



TOGETHER FOR SEARCHING, LEARNING, AND UNDERSTANDING

*Cooperation Strategy of the Libraries of
the Universities of Applied Sciences*

2007 – 2010



Preface

The first Library Strategy of the Universities of Applied Sciences was written for the period 1998 - 2003. The writing of the second Library Strategy began in 2001, and its period of validity was defined to be 2003 - 2007. Work on the third Strategy commenced well in advance of the ending of the second strategy period. All the libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences were invited to participate in the task, and on April 4, 2006 the AMKIT Consortium's Annual General Meeting, held in Lappeenranta, established a working group to coordinate the work. The group prepared the program for the Strategy Seminar of June 14 – 15, 2006, held in Koli, where library directors expressed their views regarding the strategic guidelines of the libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences for the coming years.

The Seminar was successful in setting the groundwork for strategy development. Hence, the working group had a good basis for the writing work done both over the Web and in face-to face meetings. The first versions of the Strategy were discussed at the Library Directors' Meetings of October 26, 2006 and January 11, 2007. Comments from libraries were also collected on two rounds of feedback. In February 2007, statements concerning the Strategy draft were solicited from interest groups, and five were received. The Strategy was approved at the AMKIT Consortium's General Meeting on March 21, 2007.

The new Strategy period was set to end in 2010, thus reaching beyond the 2007 – 2009 time span of the next Performance Agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Universities of Applied Sciences. Longer term strategy work was preferred as a reaction to the organizational and operational environment changes within libraries.

The decision upon the structure of the Strategy was reached so as for the Strategy to serve both the libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences as well as the AMKIT Consortium. In individual libraries, the Strategy can be made use of as a means of developing services. The AMKIT Consortium's development work for the UAS libraries and their cooperation, as well as the position of the AMKIT Consortium within the library network, are ensured by the Strategy.

In the course of the strategy work we used some Strategies of partners included in the List of Sources.

We would like to express our gratitude to library directors and other consultants for all the expert feedback, comments, and new ideas we received.

In Helsinki on March 21, 2007
Strategy Group of the AMKIT Consortium

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Vocabulary of the Strategy text:

AMKIT Consortium = Consortium for cooperation between the libraries of the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (www.amkit.fi)

ARENE = Rectors' Conference of Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (www.arena.fi)

Libraries = Libraries of the Finnish Universities of Applied Sciences (UAS libraries)

Headquarters project = Project financed by the Ministry of Education focusing on the development of common services for the libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences

TOGETHER FOR SEARCHING, LEARNING, AND UNDERSTANDING COOPERATION STRATEGY OF THE LIBRARIES OF THE UNIVERSITIES OF APPLIED SCIENCES 2007 – 2010

AMKIT Consortium

The AMKIT Consortium was founded in 2001 by the Universities of Applied Sciences to coordinate cooperative projects and collaboration between the libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences. The Consortium functions through its own bodies and member libraries. The statutory decision making bodies of the Consortium are the General Meetings and the Steering Committee. In addition, the Consortium has established various working groups whose task fields and terms are defined on a case by case basis.

Mission

The AMKIT Consortium coordinates centralized services for libraries that support the development of local services and cost efficiency as well as the libraries' ability to focus on their core functions. Libraries provide expert services and organized information resources to library customers in order to enhance their professional and human growth, and to develop their skills.

Vision

The AMKIT Consortium has the role of an innovator within the changing network of cooperation. As holders of expertise, libraries are respected developers of learning environments and teaching. Libraries also promote the effectiveness of research and development activities as well as regional development.

Values

Customer oriented approach Anticipation Innovativeness
Internationality Cooperation and cultivation of a sense of community

