

Minutes from the NAPLE meeting

Taking place in Newtownmountkennedy, Ireland on 23rd April 2004. The meeting was opened and the host, Norma McDermott addresses a few words of welcome to the audience.

Present were representatives from:

Croatia, Denmark, Estonia, Finland, France, Ireland, Norway, Portugal, Slovenia, Spain and UK. The CALIMERA project was present as observer.

Chris Batt was elected chair of the meeting. He then gave the floor to Jens Thorhauge for a report on the activities, a financial report and suggestions for future activities:

NAPLE report

The report will present a statement of the activities since the founding of NAPLE in October 2002 in Copenhagen.

The objectives were that NAPLE would:

- Inform on the present state of the art of public libraries
- Inspire to further national development
- Identify areas suitable for cooperation and topics for mutual investigation
- Support coherent European library development

The idea was to organise a European forum for national library authorities or similar bodies, balanced between the informal network and an organisation where by paying a membership fee you demonstrate your interest in the network, and to use the Internet for communication and information and combine this contact with biannual meetings.

A board representing the founding countries was accepted consisting of Chris Batt, UK, Carmen Caro, Spain, Norma McDermott, Ireland, Maria José Moura, Portugal, Jens Thorhauge, Denmark

The Danish National Library Authority (DNLA) undertook the role as secretariat, including the role of webmaster and newsletter editor and publisher.

We promised that we would publish an e-newsletter, establish a website, giving access to a closed members' discussion list and that we would arrange a conference biannually.

We did what we promised:

The secretariat in Copenhagen runs a website and has published three newsletters which I think have been quite informative as they are aiming at the NAPLE target group.

The discussion list will be opened as soon as a wish for it is expressed.

A biannual conference is taking place at the moment organised by the Irish Library Council.

The board decided that the annual membership fee should amount to 50 Euro, to be paid for a two-year period. At the conference in Copenhagen 23 countries expressed an interest in membership. 17 countries have so far paid the fee. The list of members is available on the NAPLE-web.

At the founding meeting a discussion took place about the proposed statutes and the form of organisation proposed. i.e. an association. The board has discussed this issue, and the DNLA has as secretariat host formed the opinion that the purpose of the network can be fulfilled without establishing an association. According to this the board suggests that NAPLE forum should

continue as a network, with a board, a newsletter, a discussion list, a website and biannual conferences - and other ad hoc activities, if wished.

The statutes will remain as the rules of the game for the network, but the network is not a legal person, but a deliberate cooperation that primarily is aiming at knowledge-sharing.

The board suggests that the statutes be slightly revised according to the discussion at the Copenhagen meeting and due to the suggested model.

The changes suggested are related to the following paragraphs:

- §1: network replaces association
- §2 membership applications should pass the board for decision
- § 6 rules for election of board should be written
- § 8 should be omitted
- § 9 should state membership subscription, fee, the role of the general assembly including statutes on dissolution and eventually winding up of NAPLE.

Future activities

Now looking forward: From what has been said so far it seems that the board has ambitions primarily in the knowledge-sharing field. So we suggest that we improve the newsletter. Trying to give a good covering of what happens of interest for national bodies like ours. We might work with guest editors in the newsletter. And we might focus more systematically on important strategic issues.

What do we see as strategic issues and challenges?

Right now we face for instance questions of public lending right and prenumeration, Reading campaigns and weapons to fight growing functional illiteracy is a third topic and models for acquisition a fourth.

But the list of challenges where we might benefit from a cooperation is long:

In relation to the digital and hybrid library there are

- copyright problems, licensing agreements in relation to digital media: principles, prices, problems.
- agreements with rightholders
- need for more digital content
 - music files
 - digitisation
 - text material in minor national languages
- standards
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In relation to the physical library we need

- models, inspiration, good practise
- developing methods for learning activities
 - inclusion programmes
 - lma/mba programme.

In relation to creating a new professional identity we have to work with

- competence development
- continuing education
- organisational questions and problems.

We all face problems in the information and cultural-political field – to a growing extent the European agenda is also present in these fields. With NAPLE we have a common platform and can

organise actions if necessary. The fundamental challenge to ensure a coherent library development in Europe to support European values and policy.

As to the discussion list the board would for the next period make an effort to set up the facility, which might be useful for hot and more delicate topics.

The next NAPLE event will be organised in cooperation with the CALIMERA-project as a workshop in Copenhagen on 20.-21. of January 2005. The working title is 'A new kind of access'. The workshop will focus on developing a closer cooperation between libraries, museums and archives. It will be an invited workshop with participation of directors or their representatives from national bodies for libraries, museums and archives. NAPLE members are hereby given an initial invitation to participate in the workshop, a more formal invitation will follow.

Presentation of accounts

Jens Thorhauge presented a financial statement for NAPLE:

Total income DKK 61.884,64, covering membership fees from 17 members and a special grant received.

Expenses related to IT-services and bank charges: DKK 5.461,24

Balance DKK 56.461,24

Discussion

The accounts were approved. Likewise there were no objections made from the assembly to the activities, the programme and the level of activity proposed by the board.

As for the proposed modifications of the statutes and the proposed status of NAPLE as a network with a membership fee, and 5-7 board members elected for a two-year period, and constituting themselves, running open-for- members-board-meetings, the decision was taken to agree on the proposition and let the board revise the statutes as suggested and have the revision approved at the next biannual meeting.

The assembly discussed the role and means of national public library bodies and how to create the optimal balance between a national policy with its wish for coherence on the one hand and the local institutions with different profiles on the other. Examples and experiences from a number of countries were presented. It was decided to focus on this issue in the newsletter. It was likewise stressed that it might be a theme for the discussion list.

Other problems such as public lending right was discussed, and it was likewise agreed to continue the discussion of these topics.

Election

The chairman suggested before the coffee break that colleagues present who were willing to take part in the work of the board could turn to him during the break, and that the present board recommended that colleagues from the new East-European member states considered joining the board.

After the break six colleagues declared their willingness to join the board:

Jadranka Slobodanac, Croatia, Jens Thorhauge, Denmark, Norma McDermott, Ireland, Maria José Moura, Portugal, Carmen Caro, Spain, Chris Batt, UK. They were elected and form the new board with Jens Thorhauge as secretary/chair and the secretariat in the Danish National Library Authority in Copenhagen.

After the assembly the meeting continued.

Norma McDermott presented 'National Authorities in Europe: current trends'

Slides attached

Rob Davies from CALIMERA presented the CALIMERA project

Slides attached