

## Library 10 & Meetingpoint

### Abstract:



Library 10 is a modern library in the centre of Helsinki. In addition to having a broad collection of musical recordings, the library is equipped with versatile computer workstations. Library 10's 800 m<sup>2</sup> of public space welcomes approximately 50 000 customers per month and is Helsinki's most popular library. The library is open on a daily basis for a total of 78 hours each week. The statistics of Library 10's users are much different than other branches; 60% of users are men and 60% are under the age of 30.

Of the customers that frequent Library 10, about half come to loan items from the library. What is interesting, however, is what the other half does. While some come to read newspapers and surf the net, a growing number of customers are coming to make their own music, or then to see and hear the works created by other customers in the form of exhibitions and performances.

Meetingpoint operates in tandem with Library 10 and is a part of the Helsinki City Library system. However, its customer base is not limited to just library users. All age groups are welcomed from anywhere in the world. Though it is a part of the Helsinki City Library and primarily serves those customers, it often provides services to people who do not even have a library card.

Meetingpoint has multimedia computer workstations along with a video editing workstation that library customers can book in advance. These workstations have professional photo editing tools and scanners. With those customers can edit their own videos and images and publish them on social media sites such as YouTube, Flickr, Facebook, etc. Meetingpoint and Library 10 both have 'drop by' computers that are available for quick visits. Meetingpoint also holds a variety of scheduled classes and has 12 laptops available that are arranged in sets of 6 pairs for easy tutelage. The unit functions as a centre of know-how for electronic services, digital materials and mobile services.



DJ Librarian

### **Background:**

The mission statement of Helsinki City Library is to provide a fundamental civic service that is available to everyone. As a part of the worldwide network of libraries, it offers customers access to sources of culture and information. On an interactive basis, it develops the library services that Helsinki residents need in order to become active members of society and enjoy life more fully. The library's vision for 2010 is to become the boundless library – a source of enlightenment and inspiration throughout one's life.

The history of Library 10 dates back to 1994 when the Helsinki City Library decided to create an experimental library at the Cable Factory premises. The resulting Cable Library was the first public library in the world to offer Internet connection to its users. Subsequently the Cable Library's activities, following many changes and different phases, have evolved into what is today Library 10. Its task is to develop services and operations that will serve as the foundation for the new Central Library. During the past 14 years, this unit of the Helsinki City Library has aspired to keep up with the changing times, and to even be ahead of them. Specifically regarding the application of technical solutions along with use of interior spacing, the Cable Library and Library 10 have been pilot libraries, whose experiences have been followed and capitalized upon by libraries around the world.

Library 10 originated from the merging of two branches in the Helsinki City Library system. The Main Library's former music unit, which had a brief incarnation as its own branch (Music Station), and the IT-focused Cable Library, which was located in the Lasipalatsi complex, moved into the downtown Main Post Office building in the spring of 2005. The aim when merging the two branches was to bring more than just their combined services under one roof. The goal was to involve customers with not just being consumers of cultural works, but to participate directly in the production and presentation of cultural works, and to make the premises open for anyone to use as a place of work, study, or gathering.

As a public library, Library 10 supports user interest and activity in music and other cultural pursuits. The library provides equipment, tools, and premises for independent production and presentation of cultural works. Library 10 serves as a testing and development facility for new IT and music services. The library actively follows the changing needs of customers and the means by which the library can react to those needs. Library 10 offers the metropolitan area's most diverse collection of music. The collection is developed and cultivated by cooperation with music providers using numerous procurement channels. Acquisition proposals made by customers also play a significant part in developing a relevant collection.

At the Cable Library's former location in the Lasipalatsi complex, a new library service has been founded under the name Meetingpoint@lasipalatsi. This 'library' has no book collection and the idea of its operations is to provide the city's populace with practical advice and guidance in electronic communication and living in an information society. Meetingpoint is an experimental unit that develops new methods and frameworks for cooperation with other corporate and public bodies.



Stage for events

### **Main objectives:**

Library 10 and Meetingpoint have been named as top priority projects in the Helsinki City's IT-strategy plan for 2007-2010: "Helsinki serves". These top priority projects are intended to speed up development and to forge the image of Helsinki. The informal motto that describes the principal undertaking of Library 10 and Meetingpoint is "IT within reach for everyone", and their task is to promote media preparedness and the prevention of digital disenfranchisement of the city's populace.

