
Guest editorial: Vienna 2022: a story of Kuopio conference

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Kuopio is a medium-sized town in Eastern Finland with a population of about 120,000 people. It is 400 km north-east from Helsinki, surrounded by lakes which makes it a special summer city. There is a university and the National Repository Library (NRL). NRL, established in 1989, is a resource shared by all Finnish libraries and information service centres. The basic function of the NRL is to receive, store and offer material for the use of other libraries.

Kuopio conference series started after some consultations with IFLA core programme, Universal Availability of Publications (UAP), which was hosted by the British Library. UAP programme published a study titled “National Repository Plans and Programmes” in 1982 (ISBN 0-7123-001-6). This publication inspired communication with UAP and finally ended up to the creation of Kuopio conference series.

NRL has hosted five times the International Conference on Print Repositories and Repository Libraries in Kuopio, Finland. During these conferences, the need for efficient management of less-used research documents on a global level has been highlighted as an issue. This demands new logistical and policy innovations in order to guarantee easy access to these documents. The rise of digital dissemination and new technologies has given libraries new tools, but there are still many challenges to be solved. Kuopio conferences continue to focus on issues connected with efficient print collection management and guaranteeing access to print not as a curious artefact but as a genuine vehicle to communication with the best archival prospect.

Since 1999 there have been many national and international organisations that have helped in planning the contents of the conferences including the British Library, Centre for Research Libraries (Chicago), International Federation of Library Associations (IFLA), Centre Technique du Livre (Paris), Cooperative Action by Victorian Academic Libraries (Caval, Melbourne), OCLC and many others.

Library Management journal started to support the conference and published proceedings of two conferences as special issues and many articles from other conferences in normal issues.

First Kuopio Conference: *Solving collection problems through repository strategies/the Economics of Repository Libraries* was held in Kuopio on 9-11 May 1999.

The title was formulated by Donald B. Simpson, the president of CRL. It is very American and reflects the understanding of repositories at that time. Graham Cornish from the British Library opened the theme: “Repository libraries as a concept have the potential to realise many elements that are vital to libraries: proper acquisition programmes, proper storage facilities, efficient retrieval and delivery system, given that the material is usually low use”. Repository libraries ought to have a duty to manage relegation and preservation programmes for the benefit not only their immediate patrons, but for that of a much wider audience both nationally and internationally.

As the electronic era continues to struggle to dawn, the role of repositories will become one of dwindling importance providing storage of less-and-less used material. They could become the template for future developments bringing together publishers, libraries, users in one institution serving wider and wider group of users.”

Main speakers were Donald Simpson, Pascal Sanz (CTLes, Paris), Malcolm Smith (British Library), Peter Lor (South Africa, Conference of Directors of National Libraries) and Graham Cornish, UAP, BL



The first conference, Proceedings: "Solving collection problems through repository strategies" attracted 30 participants at Boston Spa, IFLA Offices for UAP and International Lending, 1999 – ISBN: 0 95324394 X in [Interlending & Document Supply](#) and ISSN: 0264-1615.

Second conference: *Preserving and maintaining availability of print material: the role of repository libraries*. Kuopio, 13–15 May 2004.

Continuing the [First International Repository and Storage Library Conference](#), held in Kuopio 1999, this conference studied matters connected with preservation and availability of print materials. Special focus is on economy of access to print materials. Also under discussion were centralised services, which have been developed to guarantee access to print material. Less-used materials are kept in centralised storage facilities, which allow local libraries to reduce costs for their collection space.

The speakers were leading international specialists from all over the world. The conference programme was built to allow much discussion and planning. The conference was meant for library policy planners, library directors, collection management officers and for those interested in advancing resource sharing. The conference was organised under the auspices of IFLA and sponsored by it. Leading repositories of the world and some other institutions participated in programme planning. There were 50 librarians in the audience.

The third conference under the title "*The universal repository library and guarantees for the sustainability of digital copy*" was held in Kuopio on 29–30 October 2009. It was sponsored by IFLA sections on Acquisition and Collection Development and The Ligue des Bibliothèques Européennes de Recherche (LIBER).

The title was opened in the introduction of the web site. The Kuopio Conferences have identified a vital issue facing the Library and Cultural communities. They have successfully highlighted the problems of how to identify low-use print resources, how to preserve those materials and, more particularly, how to deal with these issues in a global environment. The problem is neither with the local library nor with the local or national repository but with the need for a global coordination of what is being preserved for research posterity. This identification of the **Universal Repository Library (URL)** is recognition of the paradox facing decision-makers. The **URL** sharply recognises that print is with us forever, that most of it is commercially non-viable to be converted permanently to digital form and that the desired delivery vehicle is digital. It also announces that there are rich and vital collections across all languages which should be included in this target.

The Third Kuopio Conference tried to extend this clear examination of this crucial responsibility in the preservation of the world's literatures. Where the digital environment correctly is being identified as the future medium of preference, the free availability of a rich historical research collection from all languages and cultures is of increasingly prominent importance.

There is a vast and strongly growing network of Repositories who can link together to create the **URL** to work towards a solution to the future. This conference was to focus on these and future initiatives to create innovative and creative solutions internationally.

Speakers came from following institutions: OCLC (Constance Malpas), Association of Research Libraries (Canada, USA), CTLes (Paris) and CRL. There were 80 participants.