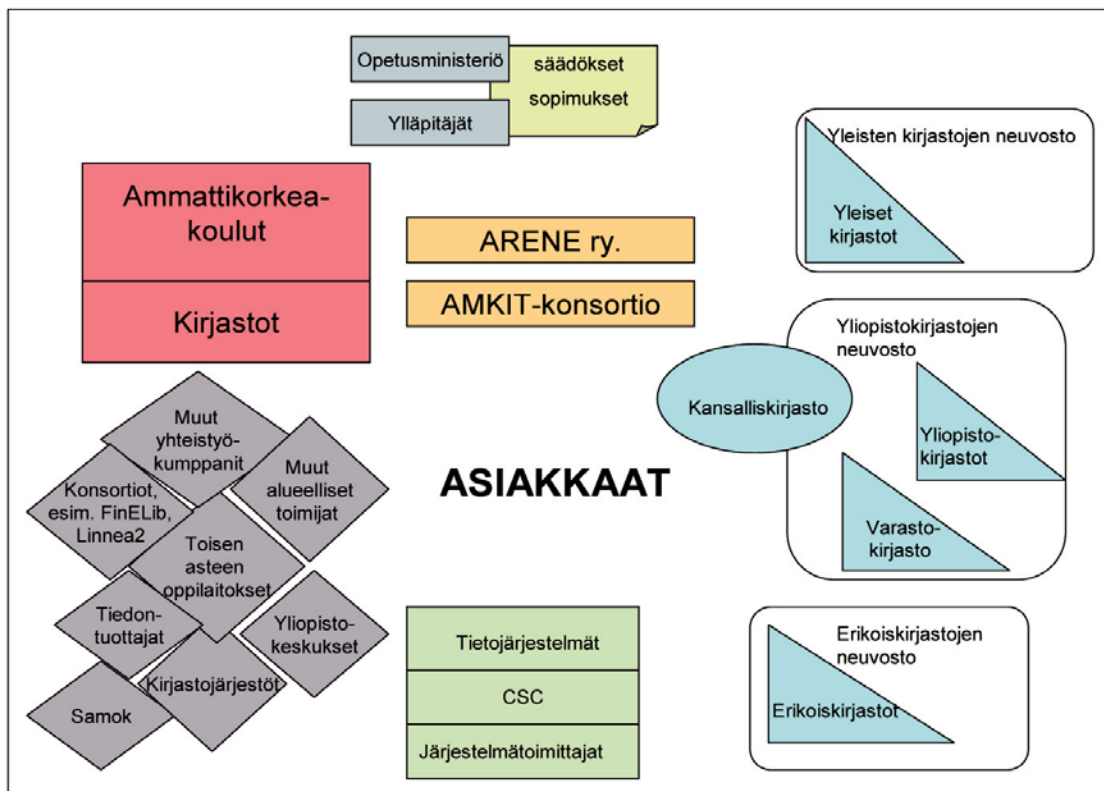
Strategic Guidelines

Flexible production of services
Strategic partnership
Expertise in library and information services work
User oriented information and communication technology solutions
Quality and effectiveness

1. Introduction

The Finnish title of the previous Strategy of the libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences is “AMK -kirjasto – oppimisen resurssi” (period of validity 2004 – 2007). This Strategy emphasized the significance of the library as a dynamic integration point of learning and research within the Universities of Applied Sciences. The goals set in the Strategy were partially reached, and its main guidelines remain feasible. During the previous Strategy period, the AMKIT Consortium attained a more significant role than before.

The rate of social transition processes has speeded up, and within the next few years the structural development of higher education will become an important factor reshaping the library world. This will bring changes to the policies of both individual libraries as well as the AMKIT Consortium. During the transitional phase, a new strategy of cooperation is required for the next-coming 2007 – 2009 Performance Agreement between the Ministry of Education and the Universities of Applied Sciences. The new “Together for Searching, Learning, and Understanding” Strategy is a continuation of the previous Strategy. Matters related only to the most central topics from the libraries’ viewpoint have been included in this Strategy. The future of the library is aligned from the perspective of both individual libraries as well as the AMKIT Consortium. The Strategy is a development tool for libraries and the AMKIT Consortium.



Opetusministeriö = Ministry of Education
Ylläpitäjät = Maintaining organizations
Säädökset = Statutes
Sopimukset = Agreements
Ammattikorkeakoulut = Universities of Applied Sciences
Kirjastot = Libraries
ARENE ry. = ARENE
AMKIT-konsortio = AMKIT Consortium
Yleisten kirjastojen neuvosto = The Council for Public Libraries
Yleiset kirjastot = Public libraries
Kansalliskirjasto = The National Library of Finland
Yliopistokirjastojen neuvosto = The Council for Finnish University Libraries
Yliopistokirjastot = University libraries
Varastokirjasto = National Repository Library
Erikoiskirjastojen neuvosto = The Council for the Special Libraries
Erikoiskirjastot = Special libraries
Muut yhteistyökumppanit = Other partners
Konsortiot, esim. FinELib, Linnea2 = Consortiums, e.g. FinELib, Linnea2
Muut alueelliset toimijat = Other local activators
Toisen asteen oppilaitokset = Upper secondary schools
Tiedontuottajat = Information providers
Yliopistokeskukset = University consortiums
Kirjastojärjestöt = Library associations
Samok = The National Union of Finnish Polytechnic Students

PICTURE. Operational environment of the AMKIT Consortium

2. The Beauty of Searching

The changes within higher education institutions challenge libraries to develop in new areas of expertise in terms of subject matter specialization and skills.