Library 10 and Meetingpoint function as learning environments, which offer up-to-date equipment and space for independent study and work. They also aim to assist customers with the questions and problems that often accompany the new technologies. Musicians that are novices with respect to recording equipment are encouraged to attend the audio editing courses that are offered by Library 10 free of charge. IT-guides assist with the use of computer programs and Internet services, while the laptop doctor checks that a customer's laptop has not been infected with a virus.

Meetingpoint reacts quickly to the information needs of its customers by staging informational happenings on various topics such as "What is Vista?", "What is Facebook?", "Time for adventure – how do I book a trip on the Internet?" or "How do I print my holiday pictures from my digital camera?" These types of small specific courses are intended to give the citizens of Helsinki the possibility of learning current web services in the comfort of their own neighbourhood library, and as such to help develop the information skills of Helsinki's citizens.

When developing Library 10's new services and operations, one of the starting points is to ensure their ability to be replicated and updated. The planning and implementation stages are documented. Consequently, they can be exploited by other libraries when carrying out their own renovations. The useful practices of Library 10 have been presented in countless domestic forums and conferences abroad. Library 10 also offers consultation help in the planning of new libraries. For example, the planners of the new City of Espoo library cooperated with Library 10 in topics as diverse as the

equipment needs for their performance area to the development of the staff work schedules. For its own part, Library 10's model has aroused a broader public discussion regarding the use of the library space and its future.



Side by side guidance

## Resources:

Library 10 is unlike the other Helsinki City libraries. While other branch libraries focus on serving the residents of their surrounding area, Library 10 and Meetingpoint serve the city's residence while they move about the downtown area. On weekdays the doors open early at 8am and close late in the evening at 10pm, allowing those commuting to and from work or school to manage their library errands on the move. Library 10 is open daily for a total of 78 hours each week. This is the second longest weekly operating hours for a public library in Europe (second only to Amsterdam's new central library's opening hours of 80 per week). Library 10 logs over 50 000 visitors each month (compare the neighbouring Kiasma art museum at 15 000/month). The floor space allotted for Library 10's customers amounts to 800 m<sup>2</sup>, making it Finland's, if not entire Europe's, most efficient use of library space. Library 10 receives 587 customers per square meter each year, while the Helsinki City Library's average is 218.

Library 10's operations are very economically efficient. The cost of each loan is 2.16 € (entire library system 3.29 €) and one visit costs 2.11 € (entire library system 4.78 €). Unlike Library 10, which is funded similar to other branches, the budget of Meetingpoint is solely dependant on the Innovation Fund of Helsinki City. Meetingpoint is a part of the Helsinki City Library's user evaluation system, but is also employs its own evaluation forms to receive user input and feedback for various classes and customer situations. These evaluations are frequently reviewed and its services are developed accordingly. The functions of Meetingpoint have recently focused on implementing its services into a mobile format that can easily be carried out at other library branches. For this purpose, the acquisition of numerous laptops and other relevant equipment has allowed the proper execution of the mobile service format.

In tandem with offering such new services has been the updating of staff skills and methods of customer service. Different staff members have undergone training in a variety of fields including media and IT-skills, cultural production, audio and lighting techniques, etc. Library 10 has also begun a novel approach to internship training, where the student graduates with a profession in the library and media

fields. The average age of Library 10 and Meetingpoint's staff is about 35 years, and 70% of the staff is male, resulting in a staff profile that reflects the make up and interests of much of the customer base.

### **In practice**

As part of the library system's organization, Library 10 and Meetingpoint are structured separately than that of the city library's other branches. Branch libraries are organized under the regional services department, whereas Library 10 and Meetingpoint are organized under the centralized library services department. As part of the library's centralized services department, Library 10 and Meetingpoint work closely with another unit of that department, the eLibrary Unit. The eLibrary Unit deals with the library's network services. One of the specific tasks of Library 10, Meetingpoint, and the eLibrary Unit are to conceive how physical and virtual library services can better be combined. Another important duty for Library 10 and Meetingpoint are to study and evaluate new information and communication solutions and how they can be exploited in the world of libraries.

It is worthy to note that since the opening of Library 10, the other downtown branches have not experienced a decline in their number of visitors. Helsinki therefore had a daily vacuum of 2000 library customers in the very city centre. Library 10's user base is also exceptional in that 60% of the customers are men between the ages of 20-30, who are otherwise not seen in the library. Additionally, customers with an immigrant background make up a significant portion of the library's users. For example, the rehearsal and recording studios are in heavy use by young rap artists.



