

The innovative collaboration work in the Helsinki University Library: the case of Terkko Health Hub

Kirsi Mäenpää

Helsinki University Library, University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland

Abstract

Terkko Health Hub is a startup community, a co-working area and an event space focused on health and life sciences. The Meilahti Campus Library of Helsinki University Library also operate in the Hub. A library is an important meeting place and learning environment. In the library, you will meet people and the feeling of belonging to a university community is amplified. The co-operation with Terkko Health Hub started when the library removed part of the printed collection and freed space was available for alternative use. We were satisfied and excited on the campus about the new collaboration.

Key words: libraries, medical; facility, design and construction; collaboration with faculty; startup community; learning environment.

Introduction

Terkko Health Hub (1) is a startup community, a co-working area and an event space focused on health and life sciences. The place is for the university students and researchers, members of the startup community and for the health care service personnel. The Hub was established in the library building. Through the Hub, the Meilahti Campus Library offers modern library services in the medical and health science fields, a learning environment and both printed and e-collections.

The Hub is located in the heart of Helsinki's medical campus. It is the junction of the university hospital HUS, the Faculty of Medicine of Helsinki University, Helsinki University Library and HiLIFE, the Helsinki Institute of Life Science.

In this review, I am addressing our cooperation with the startup community, the planning work and our experiences from the past two years.

The buildings of the Helsinki University Library

Helsinki University Library (2) serves its customers on all four University campuses and of course on the net. The libraries' doors are open to all with a thirst for knowledge. Everyone has the right to use Helsinki University Library free of charge.

The Helsinki University Library has modern buildings on all its campuses. Terkko is the oldest library building from 1998. The main library, the Kaisa house, is the newest (2012). The digitalization has changed the library services and purpose of the buildings. We have renovated all the buildings once we have repaired the Viikki Campus Library next summer.

The Helsinki University Library appears differently on every campus. The future university library is still searching for its form. Currently, the libraries have bookshelves for traditional printed material, versatile learning environments, space for co-working and communal events.

In order to meet the needs of the academic community the libraries need to pay attention to the traditional and

Address for correspondence: Kirsi Mäenpää, Helsinki University Library, University of Helsinki, P.O 53 (Fabianinkatu 30), 00014 University of Helsinki, Helsinki, Finland. E-mail: kirsi.maenpaa@helsinki.fi

The innovative collaboration work in the Helsinki University Library

discipline-specific demands of its community. It also needs to consider the possibilities brought by the new information and learning technologies. The library transforms for its users, according to the demands of the time. According to the statistics, the renovations have brought more visitors to the libraries.

The Meilahti Campus Library

The Meilahti Campus Library has focused on the needs of the researchers and students of the faculty of medicine and of the staff of Helsinki University Hospital. The library has stood on its present site for the last 20 years. At the same time, the health science library services and the ways of sharing the information have changed significantly.

Academic libraries have been sticking to acquiring mostly digital material for a couple of years now. The University of Helsinki has invested in large amounts back files of the digital material offered by the publishers.

With the change brought by the digitalization, the library wanted to make its premises more compact, thus allowing new uses for the freed space.

The library has always served the local medical campus. It also serves anyone who needs medical and health care information, through long distance borrowing as well as the Medic reference database (3) (medical and health scientific studies that have been published in Finland).

In the 1990's, the libraries needed a lot of room for their printed collections. In the 2010's, the situation is different: most of the material is digital. The printed collection fits in smaller premises. Students will still need room for studying in the future. It was clear that we needed and wanted a change..

The library transformed

Growing the digital e-library Terkko Navigator (4) made a radical change in the library possible.

Before the transformation, there were 2 floors (about 4000 m²), nearly 300 seats and about 3000 meters of journals and books for the library customers. After the change, we removed 65% of the printed collections, the premises diminished in half but the number of seats and working places remained unchanged.

With this transformation, the library wanted to improve the comprehensive service and make financial savings. With the library implementation plan for 2017-2020 we

wanted the library to transform its premises into more functional learning environments. The changes have been carried out in cooperation with the interest groups and the customers. We also decided that the size of the premises for printed copies should reduce because we have more e-publications and use of them is growing. The library acquires digital copies of periodicals whenever it is possible.

We collected statistical material and observed the customers, which helped the planning work. In 2015, we arranged workshops for students and asked them to describe the library of their dreams. We interviewed students and customers in both the library buildings and on the internet.

We found out that the students would need spaces for both reading in silence and for group working. They mentioned hammocks and cozy chairs.



Fig.1. Terkko Health Hub is a startup community, a co-working area and an event space focused on health and life sciences. Through the Hub, the Meilahti Campus Library offers modern library services in the medical and health science fields, a learning environment and both printed and e-collections. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.



Fig.2. *Everyday organization has been shared. The library is above all responsible for the students' working spaces on the second floor. Terkko Health Hub Team takes care of services for the startup entrepreneurs and Think Company Team hosts the community, the events and the premises on the first floor. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.*

Beforehand we knew that the researchers would mainly use the online library. If we wanted the researchers to visit the library premises, there should be rooms for collegial and communal meetings and even medical and healthcare events.

From library to co-working hub

After we had defined the need for change, we took forward our plans on the campus. Helsinki University Hospital owns the library building and the faculty of medicine is our biggest client so it was clear that we would promote the future changes together with them. The planning started in 2016 when our library project was linked with a wider project on the campus. In the faculty of medicine, the need for the new co-working space had arisen. The faculty would need a common space where it would be possible to combine the research, learning, studying and innovation work. Furthermore, there was a need for a space where one

could arrange events and where there is affordable space available for new startup entrepreneurs.

