The Public Library in the 21st Century

Zürich – May 2016
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Agenda

1. Major changes and challenges
2. The spaces of the public library
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- The public library – a unique cultural institution

In a process of change due to:
- The explosive development in technology and media
- The question of the virtual space contra the physical space
- The development of late-modern society
- The situation of increasing competition
- New users
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• Previously the mission of the public library was to socialize individuals to live in a modern democratic and secularized society. That meant: To support empowerment, knowledge, enlightenment and bildung through the “right” book.
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- The dissolution of the great stories
- The library was part of a great story
- We can’t speak about a single truth anymore
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- The post-traditional society
- An undermining of the formulas of truth
- An increased reflexivity
- An increased uncertainty
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• Everyday-life, consumption and identity associated with experiences.
• Minus traditional parameters of competition.
• Feelings, stories and experiences.
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- From monocultural to multicultural.
- Generations
- Ethnicities
- Social groups
- Genders
- Religions
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- New users
- Digital natives
- Prosumers
- New competences/demands
Culture 3.0:

... a situation in which individuals do not limit themselves to absorb passively the cultural stimuli, but are motivated to put their skills at work: thus, not simply hearing music, but playing; not simply reading texts, but writing and so on.

Pier Luigi Sacco, Professor of Cultural Economy, ULM University of Milan.
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- The libraries are under pressure
- Need for resources
- Need for legitimacy
- Need for stronger relations with the surrounding community.
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- A new willingness and desire to engage in a more dynamic relationship with surroundings of the libraries.
- A movement from the uniform to the manifold.
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From content to context
From transactions to relations
From collection to connection
From collection to creation
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✓ User-involvement
✓ User-driven innovation
✓ Partnerships and creative alliances
✓ Hybrid cultural arenas
✓ Creative and cultural entrepreneurs
✓ Expressive cultural mediation
✓ Performative spaces
✓ Etc.
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The Public Libraries in the Knowledge Society

Summary from the committee on public libraries in the knowledge society
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- **Experience**
  - quest for meaning and identity in a complex society

- **Involvement**
  - lust for participating and contributing

- **Empowerment**
  - development of strong and independent citizens who are able to solve everyday problems

- **Innovation**
  - finding new answers to practical problems or developing new concepts, methods or artistic expressions
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The Inspiration Space
The space for meaningful experiences, i.e. experiences that transforms our perception. This can happen through story-telling and other artistic expressions within all media, culture patterns and genres.
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The Learning Space
The space were children, youngsters and adults can discover and explore the world and thereby increase their competences and possibilities through free and unrestricted access to information and knowledge and through play, artistic activities, courses and many other activities.
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The Meeting Space

The meeting space provides the frames for non-committal, accidental meetings in both small intimate spaces as well as in lounge areas with newspapers and café facilities and as in more organized meetings, where topics and problems can be analyzed and discussed.
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The Performative Space
A space where the users can be inspired to create new artistic expressions or inventions by having access to media, materials, tools, mentors, workshops, entrepreneurial skills, and scenes for staging events.
The performative space is meant to support creativity and innovation and new production environments in the local community.
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- The creation library is a library which has extended its role and become a place where media conveying information, knowledge, art and entertainment are created. It is a library that houses a range of equipment and facilities to help, authors, editors, performers and other creators to prepare new work, alone or in groups, in new or old media, for personal use or widespread distribution.

Confronting the Future – Strategic Visions for the 21st Century Public Library, ALA
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How is the model being used?

• As an instrument for arranging, rearranging, designing and building libraries.
• As an instrument to develop libraries e.g. through partnerships.
• As a management and communication tool in connection with the development of library plans and policy.
• As a tool for communicating the role of the library to (local) politicians.
• As a point of departure for the discussion of the public library’s role in the continued development of a democratic society.
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Modelprogram for public libraries (Danish Agency for Culture)

http://modelprogrammer.kulturstyrelsen.dk/en/
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Thank you

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