**Music studio**

Library 10 and Meetingpoint are united under a single manager, yet both branches have their own staff manager. Both branches have no department managers, and decisions related to operations are made in service teams. Each staff member is free to suggest new projects or operating methods, and decisions are made in staff meetings. Normally the staff member initiating a staff approved project also becomes the person responsible for its implementation.

Library 10 and Meetingpoint's operations are based on a customer oriented approach. Already in the planning phase for any activity, the question "What do customers do and how do they do things?" is posed. Library 10's most important development tools are customer feedback, questionnaires, interviews, and the dialogue between customers and staff. Thus the materials for loan as well as the technology available for customers evolve and are constantly being updated to reflect the wishes of customers.

Library 10 and Meetingpoint have invested specifically in flexible technology, easily adaptable interior solutions, customer independence, and new skills in its staff. The library's numerous computer stations,

desks, terminals, and other IT-related furnishings are all fitted with wheels. Electrical outlets and data ports are located in the ceiling. Consequently, the space and technical equipment can be quickly rearranged for different needs. In addition, the Stage area can be expanded from a display area to a small concert hall in a matter of moments as the shelves are also fitted with wheels. The library's floor plan has been designed to have a natural customer flow towards the self-loaning and return points, through which 70% of material passes.

Library 10 has a score of mobile laptop tables as well as data and electrical outlets, allowing customers to set up a laptop work station anywhere in the library, whether alone or with friends. To assemble one's own workstation Library 10 also offers do-it-yourself peripherals for loan such as scanners, memory card readers, headphones, DVD player, etc. The library also has the rehearsal and recording studios as well as instruments for loan. When musicians have completed a recording project, they may have it placed in the demo-tower for other customers to enjoy. When their talents grow, bands can reserve the Stage and give a performance to the library's users. All of this is available with the library card, free of charge. Library 10 issues dozens of new cards each month to customers that have not previously needed the library.



**Mobile laptop table**

Reference desk work has changed to a one-on-one approach, where the customer sits alongside with a staff member and together search for information on the same screen. This simple change of approach has effected an efficient use of time during the customer-staff engagement. The customer is able to more actively assist in the search, often slightly reducing the time staff is occupied with any one search. At the same time, the customer receives a working lesson on systematic search methods which enables them more independence with any future information needs.

Since in practice the library competes for customers' leisure time with other entertainment and cultural offerings, its events and services must be marketed efficiently and effectively. Some of the practical and gratuitous channels for marketing used thus far have been local radio, free daily newspapers, Internet forums, blogs, and other social media. Library 10 and Meetingpoint have made resourceful use of its own media equipment to market itself, for example by recording interviews with customers on video and then uploading them to their own web pages.

### **Innovative features:**

Library 10 and Meetingpoint have and continue to offer services that customers do not even expect of the library, for example: rehearsal and recording studios, audio and video editing rooms, music

instruments for loan, multimedia peripherals, comic workshops, and so on. The result has been that customers have begun to expect similar services from other libraries. In 2007, Library 10 logged 2746 studio reservations and made 6989 loans on non-traditional items such as computer peripherals, headphones, instruments, etc. In addition to the non-traditional items that are a part of Library 10 and Meetingpoint's collection are the broadband modems and TV digital converter boxes that are made available to customers on loan in cooperation with a corporate partner.

Library 10 and Meetingpoint bring professional quality equipment and software into reach of the individual who might otherwise not have the resources or ease of opportunity to use such equipment. Library 10 organizes free courses for the audio editing equipment, while Meetingpoint assists customers with the basics in video editing. This allows the customer the real opportunity to be a cultural contributor as well as a consumer.

Meetingpoint's laptop doctor provides personal guidance and advice in the use of one's own laptop computer. Customers are able to book appointments to consult with the library's laptop doctor. The service aims to diagnose and treat the various problems that customers may encounter with computer upgrades, updates and software installation. A comparable service is unavailable in Helsinki. The laptop doctor is free and easily accessible, and consequently receives lots of positive feedback from customers. The City of Helsinki is apparently the first city in the world that employs a laptop doctor!

The Laptop-club convenes once a week at Meetingpoint for learning and improving computer skills in a peer group of senior citizens. The club is run by Meetingpoint employees, but sometimes features visiting instructors from other libraries. The members can directly affect the topics that are discussed and taught in the club. This spring for example, the club's program has included sending e-cards for Valentine's Day, shopping on the internet, watching internet-TV and learning the new Vista operating system. The Laptop-club responds to the constant demand of Meetingpoint customers for courses and learning opportunities while using with their own laptop computers. Learning is especially fun in a peer group with interactivity. The Skype-courses for example instruct customers how to make Internet based calls to friends abroad, and Facebook courses coach users on how to network with others in their own profession.



