
**COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT POLICY 2009–2015 OF THE
NATIONAL LIBRARY OF FINLAND**

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1. The Purpose of the collections development policy

The collections policy of the National Library of Finland guides the formation and development of collections. The policy also outlines the National Library's collection, its national and international significance, and the guidelines for acquisition, selection, donation and disposal.

The guidelines for the selection of new material relate to the expanding research collection and, with regard to the National Collection, the *ulkofennica* resources (Finnish-language material related to Finland created by Finns outside Finland) and the web archive. The acquisition policy included in the collection development policy describes in detail the principles for the development of research collection.

The collections policy is supplemented with the 1) preservation policy, 2) digitisation policy and 3) bibliographic description policy, which will be completed in 2009.

The mission of the National Library of Finland

The National Library of Finland is the country's oldest research library. Its collection represents a centuries-long continuum of science and book culture. The National Library serves the whole nation by preserving the printed cultural heritage for future generations. It also serves current research by acquiring Finnish and international research literature in its focus areas.

Statutes and agreements guiding operations

- [Yliopistolaki](#) (Universities Act, 645/1997; amended Sections 25 and 25 a, 586/2006)
- [Laki kulttuuriaineistojen tallettamisesta ja säilyttämisestä](#) (Act on Collecting and Preserving Cultural Material, 1433/2007)
 - Related Decree of the Ministry of Education (to be completed in 2009)
- National Library of Finland Regulations (14 February 2007) and Rules of Procedure
- [National Library of Finland Strategy 2006–2015](#) (17 November 2005)
- [Library agreement on library and information services between the University of Helsinki and the National Library of Finland 2007–2009](#) (6 June 2007)

The National Library of Finland as research library

The National Library's historical collection is international, multidisciplinary and unique in Finland. Thanks to the Legal Deposit Act, researchers in history and culture can use almost the entire Finnish printed cultural heritage as source material. The National Library's historical collection links Finland with the European cultural heritage and illustrates the presence of international scholarship and written culture in Finland.

The National Library's current collection is based on 1) a statutory mission of preservation and 2) the National Library's role as a research library in the humanities.

The research collection encompasses the following focus areas:

- Historical research
- Art research
- Russian and East European studies
- Philosophy

The acquisition guidelines for these disciplines are determined with the University of Helsinki. The National Library serves the Finnish research community, especially in the following areas:

- Book history and the history of learning
- Philosophy and the history of philosophy
- The theory and philosophy of art
- Classical studies
- The history of cartography
- Russian and East European studies
- Source literature: classics, complete works, critical editions, anthologies of letters

The National Library acquires educationally relevant material for long-term national use.

In 2009 the steering group¹ of the research infrastructure project, established by the Ministry of Education, defined the National Library's collections as national research infrastructure. This means that the collection is a national information resource enabling research and innovation in the humanities and social sciences. In this context, the collection is viewed as research material.

From an international perspective, the National Library is the largest and most comprehensive archive of Finnish publications.

Some of the National Library's special collections are internationally unique and represent a significant part of European cultural history. Examples include the A. E. Nordenskiöld Collection, the collection of mediaeval parchment fragments, the Hebraica Collection and the Monrepos Library. The section of the Slavonic Library dealing with the era of Finnish autonomy (1828–1917) features the largest collection of 19th century Russian resources outside Russia.

The principles of the collection management

Collection development and management are based on sustained efforts, scholarly depth and continuous interaction with the research community.

¹ [National research infrastructures: the current situation and a roadmap. Publications of the Ministry of Education, 2009:1.](#)

The policies for the development and management of the National Collection are mainly prescribed by law. The acquisition guidelines in the collections development policy mostly apply to the National Library's research collections: the Humanities Collection and the Slavonic Library. The guidelines for donations and deposits apply to all collections of the National Library.

Challenges for collection development

The challenges for collection development include improving global digital accessibility and ensuring long-term preservation. These challenges are addressed in the National Library's digitisation and preservation policy.