Vision: The AMKIT Consortium has the role of an innovator within the changing network of cooperation. As holders of expertise, libraries are respected developers of learning environments and teaching. Libraries also promote the effectiveness of research and development activities as well as regional development.

3. The Fun of Learning and Knowledge

Libraries are part of the pedagogical processes and innovation systems within the Universities of Applied Sciences. A special purpose of the libraries of higher education institutions is to support the accomplishment of objectives set for information skills learning.

Mission: The AMKIT Consortium coordinates centralized services for libraries that support the development of local services and cost efficiency as well as the libraries' ability to focus on their

core functions. Libraries provide expert services and organized information resources to library customers in order to enhance their professional and human growth, and to develop their skills.

4. Knowing Your Values

The values guiding the policies of the AMKIT Consortium and libraries are

Customer oriented approach
Anticipation
Innovativeness
Internationality
Cooperation and cultivation of a sense of community

5. Strategic Guidelines

The following strategic guidelines are targeted towards achieving the Vision.

Flexible production of services
Strategic partnership
Expertise in library and information services work
User oriented information and communication technology solutions
Quality and effectiveness

5.1. Flexible Production of Services

A truly customer oriented approach is the core objective of library services. The AMKIT Consortium makes strategic use of structure renewals for the common benefit of the libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences. Locally, all libraries are participants in the structural development processes.

Vital Keys to Success:

1. Libraries have an effective customer interface.
2. The AMKIT Consortium and libraries aim at making strategic use of structure renewals.
3. The AMKIT Consortium plans, acquires, and produces common services for libraries.

Crucial Actions:

Work distribution. Libraries and the AMKIT Consortium anticipate structure renewals by seeking partnerships and by networking. Libraries actively seek new models of providing services in order to safeguard both service quality and cost efficiency. The AMKIT Consortium develops, plans, and acquires common services of high standard to its members, e.g. through the Headquarters project. Hence, local libraries can focus on their core areas of expertise and main services.

Acquisition of library materials across library sectors. The AMKIT Consortium actively participates in the development of national library network services, and particularly the FinELib services. The aim is to ensure that the anticipation and consideration concerning the structural development of higher education is also demonstrated in the FinELib projects. The participation of various library coalitions in nationwide consortiums of library materials is secured by development of contract models, for instance by introducing FTE numbers for each field of study. Libraries have a demand for multiform materials as well as new methods for determining the prices for different materials. Libraries are open to unbiased, well functioning, and cost effective consortiums of library materials.

Mobility of library service users. Different library sectors mostly have the same customers. The libraries' first priority is to advance the principle of customer oriented services. An authentication system provides remote access security and is a prerequisite for convenient use of library services. The AMKIT Consortium's statements are aimed at advancing the application of modern authentication technology also within the publishing sector.

5.2. Strategic partnership

Vital Keys to Success:

1. Libraries are part of the central processes within the Universities of Applied Sciences.
2. Libraries are part of the national and international library network, and they are acknowledged partners.
3. The AMKIT Consortium has its own development projects as well as collaborative projects with the library network.

Crucial Actions:

Activities of the AMKIT Consortium. The AMKIT Consortium actively follows and aims to anticipate changes in the operational environment. The Consortium facilitates cooperation with The National Library of Finland, the Ministry of Education, the library network, as well as other partners and financiers. The Consortium gives statements on those acts, regulations, instructions, and recommendations issued by the authorities that concern the field of library and information services. It also carries out surveys and takes initiative on issues of particular importance to the libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences. The Consortium develops foreign contacts, for example by exploring cooperation possibilities with international library organizations. Within the Consortium, libraries work to further common interests and offer their expertise to advance issues of mutual relevance. Several of the libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences operate within organizations that also provide services to other sectors besides the Universities of Applied Sciences. The Consortium aims to have an impact on the removal of obstacles in the way of library and information services development, thus promoting cooperation with local actors, for instance.

Projects to be carried out. The AMKIT Consortium plans and carries out development projects in the field of library and information services through its Headquarters project and in collaboration with The National Library of Finland, the library network, ARENE, and other actors. The development projects focus on the areas of learning, web publishing, quality monitoring, and library standards, among others.