The fourth conference was held in Kuopio on 9–10 August 2012 with the title "*Global policies, Imperatives and Solutions for the Efficient Library Collection Management and Access to Less-Used Documents*". It was a preconference to Helsinki IFLA 2012 sponsored by IFLA sections on Acquisition and Collection Development and Serials and Other Continuing Resources.

The satellite conference continued to focus on issues connected with efficient print collection management and guaranteeing access to print not as a curious artefact but as a genuine vehicle to communication with the best archival prospect.

In the invitation text, the organisers wanted papers on following themes: Digital material is becoming dominant in many libraries. Especially in universities engaged in research and teaching in science, technology and medicine (STM) subjects need to concentrate on digital content provision. At the same time economic constrain force libraries to make savings where ever they can. Savings can be made in profiled collection policies and profiled acquisitions. The costs of library premises are also a target of institutional economic consideration. Premises to accommodate print collections are being reduced and if possible local storage facilities should be rejected. One viable solution to maintain availability to print collections is outsourcing.

Speakers included Jarmo Saarti (University of Eastern Finland), Daryl Yang (UKRR), Bernard F. Reilly (CRL) Steve O'Connor and Cathie Jilovsky (CAVAL, Australia).

Proceedings: "Kuopio: Third (**this is actually the fourth**) International Conference on Repository Libraries" *Library Management*, ISSN 0143-5124, vol 34, Num, 4 May 2013.

The fifth conference titled "*Aligning commercial and public document repositories to facilitate free and sustainable information*" was held in Kuopio on 21-22 May 2015 as 25th anniversary of NRL.

The conference was inspired by the IFLA declaration for the inclusion of culture in the Post-2015 UN Sustainable Development Goals. The IFLA Lyon declaration on Access to Information and Development states:

We . . . believe that increasing access to information and knowledge across society, assisted by the availability of information and communication technologies (ICTs), supports sustainable development and improves people's lives.

The conference wanted to offer a fertile field in which new ideas can be sown to achieve what Lyon declaration aims at. The keynote speakers were advised to describe the environment and predict the future. Also the conference wanted to encourage younger members of the profession to speak on and debate the future of this profession which they are inheriting. What is the role of information through our print repositories?

The invitation text included the following. Already many libraries globally have decided, or had decided for them, to reduce their print collections in favour of more space for their users. This re-allocation of space has not been a bad thing, but the consequences of the loss of print are yet to be determined or fully understood. Fundamental amongst these is diminution of the role of libraries as a free source for information for their communities.

These conference papers are mostly available in the pages of *Library Management*. Speakers included Steve O'Connor (*Library Management*), Bernard Reilly (CRL), Constance Malpas (OCLC), Deborah Jacobs (ARL, Duke University, USA), Jean Louis Baraggioli (CTLes, Paris), Ulrich Niederer (Luzern, Switzerland), Caroline Brazier (BL) and Rachel Kirkwood (University of Manchester).

Attendance: 80. After this conference, I offered the series to be planned and hosted by European Print Initiatives Collaboration (EPICo).

The sixth Kuopio conference was held in Basel, Switzerland under the title "*A Matter of Trust: Cooperative Print Storage and Shared Archiving Initiatives*" on 14–16 March 2018. Ulrich Niederer offered to organise it partly because he had managed to open a new repository to Switzerland.

In this conference, experts from Europe, the USA and Australia talked about their projects and tried to show that archiving print is complementing the digital turn and not competing it: the coordination of printed material storage on a national or even international level will become more important, as more and more digital content will be available.

The conference focussed on two main aspects: Cooperative storage facilities as service providers and shared or distributed archiving initiatives of serials. The presentation of detailed procedures is important: how are shared initiatives set up, what are the obligations of

its members, how can holdings be made visible, does de-duplication take place? What does it cost and what business models are developed?

Additionally, the book *Repositories for Print: strategies for access, preservation and democracy* was presented. It is edited by Pentti Vattulainen and Steve O'Connor, and it was published by de Gruyter just in time for the conference (ISBN 978-3-11-053537-2).

The conference also arranged a visit to the still new Cooperative Storage Library Switzerland – a perfect way to bring the conference to an inspiring end.

The speakers included Andy Appleyard (Head of Operations North, British Library), Steve O'Connor, Pentti Vattulainen, Wolfgang Mayer & Brigitte Krompf (University of Vienna), Lizanne Payne (Hathi Trust, USA) and Daryl Yang (UKRR). There were about 80 participants.

Kuopio 7: Vienna 07–09 2022

Kuopio 7 was hosted by Shared Archiving Austria (Link to SAA). The title was: *Review and Renew: Collection Management Policies in a Digital Age*. The Programme committee was European Print Initiatives Collaboration (EPICo). Programme advisors were Pentti Vattulainen and Steve O'Connor

In the conference, library professionals, scientists **and** representatives of major publishers presented their approaches to challenges like preservation policies, evaluation of archiving projects, economic models, metadata and other related topics.

This issue includes many papers that were presented in the conference.

Attendance: 8 chairs, 33 speakers and 60 participants. The proceedings are published in this issue of *Library Management*.

Future: the conferences will be held in Europe biannually. The next **Kuopio 8th** or by its new name **EPICo2** will be in **Barcelona 25–27 September 2024**. The possible title is “Importance of print in a digital world”. Local organisers are Consortium of Academic Libraries in Catalunya and University of Barcelona.

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