

Editorial

No. It is not possible to write an editorial without mentioning the one thing affecting our lives, both professionally and personally, right now; the ongoing Covid-19 pandemic. In particular, it is not possible to write an editorial in a journal for library and information studies without bringing up the pandemic, since it is influencing core aspects of our subject area.

These days information is hard currency. We are flooded with facts and hypotheses related to the virus, reporting the number of deaths and infected in different countries, debating strategies to defeat the virus and to protect the elderly from being infected, and arguing which measures are most effective. Information flows thru social media platforms, at the same time as many people follow traditional news media meticulously. False claims are spread of cures and ways of protecting yourself from infection, simultaneously as experts on epidemiology in some cases are portrayed as heroes. In addition, even if the information is accessed by traditional media or governmental bodies, the recommendations differ between different experts and different countries. The complex nature of how information is produced, consumed, and lived in every day practices has seldom been so striking.

In the Nordic countries, libraries are given different roles in these turbulent times. In Sweden, most public libraries have remained open. This is not the case in the neighbouring countries. How is the role of libraries in Sweden affected by the position they are given in the crisis? And how is the role of libraries in Finland, Denmark, Iceland or Norway affected by the position they are given in their respective societies during the crisis?

In Sweden, the pandemic has actualised a request for public libraries to be included in the national total defence strategy. For example, The Swedish Library Association advocates such a stance. However, there are critical questions to be asked. What happens with the autonomy of public libraries in relation to government agencies if this is effectuated? How will people, in different life situations and societal positions, perceive the library if it is positioned as part of the national total defence strategy? The role of public libraries in society is of acute relevance, and these times of crisis highlight such issues of societal importance.

Thus, this very first issue of *Nordic Journal of Library and Information Studies* (NjLIS) is launched during exceptional circumstances. Besides what is discussed above, the education at Nordic universities has been transformed during the preparation of this issue and is now carried out on digital platforms. Conferences, such as the iConference, originally scheduled to take place in Borås, Sweden, was

transitioned to an all-virtual format. We are now used to getting glimpses into other people's private homes during work meetings, and we have established new techniques and practices while adjusting ourselves to digital settings.

In this situation, it is particularly important to have high-quality fora for sharing scholarly output and critique, published in digital form and openly accessible to all. NJLIS aims to be such a forum for the Nordic and international library and information studies community, including scholars, students and practitioners. Submissions are invited which offer empirical, theoretical and/or historical perspectives of relevance to LIS research. There will also be special issues that allow for a more thorough investigation of a particular idea or phenomenon. We welcome both contributions and ideas for special issues.

NJLIS is a new journal, but with a legacy from preceding journals going back to 1979. While drawing on the substantial knowledge of how to produce a scholarly journal, we now take a new step by becoming more international and involving more actors. The journal is supported by many of the Nordic LIS schools and responsibility for the editorship will move between the schools. We believe that this is a way to ensure the sustainability of the journal's future and to bring in new perspectives along the way. By being a researcher-run, institutionally supported journal, NJLIS will also provide open access to its material without requiring any publishing fees. It has already been accepted for inclusion in the Norwegian register for scientific journals.

While acknowledging the special social and material context caused by the pandemic, this first issue of *Nordic Journal of Library and Information Studies* will not discuss it further. Research takes time and we find it important to favour reflection, analyses and thorough investigations. Therefore, the pandemic crisis is a theme for an upcoming number. Anyone considering or working on papers with relevance to the pandemic is encouraged to keep an eye out for the call for paper.

This issue includes two scholarly articles: one looking back at the history of the establishment of online information as a service at information centres, and the other looking forward into how library staff can develop non-traditional lending initiatives. The historical article, written by Ole Ellegaard, Mogens Kragssig Jensen and Johan Albert Wallin, analyses the information industry emerging after the Second World War and how digitized information in databases influenced the services given at research libraries. Using Odense University Library as a case, the authors discuss how technologies, such as digital databases, CD-rom and the World Wide Web, change the users' information seeking. In contrast, Anna Arendse Thorsen's analysis in the other article takes its starting point in the present and reaches into the future. Investigating two Danish cases, she discusses how the lending of non-traditional material in public libraries can be seen as co-creation resulting in an exchange of experience between users. A model, "The model of Experience Lending", is presented.

In addition, Henrik Jochumsen reviews the doctoral thesis "Folkbildning för delaktighet. En studie om bibliotekets demokratiska uppdrag i en digital samtid" by Lisa Olsson Dahlquist, Lund University. Book reviews, and particularly reviews of Nordic doctoral theses, will be a recurring part of the journal. We therefore welcome submissions of reviews.

With these words, I welcome you to *Nordic Journal of Library and Information Studies*.

Lisa Engström
Editor-in-chief