The collections development policy and the acquisition policy determine:

- The National Library's national overall responsibilities and discipline-specific responsibilities within the University of Helsinki
- The principles for integrated acquisition (electronic/printed)
- The focus areas for the acquisition of research literature
- The principles for the receipt of donations and deposits
- The accessibility of collections
- The principles for the evaluation, relegation and disposal of collections

The users of the National Library of Finland

A significant part of the National Library's users are academic researchers, university teachers and postgraduate students. In addition to researchers and students, the National Library's resources are used by hobbyists, genealogists, journalists, authors, the mass media and cultural institutions. International scholars use the Slavonic Library, special collections, manuscripts and map collection, in particular. The scope and depth of users' information requirements vary from basic needs to profound specialist needs. Approximately one-half of the local customers come from the University of Helsinki, mainly from the Faculties of Arts and Social Sciences.

2. Collection overview

The National Collection

The National Collection of the National Library of Finland is an archive collection available to academic researchers and other users. This collection has been officially accumulated under legislation since 1707. As early as the 17th century, Finnish printing houses were required to relinquish their products to the National Library. The collection of legal deposits is now accumulated in the form of printed products, records and online publications ([Act on Collecting and Preserving Cultural Material, 1433/2007](#); *Decree to be completed in autumn 2008*). The National Library supplements the legal deposits it

receives with *ulkofennica* resources, meaning Finnish-language material related to Finland created by Finns outside Finland. The Finnish National Sound Archive provides the country's most extensive public archive services related to recordings.

The collection of legal deposits is an archive collection used as source material in historical, cultural and other research. The collection mainly serves the purposes of research. The National Library's most important tasks are to collect and preserve national material published in Finland and to make it available to current and future generations. The National Collection currently occupies some 30 kilometres of shelf space, while the Finnish National Sound Archive includes some 150,000 items.

Historical collections

The historical collections of the National Library serve research in cultural history and the history of learning. The Humanities Collection is based on the Senate Public Library and the large donated collections of scientific literature from the 15th century onwards which were received mainly from St Petersburg at the beginning of the 19th century and were transferred to Helsinki after the Great Fire of Turku (1827). The oldest donations and rarities now form specialist collections (incunabula, 16th century literature, the collection of rarities), while the Humanities Collection includes source literature and scientific literature from 1600 onwards. Throughout the years, the Humanities Collection has been expanded with numerous private collections, and it also includes material in minority languages received as legal deposits from Russia.

The Slavonic Library houses a collection accumulated in the form of legal deposits from 1828 to 1917 which provides essential source material for research in Russian history and the era of Finnish autonomy under Russian rule. This is the largest collection of 19th century Russian publications outside Russia. The following legal deposit collections accumulated during the era of autonomy provide unique source material in Oriental languages and cultures: the Caucasia Collection, the Arabica Collection, the Persica Collection, the Turcica Collection, the Armeniaca Collection and the Hebraica Collection. Similar language-specific collections exist for the Baltic area.

The A. E. Nordenskiöld Collection is included in the UNESCO Memory of the World Register as a key reference resource in the history of cartography. The Monrepos Library is a unique collection of Enlightenment literature representing the period's notion of culture and education.

The Manuscript Collection provides a strong basis for research in the history of the University of Helsinki and the general history of Finnish learning and edification. The collection also includes papyri, Oriental manuscripts and mediaeval parchment fragments.

- The early research literature of the Humanities Collection, approx. 416,000 copies (10.5 kilometres of shelf space)

- The legal deposit collection of the autonomy era, approx. 170,000 copies (2.5 kilometres of shelf space)
- The Manuscript Collection: some 500 private archives and 100 community archives (3 kilometres of shelf space)
- Historical scholarly journals
- International newspapers
- 400 incunabula
- 40 specialist collections
- More than 10,000 parchment fragments

The research collection

The research collection serves scholarship, particularly in the humanities. Key disciplines include history, Russian and Slavonic studies, and art research. The current collections are based not only on the status of the National Library as a central humanities library from 1982 to 2004, but also on support for research relating to the National Collection and the historical collections.

