

## Use the opportunities of the digital world – transformed library services, resource reallocation and developed work structure

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### Abstract:

*With globalization, urbanization and digitalization being key factors in the changes around us, this paper focuses on digitalization and its significant effects on the library services. Helsingborg public library continuously strives to get more people digitally included by providing access to digital information and technology with the added service of supervision and training by the library staff if needed. On a strategical level libraries need cooperation with other departments to increase the digital skills of citizens, reduce the digital divide and develop access to the digital arena. With regard to this ambition, a Digidel Center was opened at the Helsingborg City Library in February this year in collaboration with the city's digitalization department. In addition to the Center, we will also intensify the library's work with Digidel in Helsingborg's various districts during 2018. By meeting demands in a number of different projects and ways, we continue to develop our work to ensure a good library service for both today's and tomorrow's residents.*

**Keywords:** Digitalization, Management, Resource allocation, Professional development, Library Services

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### Transforming cities and transforming libraries

Globalization, urbanization and digitalization are key factors in the changes around us. This affects people's expectations of public service and puts demands on the library operations to adapt to the outside world. The transforming libraries, the shifting values, attitudes and behavior, all have an impact on the way we operate our services and the need for us to create

environments that promote strong development to ensure a viable future and a library that provides benefits to all our customers.

The city of Helsingborg is developing and changing with increased population, new city districts and changed social structures. The city library is working intensively with developing and changing its operations to better serve today's society as well as to be relevant in the future.

In a recent library development investigation, the following challenges were defined:

- Digitalization and the digital divide
- Reduced reading comprehension
- Strengths of democracy and freedom of expression
- The media landscape and media consumption are changing
- Migration
- The "library map" of the city is from the 1960s and 70s

In addition, the financial situation in Sweden and in Helsingborg should be added as another challenge. These challenges affect the entire library business.

### **Digitalization and library services**

This paper focuses on digitalization and its effects on the library services, the internal work as well as the need of collaboration. Changing attitudes, increasing collaboration, developing work structure and improving empowerment and library management are some of the key factors to meet the demands from Society in the digital world.

Free access to information and knowledge, for all, are the core of library activities. This work promotes freedom of opinion and enable participation in the democratic society.

As the information landscape changes and more of the information and knowledge becomes digital there is a need for us to change our work.

One of the main goals of the City of Helsingborg is to take advantage of the opportunities of digitalization. In 2015 the city won the prize "Sweden's IT municipality". Of course, the library works strategically and operationally with this and wants to be part of this important work of the municipality.

In order for this to be possible, focus is needed on library development, further activities within continuing professional development as well as a change of attitude and working methods. In 2015 a re-organization made it possible to form a new department focusing on the digital divide, named "Department Search". Another department was formed to focus on the systems, web sites, social media, technological equipment and the access to media (both print and digital), named "Department DigBib/Media". To succeed with the work of these two departments resources were reallocated and staff was trained as well as recruited to work in the digital arena.

### **Digital divide and cooperation**

During the last years the Helsingborg public library has worked intensively with the digital divide to get more people digitally included. The services includes providing access to digital information, access to technology and the premises as well as supervision and training performed by the library staff.

On a daily basis, the library meet large groups of digital divides as well as those who are born digital. The library services needs to meet the need of both groups. To further develop the digital work we strongly believe that libraries need to increase cooperation with other departments. In Helsingborg, the library, together with the city's digitalization department, has initiated a joint Digidel Center to collaborate on this.

The joint Digidel Center was opened at the Helsingborg City Library in February this year. The starting point of the work is to increase the digital skills of citizens, reduce the digital divide and develop access to the digital arena using suitable/new technology such as robots and 3D printer. The collaboration between Helsingborg's Library and the City's Digitalization Department provides a venue for meetings and sub-cultures where visitors can share and learn from each other as well as - if needed - get guidance and help from supervising staff. The Digidel-center gives different departments of the city the opportunity to meet residents, test ideas and showcase digital activities/services in a showroom, but also take advantage of the site for Hackathon's and other co-working activities for the development of the city's digital services.

In addition to the physically located Digidel Center at the City Library, we will also intensify the library's work with Digidel in Helsingborg's various districts during 2018. It will be done in the form of library staff presence in other organization's premises, such as senior citizens' meeting places and recreational facilities, as well as through pop up and the library bus presence in the areas.

### **Strengthen the city and the library business**

With the Library digital work, we strengthen the city and ensure access to information for all. Several cities in Sweden have made similar investments, but we believe that Helsingborg's Digidel-venture is unique in its kind because of the strong cooperation with other departments of the municipality. The work is in line with the national work where the government in a period of 3 years are investing a lot of money into the public library business of Sweden.

By meeting the demands in a strategic way we continue to develop our work to ensure a good library service for both today's and tomorrow's residents.

### **References**

Digidel Helsingborg, webpage: <https://digidel.helsingborg.se/>