Laptop club

### **Customer involvement:**

At Library 10, exhibitions and events are organized that are related to current events in the society. The city's different agencies, hobby groups, clubs, and associations can present their own activities at the library's Stage. During panel discussions customers convene to question experts from different fields.

For example during last spring's "Voice of the Youth" event, the library's Stage played host to municipal politicians and leaders, where young adults were able to interview and pose questions that concern them. The Stage has witnessed discussions ranging from the fate of the city's forests to the rampant wild rabbit population in the city to the Eurovision karaoke event after Finland won the competition for the very first time. During 2007 the Stage organized 60 cultural events. Many of the events are recorded on video, allowing them to be viewed from the library's web pages. Library 10 also founded the Library Radio in 2007, which brings voice to the library's web pages. Via the Library Radio, author interviews, material presentations, reference questions, and other web content can now be heard in addition to being read.

Meetingpoint has a mobile laptop classroom that brings new media and web services to customers of neighbourhood libraries. Two librarians take six laptop computers to these libraries. At the library the laptops are connected to the local StadiNetti wireless network that can be found in every Helsinki City Library. The computers are equipped with web-cams and headsets. Another successful Meetingpoint service is the organization of media days at other libraries. Here, the staff presents Web 2.0 to the public and offers advice on how to take advantage of it. During these events local residents have been able to scan old photos of their neighbourhood and to recall stories that are then recorded. These can subsequently be stored on the neighbourhood's own web pages, for example. Seniors are also offered instructions on how to transfer photos and videos from digital cameras and mobile phones to a computer after which they can be sent by email or uploaded to internet sites such as Flickr.

On another level, citizens contribute to the development and evolution of Library 10 and Meetingpoint's design and services. Customers provide valuable feedback regarding improvements that the library did not realize in the planning phase. For example when designing the rehearsal studio at Library 10, the focus was on acoustics and the audio equipment. It was not until after receiving customer feedback that the library added mirrors to the rehearsal studio. For performers, it was not only important to sound good, but to look good as well!

One new service that has been in the planning is the Citizen's Media Card, which would allow customers to store media they have produced themselves. Already customers produce works of music and video at the library. Additionally, using scanners and publishing software, they produce other works that are either printed or intended for publishing on the web. In this way, the digital media created by customers would become a part of the library's digital collection.



Cosplay girls at the Comic Festival

## Results:

Since their opening, Library 10 and Meetingpoint have had broad media exposure exemplifying their new library services and innovative use of the city's public space. Library 10 and Meetingpoint's popularity and activity are one of the strong justifications driving the plans for a new Central Library in the heart of Helsinki.

Library 10's physical premise can be seen on the web. Concerts, discussions, clubs and other events are filmed, recorded, and stored on the library's web pages. In this way Library 10's presence extends beyond the walls of its location. Perhaps even more significant is that its presence has been felt. This is reflected in some of the awards it has received.

In 2006 it was awarded the "Helsinki of my Dreams" prize by Radio Helsinki and Finland's largest national newspaper, Helsingin Sanomat. The prize is awarded once a year to an individual or body that has made Helsinki a better place in which to live and work. The justification for selecting Library 10 as the recipient went as follows: "...the library that opened in the Main Post Office building has enticed visitors not with books, but modern library services. At Library 10, one can listen to music, recording one's own music, edit videos, or delve into a broad collection of comics. The library's central location in the centre of Helsinki, modern services, and ease of use has brought the library into the daily lives of youth in a whole new fashion. In this way Library 10 has made Helsinki a better place to live."

In 2008 Library 10 was one of two bodies that shared the coveted Quality Innovation of the Year Award in the public sector by the Excellence Finland organization. The panel detailed its decision by stating that the library has perceived the changing world and has answered this challenge with very modern methods to achieve excellent results in its work.

Library 10 is the most visited library in the capital's metropolitan area. Each year hundreds of domestic and foreign cultural and library professionals, architects, politicians, IT-professionals, and other visitors come to acquaint themselves to what Library 10 is doing. The greatest interest at the moment is: what is it that brings young, primarily young male, users into the library? If we are to believe the messages relayed to us by these various visitors, then Library 10's functional model and individual solutions are currently being copied by dozens of cultural and library premises around Europe.