foundation has continuously lobbied

the decision makers and implemented a number of new initiatives to strengthen the NLL and its public relations. The Foundation initiated various projects to attract funding both for the new building and the library network, and for the NLL's current needs for information resources, training, and so on. An intellectual computer game for children about the construction of the new NLL building, developed by the Foundation, gained public acclaim.

LIGHTNET

Alongside the construction, funding in the amount of approximately €18 million was granted for the modernization of Latvian academic and public libraries. A concept for the establishment of 'Lightnet' was developed, which was implemented by 2006. All project participants – the 874 public libraries of Latvia – received an Internet connection, access to the Latvian Library Information System, a minimum number of computers and training. In 2007–09 this was followed by The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation grants of \$16 million and \$2 million and Microsoft licences to the value of \$8 million.

DIGITAL LIBRARY (DIBI)

The National Library of Latvia started digitization in 1999. The year 2005 saw a new turning point – the creation of the pilot project 'Jāzeps Vītols'. He is one of the most outstanding personalities in Latvian music culture (1863, Valmiera–1948, Lübeck). He was the student of the famous Russian composer Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov. J. Vītols' heritage contains autograph music manuscripts (incidentally, Vītols has very exquisite, calligraphic handwriting), letters, photographs, sound recordings, films, sheet music editions, monographs, posters and other materials, which in a very fragmented way are held not only by many memory institutions in Latvia, including the Academy of Music, but also abroad. Thus a multimedia access point was created. It convinced the Government, and in the period from 2006 to 2008 major investments were made to create the Digital Library of the

National Library of Latvia 'Letonica'. The NLL simultaneously became involved in the TEL and Europeana projects.

Major achievements were:

1. A concept developed, envisaging the NLL as the coordinator of national level activities. A number of policy documents were also adopted including a digitization strategy for 2007–10. It defined the following criteria:
 - a. Historically and culturally significant documents,
 - b. Physically deteriorating intellectual property,
 - c. Frequently used material, as well as the target audience, determined by two main directions:
 - d. Lifelong education,
 - e. Research.
2. The so-called *Digitization Handbook establishing standards for scanning, master and Access files, file naming conventions, and metadata – the Dublin Core TEL Application Profile* developed, which is published on the NLL webpage, accessible to all interested persons.
3. Digital Object Management system (DOMS) developed in cooperation with Microsoft.
4. Cooperation with many Latvian memory institutions started in practice.
5. By 2009 several digitization projects continued or initiated – books, posters, maps, sound recordings, photographs, and so on.
6. Mass digitization started with OCR and the possibility of simultaneous search in the whole text array (300,000 pages).
7. The years 2009–12 have secured European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) funding for further mass digitization works, as well as for significant solutions for improving information search and use.

In 2007 the NLL organized a large international conference, 'Digital Library for Learning', focusing on the contents of libraries and the development of technologies for the requirements of education.

In December 2008 a course on computer linguistics, developed by international specialists

of the field, was prepared for an audience of NLL specialists and other interested persons. In 2008 the NLL initiated the establishment of a working group for the creation of the National Corpus of the Latvian Language, consisting of specialists from Latvian institutions of higher education, the State Language Commission, the State Language Agency and the NLL. A Memorandum of Agreement has been signed on the creation of the National Corpus of the Latvian Language. Since 2008 regular meetings of the working group have been convened.

The funding of the Digital Library project in 2006 was €0.13 million, in 2007 – €2.07 million, in 2008 – €1.45 million. To ensure co-funding for ERDF grants in 2009 €0.19 million were allocated; it is planned to allocate €0.7 million in 2010.

In 2008 in the framework of the project the technical infrastructure was created, metadata standards for the digital library were established, and staff training organized, while starting the implementation of the set objectives: to ensure the digitization of the library collection and making it accessible on the Internet, by offering to the users diverse possibilities for searching and research.

In 2008–09 a digital object management system and a repository for the permanent preservation of digital objects was developed and launched, and the migration of all existing collections (24 in total) to the new system was started, thus ensuring browsing and searching of all digital resources in one location.

Cooperation agreements with 27 memory and research institutions have been concluded on the delivery of new digital content, and work on seven new digital collections has started – *inter alia* on the portal of periodical publications Periodika.lv, in which currently 350,000 text pages are available. All resources of the digital library, irrespective of their copyright status, are available in the closed state library network, thus dramatically improving access for the end-user throughout the territory of the state.

Depending upon the available funding, there are plans to launch publicly the aforesaid system for digital object management and repository,

and to supplement it with data; or, in case of insufficient funding, to carry out work to significantly reduce the system maintenance costs and have the public launch afterwards.

In 2008 and the first half of 2009, a pilot project for visual map navigation, a pilot project for the conversion of fracture (Gothic) fonts, post-processing and segmentation of text documents was developed, with the aim of developing improvements for the search function in the rapidly growing document array.