The up-to-date accumulation of research literature also anticipates future research needs and creates Finnish research infrastructure. The collection is currently expanding at an annual rate of approximately 10,000 monographs and 1,200 journal volumes. Electronic acquisition primarily consists of joint acquisitions with the University of Helsinki. The expanding Humanities Collection currently comprises some 20 kilometres of shelf space, while the Slavonic Library totals close to eight kilometres of shelf space. The research collection currently includes more than 40,000 items on microfiches.

3. Development principles

Selection and policies concerning the research collection

The National Library's acquisition policy defines the resource acquisition areas in the humanities and social sciences.

The selection of material takes into account the need to support research in the humanities and social sciences as well as the national educational and research role of the National Library of Finland. The National Library plays a major role in the acquisition of valuable information content as the sole purchaser of such material in our small country.

In all material selection, the National Library strives for cooperation and a sound distribution of duties with partner libraries. Particularly important partners include the science libraries on the City Centre Campus of the University of Helsinki, as well as the University disciplines and other libraries in related fields. The National Library's experts participate in discipline-specific groups in the selection of electronic material. Researchers and experts submit acquisition proposals directly to the National Library.

The National Library also participates in the acquisition tendering processes arranged by the University of Helsinki. The majority of material in the research collection is acquired through purchase. Foreign material and selected Finnish research literature are acquired for the research collection.

Material for the American Resource Centre functioning in the National Library's facilities is selected by its staff. The acquired literature becomes part of the National Library's collection.

Acquisition guidelines for the research collection:

- The material to be acquired must be of a high scientific quality and have permanent value for research.
- The research collection will be built through sustained efforts.
- Educationally relevant material can be acquired even if the current demand is not high.
- Developments in humanities research and scientific publishing will be monitored and supported.
- Research literature will be acquired in the most important Western languages and Slavonic languages.
- The literature for the research collection will be primarily acquired in the original language. Almost all translations will be acquired in English. Some Swedish-language translations will also be purchased.

Most of the material will be selected using

- Book catalogues with reviews
- National bibliographies
- Profiled catalogues from suppliers
- Catalogues of new publications
- Publishers' newsletters on new publications
- The expertise of the University of Helsinki scholarly community

Policies applying particularly to electronic material

Electronic material will be mainly acquired through the FinELib (Finnish National Electronic Library) Consortium. The National Library of Finland participates in this consortium as a part of the University of Helsinki. The National Library acquires e-material both jointly with other libraries and on its own. The electronic material acquired by the National Library will be made available to users in the University of Helsinki Nelli-portal.

The National Library will give priority to the following electronic material in acquisitions:

- Reference books, encyclopaedias, dictionaries, source books and anthologies will be mainly acquired in electronic format. The most important reference books (e.g., the National Bibliography) can also be acquired in print.
- Journals
 - If a journal is available in both printed and electronic format, the latter will be given priority, provided that
 - The e-journal can be subscribed to without subscribing to the printed version.
 - The latest issues of the e-journal are immediately available.
 - Earlier electronic volumes will be permanently available even if the subscription to the e-journal is discontinued. PDF or similar formats will be given priority with regard to earlier volumes.

Open-access resources

The same principles apply to selecting and making available both open-access and licensed resources. The selected material includes digital collections (e.g., newspapers, maps, collections of pictures), library catalogues as well as source material. The material is made available to users through the Nelli-portal or the collection catalogue.

Electronic books

The comprehensive acquisition and availability of e-monographs will depend on technological development. The National Library and the University of Helsinki will begin to acquire e-books on a wide scale at the same time. The long-term storage of material is a key requirement.

On the selection of material for the National Collection

Ulkofennica resources

Ulkofennica resources will be acquired for the National Collection where possible. These resources include

- Material written, composed or illustrated in any language by Finns outside Finland
- Finnish-language material published outside Finland regardless of the author's nationality
- Material related to Finland and Finns and published outside Finland

Such material may include literature, records and ephemera (e.g., exhibition catalogues).