At the early stage of the planning, we agreed that the Terkko library building would be divided in two. In the future, the library premises would be located on the second floor. The innovative ecosystem of medical science and health technology and life science would come into the first floor of the building. There was an idea that the new ecosystem would expand the new studies, know-how and entrepreneurship.

The objectives of the library were obvious: fewer square meters, more space for studying and new cooperation. We had two challenges to the success of our objectives. Firstly, how are we going to connect studying alone in quiet areas with louder co-working spaces. Secondly, how should we organize the self-service hours: time, when the building is open and library facilities are available, but the staff are not there.

In our new cooperation-concept, we could get longer



Fig.3. *Terkko Health Hub and Meilahi Campus library are located in the heart of Helsinki's medical campus. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.*

office hours because we would share the customer service work with the hosts of the startup community. We would get new kinds of events and action premises in our vicinity. Maybe this would attract some researchers to the library premises. We would offer library support for user enquiries and information requests. The students would get versatile working spaces and a unique opportunity to participate in the innovation work.

We are proud of our openness

The benchmarking targets of the change project were, among others, the Harvard University (5) and some startup communities of the Boston area (6). There is something common in all of those co-working communities: inspiring premises, good technological facilities, friendly hosts, but also membership fees. The community hosts make sure that the atmosphere is good and places are in tip-top shape. They also look after a common kitchen, from where coffee and snacks are available for the members of the community. There

is a community membership fee with different levels of membership available. The lowest fee includes a working place, Internet connection and permission to use the common meeting rooms.

We also wanted to have all this on our campus. However, the openness of academic community and our open library culture set us to a different situation from our benchmarking.

The building would be open for all and especially traditional library services are available and free for everybody. The openness would bring challenges to us. In our international benchmarking targets, there were not any examples of how the library services would interrelate to the co-working community. We still wanted to bring co-working to the same premises with the library even though we would have a closed and open community side by side.

In the new premises there will be zones marked for the public and for the closed community space. The area also needs to be divided into an event stage and a quiet working place. This is important to students who have

been absorbed into studying and for community members that need to be able to concentrate.

It would on the other hand be easy to establish a new co-working community in the library. The libraries are regarded as the common space of the university where everyone can work freely, safely and alone or together. Furthermore, we have a good attitude to customer service and lots of experience in working on the medical campus.



Fig.4. The former Terkko library building has been divided in two. The library premises are located on the second floor. The innovative ecosystem of medical science and health technology and life science is on the first floor of the building. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.

Coexistence in Terkko Health Hub

We have been in the renewed premises for over two years. As we were making a new community, we together agreed that we would look where Terkko Health Hub is going and make necessary changes along the way.

At the initial stage, we agreed that Terkko Health Hub would need a steering group to make the decisions on the budget and to accept the action plan. The group has representatives from the campus and from the library.

Everyday organization has been shared: the library is above all responsible for the students' working spaces, Terkko Health Hub Team takes care of services for the startup entrepreneurs and Think Company Team hosts the community, the events and the premises on the first floor.

Terkko Health Hub brings the campus together. Many events, meetings, networking opportunities and for instance student recruiting opportunities have taken place. The students have found the Hub. They are studying all over the building, in the library premises and in the community free working area. The café, which was newly built in the renovation, has proved to be an important meeting place.

From the library point of view, the best part is the close collaboration. The library services are still the core. The most difficult part has been a change in the library's soundscape. It is no more merely for quiet working. We still need silent spaces, but it is not the only way to work.

Future of premises in the Helsinki University Library

The concept of Ray Oldenburg's (6) third place means a public place where it is easy to come and which is located near your everyday life.

The main features of the third place fit in the modern university library. It is open to everybody, creating equality and interaction, intellectual, impartial and all in all a pleasing place.

In the library, you work together, research and study side by side - alone but together. The library is private and public at the same time.

Terkko Health Hub is a fine example where the library premises are going on at the University of Helsinki, perhaps, also in other universities. The role of library buildings as learning environments has increased and they are important enablers of the collegiality and sense of community.

A sense of community is formed from cooperation. We look for partners whose presence would be an advantage to our customers above all for the students



Fig.5. Students would need spaces for both reading in silence and for group working and rooms for collegial meetings. Photo by Jussi Männistö, Information Specialist, Helsinki University Library.

who use library premises the most. We want to promote research, cooperation and learning. In addition to the learning materials, the libraries offer a safe and communal place to work.

*Submitted on invitation.
Accepted on 17 April 2020.*

REFERENCES

1. Terkko Health Hub [cited 2020 2020-04-16]. Available from: <http://www.terkko.fi/>.
2. Helsinki University Library [cited 2020 2020-04-16]. Available from: <https://www.helsinki.fi/en/helsinki-university-library/>.
3. Medic – The Finnish Medical Bibliographic Database [cited 2020 2020-04-16]. Available from: <https://www.terkko.helsinki.fi/medic-tietokanta/>.
4. Terkko Navigator, The Meilahti Campus Library [cited 2020 2020-04-16]. Available from: <https://www.terkko.helsinki.fi/>.
5. Harvard Innovation Labs [cited 2020 2020-04-16]. Available from: <https://innovationlabs.harvard.edu/>.
6. NGINworkplace [cited 2020 2020-04-16]. Available from: <https://nginworkplace.com/>.
7. WeWork [cited 2020 2020-04-16]. Available from: <https://www.wework.com/>.
7. Oldenburg, R. The great good place: cafés, coffee shops, bookstores, bars, hair salons, and other hangouts at the heart of a community. New York: Marlowe, 1999.