In the second half of 2009 and in 2010 it is planned to use the results of the pilot projects of fracture (Gothic) font conversion, post-processing and segmentation of text documents, and visual map navigation in the framework of projects financed by ERDF structural funds. During the second half of 2009 a pilot project for fast display of search results of full text search in the large-scale document array was implemented.

Since the whole amount of the state budget allocation is used for the maintenance of the existing systems, there are plans to finance the development of the digital library in 2009–2011 with the help of co-funding from European Structural Funds – with the total amount of €5.14 million. The funding is envisaged for two main objectives: digitizing content intended for education, and development of new, innovative e-services, as well as new system functionality.

In 2009 preliminary work was carried out for a large-scale digitizing project of books and periodicals (3.5 million pages of the most demanded publications, included in study programmes) and user interfaces for convenient searching. It is planned to acquire the necessary technologies and document post-processing tools in the framework of the project, in order to ensure the sustainability of the digital library under conditions of limited financing. Technological solutions for the public access to the Latvian Web archive (3,000 websites) will be also developed and the retroconversion of the national card catalogue performed (600,000 entries).

During the second stage of the project – in 2010–11 – a new tool for the aggregation of electronic resources will be introduced, a series

of new, innovative e-services for the public will be developed, *inter alia* on-demand digitization, uniform identification of registered distance users, and a digital library for children, for users with special needs and mobile equipment, as well as a map navigation solution.

In the first half of 2009 two project proposals for the preparation and publication of digital research contents have been submitted jointly with other European memory institutions to the EU ICT Policy Support Programme under the Competiveness and Innovations Programme. Latvia plans to offer for publication in the Europeana portal 120,000 pages of documents in various forms. The launch of the project is planned for 2010.

ADMINISTRATION

The last decade has been characterized by fast economic growth and even faster recession. This, of course, has had a major impact upon the administration of the Library. The annual budgets have differed greatly. The same can be said about various items of expenditure. For example, even during the 'best' years the funding for the acquisition of information resources or maintenance in practice did not increase. At the same time the maintenance costs of seven buildings, as well as prices of books and periodicals, kept growing.

INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

The National Library of Latvia has actively participated in the global and European structures of national libraries. In 2001 the Conference of European National Librarians meeting was held in Riga. The tradition that dates back to 1968, the organization of the summer camps of the national libraries of the three Baltic States – LiLaEst – continued in 2001, 2003, 2005 and 2007.

In the interim period new bilateral cooperation agreements have been signed with the National Libraries of Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Karelia, Russia, Taiwan, Uzbekistan and Sweden.

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THE NATIONAL LIBRARY OF LATVIA, 2001–2008

ABSTRACT

The new millennium witnessed significant changes in the development of the National Library of Latvia (NLL). The last decade of the twentieth century was linked to the restoration of all the basic functions of a national library in independent Latvia, but its development over the following decade was determined by the creation of a new, contemporary library. The twenty-year debate on the necessity of a new library, conforming to Latvia's needs, generated discussion not only on the functions of the library, but also on the broader cultural context. The basic approach was clear – nothing would remain the same in the new library. The size of the library's traditional collection has not changed significantly, but the provision of digitally born information and electronic publications has expanded rapidly. From 2001 to 2008 the NLL developed a national competence-building function in library computerization projects. Deepening cooperation with research libraries and other educational and research institutions, as well as the establishment of the Research and Development group, which brought the vision of a digital future into the Library, have been very important for enshrining the authority of the NLL in the whole library network. The National Library holds an optimistic view of the coming decade, believing that the new building will be completed, that the National Digital Library 'Letonica' will be created with resources in TEL, Europeana and the World Digital Library, and that the Library will be a valuable interactive centre of culture, education and research in the state.

APPENDIX: STATISTICS

	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Total holdings	4.465.262	4.478.424	4.524.303	4.537.986	4.592.949	4.044.168	4.072.188	4.080.390
Legal deposit copies	43.410	43.221	40.588	35.539	45.030	44.385	32.299	30.968
Readership	43.069	36.174	44.361	43.231	52.398	55.953	81.363	84.200
Visits	476.493	496.835	510.399	455.001	553.622	605.845	786.198	746.568
Loans	3.120.186	2.182.649	2.414.571	2.263.439	1.855.419	1.681.691	1.689.741	1.407.587
Budget	US\$1.956.280	\$2.079.130	\$2.040.214 \$2.478.392 including grants	\$2.509.109 \$3.099.457 including grants	€2.072.673 €2.614.779 including grants	€3.003.062 €3.479.084 Including grants	€8.777.821 €9.326.898 including grants	€8.472.223 €8.741.717 including grants