Web archive and E-Fennica

The National Library of Finland is responsible for archiving Finnish, public online material in a representative and diverse manner.

The following three methods are primarily used to collect material:

1. Web harvesting
2. Bulk transfer
3. Individual transfers

Web harvesting means the highly automated collection of online material using purpose-built software. **Bulk transfer** means that a publisher transfers material to the National Library in some other way because the material cannot be harvested for technical or other reasons. **Individual transfers** refer to the receipt of online publications assigned an ISBN using an online form.

Web harvesting is used to collect two kinds of content: Finnish resources and supplementary resources focused on a specific theme. **The collection of Finnish resources** involves an automated program. Annual collections are not based on content selection; rather, the goal is to obtain an overview of all online content. The National Library archives websites with .fi or .ax domain names. Finnish websites with .com, .net or other domain names are also archived where possible. Finnish resources are collected at least once a year.

Theme-based collection aims to anticipate future research needs and to supplement gaps in the annual collection by collecting material on a specific topic or current event. The material may relate to important national and public events, other events involving online material that will disappear quickly as well as unanticipated world events, natural disasters etc. Theme-based collection campaigns can also be carried out with other memory institutions and various research institutes. Theme-based material is also collected using automatic collection software, but experts are assigned to decide on the theme and review the results.

It has also been decided to use either harvesting or transfer to collect all of the following material:

- E-books assigned an ISBN
- E-publications assigned an ISSN
- Material in the publications archives of universities and higher education institutions
- Online journals
- Official publications
- Map publications
- Music-related material published only online or otherwise missing from the National Collection

4. Donations and deposits

The National Library accepts significant material relating to Finnish cultural history, science and art. Each donation is considered on a case-by-case basis, taking into account:

- The suitability of the offered material for the National Library's collections profile (focus areas) and the significance of the material for cultural history
- The condition and storage costs of the material (casing or other protection) and potential conservation needs
- The work (organisation, cataloguing, etc., in person-years) needed to make the material available to customers
- Facility resources

Book collections accepted as donations are placed in collections at the National Library's discretion and are preserved as separate entities only if their preservation is justified for reasons of cultural history or provenance. Donated material is made available to users according to the National Library's processing schedule. If the donated material contains publications not to be included in the National Library's collections, such material will be primarily sent to the National Repository Library.

The Manuscript Collection is the only collection of the National Library which mainly expands through donations. The general principle is that the National Library accepts only material that is of *national significance* and related to Finnish cultural history, scholarship and art, especially music. Material supplementing current items in the Manuscript Collection is also accepted. Manuscripts and archives donated to the Manuscript Collection are preserved according to the provenance principle as separate entities.

The National Library accepts publications in good condition which are missing from the National Collection, as well as Finnish recordings missing from the Finnish National Sound Archive.

The same selection guidelines apply to both deposits and donations. Extensive and considerably expanding deposits are not accepted. The depositor is usually charged for the costs of preserving and making the deposited material available.

5. *Accessibility*

The National Library of Finland is a research library open to all information seekers. Its collection is described in three databases: the Fennica National Bibliography of Finland, the Viola National Discography of Finland and the Helka database of the University of Helsinki. These databases also include information about substitute copies, as well as bibliographic entries and direct links for digital objects. Collection databases are freely accessible worldwide.

The worldwide task of national libraries is to promote the accessibility of the printed cultural heritage. This task is carried out through the comprehensive description of material, the national and international distribution of metadata descriptions and by making collections digitally available within the framework of copyright legislation. The

National Library of Finland cooperates actively to enable the global accessibility of its collection. Global accessibility require transfer-ready metadata which complies with standards. Related principles are defined in the National Library's bibliographic *description policy*.

Items included in the National Library collections can be consulted in the reading rooms or checked out. The former items include the National Collection, special collections, archives and manuscripts, material in the Humanities Collection printed pre-1900, and material in the Slavonic Library printed pre-1960. The national web archive is available to users on special workstations which do not allow the electronic reproduction and distribution of material.

