EDITORIAL

What is the next technological revolution

by Kai Ekholm

... that will override all other revolutions?

This issue has been on my mind for some decades now. At least we at the National Library of Finland take it almost for granted that we are at the forefront of developments in our field. We have encountered numerous innovations in the field of information technology, have adapted to them, and have learned to apply many routine procedures (such as descriptive cataloguing, OPAC, lending systems and electronic journals).

Digitisation is a logical continuation of this paradigm, as are e-books and the management and extension of rights to researchers and the public at large. We safeguard the digital rights of our customers. If we do not negotiate more extensive rights, no-one else will. Creating an infrastructure around all of this, and managing digital libraries and their user rights, fall self-evidently within our realm of duties.

In fact, we have led a number of paradigm shifts, including the introduction of electronic journals in the mid-1990s.

National libraries will discuss these issues at the annual Conference of Directors of National Libraries, to be held in connection with the upcoming conference of the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions. What solutions have been reached with regard to the vast resources of the Library of Congress, how can we create partnerships in this increasingly commercial world, and how can we acquire rights, funding and wider access to these resources?

Indeed, I am eagerly waiting to hear the response of Brewster Kahle, the founder of Internet Archive, to the question in the heading above.

We must increasingly lend an ear to the undertakings of the business world. If you can't beat them, join them.

What counts is perseverance and success. This has been the secret of libraries thus far.

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