5.3. Expertise in Library and Information Services Work

Rapid changes in operational environments accentuate the importance of versatile and multidisciplinary professional skills and know-how in library and information services work. Libraries demonstrate innovativeness in the everyday functions as well as the development of the Universities of Applied Sciences. This increases the library's attractiveness as a potential employer, hence facilitating the recruitment of new experts

Vital Keys to Success:

1. Libraries have sufficient staff by both qualitative and quantitative measures, and the staff is committed to the goals of the Universities of Applied Sciences.
2. Library staff maintains and develops their expertise, e.g. their professional, subject matter, pedagogical as well as information and communication technology know-how.
3. The library is an attractive employer in terms of work tasks and wages.

Crucial Actions:

Creation of know-how profiles. The AMKIT Consortium draws up know-how profiles for each category of tasks, and makes motions on consistent job titles within the field of library and information services.

Good practices. The expertise and know-how of library staff is enhanced by gathering and sharing good practices.

Training. The needs and possibilities for developing the know-how of library staff are mapped out. The AMKIT Consortium contributes to the organization of anticipatory training directed at library staff. Libraries promote cooperation in multiprofessional training, for example with teaching and information technology staff.

5.4. Customer oriented information and communication technology solutions

Information and communication technologies are part of all library functions. Information systems are necessary for the management and processing of both printed and electronic materials. Well functioning information technology is vital to the production and use of library and information services. Information technology solutions must be interoperable between themselves, with other systems within the organizational frameworks, as well as the systems of other national and foreign partners. Information technology solutions must be implemented in broad cooperation for maximum benefit, cost efficiency, and sustainability.

Vital Keys to Success:

1. Well functioning technical infrastructure
2. Interoperable information systems

3. Cooperation and shared expertise in information and information technology solutions, as well as sufficient resources for development activities

Crucial Actions:

Renewal of information systems within libraries. The aim is that libraries are always equipped with well functioning, reliable, and up to date information technology to secure high standard, customer oriented service. The information systems within libraries meet the quality requirements of accessibility and usability. The AMKIT Consortium is an activator in nationwide information systems projects.

Collaboration with the information and communication technologies field. The AMKIT Consortium actively participates in the preparation of information and communication technology projects and collaboration in, for example, learning support, user authentication, electronic publishing, and projects of data administration within the Universities of Applied Sciences. Expertise in librarianship and standards utilization is offered to advance diversified projects targeted towards the achievement of effective and cost efficient information system services. Sufficient resources for development activities are ensured by cooperation.

5.5 Quality and Effectiveness

Quality assurance systems of higher education institutions must facilitate evidence and assessment based development of functions. Constant assessment of feedback and key figures is a prerequisite for recognizing and answering the different needs of library customers within changing operational environments. Qualitative and quantitative indicators need to be combined for demonstration of effectiveness.

Vital Keys to Success:

1. Comparable, all-inclusive, and reliable indicators
2. Systematic collection of qualitative and quantitative information about policies
3. Quality work across library sectors
4. Leadership based on evidence and assessment

Crucial Actions:

Development of quality assessment. The AMKIT Consortium participates in the national development of indicators, methods, and means for quality assessment. Core measures are the combination of qualitative and quantitative indicators, and the development of comparable key figures.

Inclusion of the library in the performance figures of the Universities of Applied Sciences. The aim is to make library and information service functions visible in the performance figures of the Universities of Applied Science, for instance by collecting library feedback through OPALA, the nationwide system for student feedback, and by making use of the statistics of Finnish scientific libraries in the AMKOTA database figures. Thereby, the contribution of libraries can be shown in the performance of the Universities of Applied Sciences.

6. Forward Together

This strategy period is a period of structure renewal on many levels. Seeking partnerships, networking, and cooperation are a prerequisite for the prosperity of libraries. Joint libraries of several different organizations are established, and the versatile cooperation of libraries on projects, and otherwise, set new ways of producing services. Quality assurance systems of library services, and indicators of effectiveness, are developed. Libraries are faced with new know-how challenges. Some traditional library service functions are organized anew. Libraries gain significance as educators of information literate professionals for the working life. The libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences are, on their part, responsible for the results of the regional development mission assigned for higher education institutions. In many regions, the library of the University of Applied Sciences is the only scientific library. The AMKIT Consortium is a central forum for library cooperation, and a national developer of the library network.

“Together for Searching, Learning, and Understanding” Cooperation Strategy of the Libraries of the Universities of Applied Sciences is executed through the AMKIT Consortium’s Action Plan process. The goals and actions set in the strategic guidelines are specified in the annual Action Plans, and their implementation is assessed in the Annual Reports. Libraries strive for the actions of this Strategy, and the assessment of their implementation, to be included as part of the strategy and assessment processes of their organizational frameworks.

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