Microfilmed and digitised original works are made available to customers only for compelling reasons.

Licence agreements limit the use of electronic material acquired by the National Library to the University of Helsinki network. External users (users outside the University of Helsinki) must thus use licensed material either on the workstations in the National Library facilities or on their laptops using a visitor username.

6. Evaluation of Collections

Quantitative and qualitative assessment ensures that the collections meet the objectives set for their scope, depth, quality and age, and satisfy user information needs. The classification of collection levels in various disciplines uses the Conspectus model,² which indicates the relative level of the collections, both quantitatively and qualitatively.

Actual collection assessment is based on the data obtained from library systems. This data indicate the quantitative distributions between various disciplines and can be used to create a profile for existing collections and to show current acquisition levels. The degree of use of various collections is based on statistics on loans and other statistics which indicate how collections in various disciplines meet user needs.

The strengths and weaknesses of collections are assessed together with scholars once every four to seven years. User feedback is vital for collection development.

² Conspectus is an international tool for collection assessment and development. It uses agreed depth indicators and related details to describe the content, coverage and quality of collections.

Source: [Guidelines for a collection development policy using the Conspectus model / International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions Section on Acquisition and Collection Development, 2001.](#)

7. Storage, facilities and disposal

The National Library of Finland is a preserving and archiving library. It applies good collection maintenance practice to all its collections. The duty of preservation applies particularly to the national collections, meaning the National Collection and the historical collections. With regard to the national collections, the goal is preventive protection and maintenance. *The preservation principles are defined in detail in a separate preservation policy.* The collection grows by approximately one kilometre of shelving each year. Half of this growth relates to the National Collection, half to other material.

The preservation obligation of the national collections places safety and quality requirements on the facilities. The National Library's closed stacks or "book cave" (10,000 m²) is a specially equipped facility designed for the demanding preservation of information resources. Cost efficiency requires that this facility is appropriately used. The most valuable collections, such as the National Collection and the historical collections, are placed in the closed stacks. The older part of the research collection is also placed there, but the most recent and most used material is included in the open collections.

Microform or digital substitutions are offered of the National Collection's most used and fragile material to protect the original publications. All newspapers to be included in the National Collection are first microfilmed. *The digitisation guidelines of the National Library collection are defined in a separate digitisation policy.*

Provisions on the preservation and disposal of material in the National Collection are included in the [Act on Collecting and Preserving Cultural Material](#) (No 1433/2007, Section 23, and a related Decree of the Ministry of Education). In practice, no items are removed from the archive collection. For cultural-historical reasons, no items are disposed of from the National Library's historical collections. Disposal thus affects the research collection only. When disposing of an item, the following must be considered:

- The item's relation to the National Library's focus areas
- The item's relevance for the collection
- The item's condition
- The item's availability to users in other formats

Extensive disposals will be planned with the libraries on the City Centre Campus and other humanities libraries in the City Centre. Material removed from the collection is primarily offered to the City Centre Campus libraries of the University of Helsinki and secondarily to the National Repository Library.

8. Relationship to other libraries and cooperation

The National Library must statutorily coordinate the cooperation between Finnish libraries which receive legal deposits. The cooperation between the National Library and the University of Helsinki is defined in a target agreement between the two parties and in a related [Library agreement on library and information services between the University](#)

[of Helsinki and the National Library of Finland for 2007–2009](#). The National Library's collections cooperation with other Finnish libraries is less close. To develop the Slavonic Library collection, an advisory board has been established for the Slavonic Library with members representing Russian studies at various Finnish universities and research institutes.

The National Library participates in the *collection map project*, which is developing the description of collections and the availability of material at a national level.

The National Library cooperates in preservation with the National Repository Library. The National Library is the sole recipient in Finland of literature published pre-1800, taking into consideration the principles for the receipt of donations outlined in Section 4 above. The National Library sends additional publisher's copies of Finnish material to the National Repository Library. For its part, the National Repository Library provides the National Library with publications missing from the National Collection.