



A concept for the library's service of users with reading disabilities

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Introduction

This is a description of the concept for the library's service of users with reading disabilities or dyslexia. The project is based on best practice gathered from libraries in Denmark, and a study visit to libraries in Holland. Furthermore, a list of rapports and recommendations have been read, which also have been used in connection with founding the concept.

Our main purpose has been to make the concept simple and easily accessible to all libraries. This means, that many details from rapports and recommendations are not included, but can be found in the individual materials. The rapports and recommendations from others are made accessible through references, links and files. Should there be any rapports missing in our list, please contact the editor of the project.

We have chosen to divide the concept into general themes. The themes are displayed on the website via different points, while this outline gives a brief summary.

The themes are:

- Materials
- The Library Space
- IT
- Website
- Marketing
- Service and guidance
- Sparring practice

We hope that many will be inspired to use the concept in their own library. Parts of the concept, which are ours, are free of access and can be downloaded and re-used in all libraries. One of the strengths we found with Holland was precisely the shared concept, which in all simplicity leads to recognizability.

Materials

Show the front

- Make sure to place all materials with the front turned forward.



One of the most important lessons to be learned from the Danish libraries' recommendations, and the visit to Holland, is that the front of the material should face the user. The spine with its title and class mark doesn't appeal to the user's curiosity, whereas an interesting or significant picture does the work. For many adults this is a quite untraditional way of displaying materials, which also calls for other kinds of inventory. Included in the concept of keeping the front in focus is therefore also modern inventory (see pictograms, boxes and furniture).

Fiction and non-fiction

- Let the collection of materials for users with reading disabilities or dyslexia contain both fiction and non-fiction.

It is also important to stress that not all read equally good/bad. That is why it is a good idea to have materials of varying difficulty. We have chosen to mix easy and more difficult materials. What's easy to read for one user, can be quite difficult for another. Except for the most accessible materials, which are placed under a special pictogram, all materials are therefore positioned together.

Keep in mind that the majority of users with dyslexia are men. Make sure to arrange your themes in accordance with this knowledge.

Materials with the highest circulation are 99.4 and fantasy.

- The criteria for selecting materials, which haven't been especially published for users with reading disabilities or dyslexia, are:

The mutual correlation of criteria depends on the material.

Easily accessible materials (both words and sentences are short).

Many pictures.

Uneven at the right edge of the text (promoting reader-friendliness).

Avoid: text written in blocks with "noisy" colours can make reading difficult.

Pictograms

- Make it easy for the user to find materials suitable for the topic he/she is interested in.

Icons are made for both fiction and non-fiction. The pictograms have added information on the topic, and possibly a class mark. Everyone can use the pictograms. All you need to do is print them from the website, and then laminate them. The pictograms are printed on regular, standard paper and subsequently laminated with size 250 MIC, 216 mm.*303 mm. You can find the pictograms at the website www.letbib.dk.

We have chosen to make special theme-boxes. A theme-box could, for example, be labeled "War", and within this box is placed both fiction and non-fiction.



The Library Space

A new piece of furniture

- Making the front of the materials face the user, calls for a new piece of furniture in the library space.

A new piece of furniture has been designed in order to inspire. The furniture consists of four elements – two different “cribs” in which to browse, a stand-desk in connection with a bench, and a seating table for four – which all can be combined. The intention is thereby to integrate materials and work place in one piece of furniture. The philosophy behind the making is for the user to have electronic facilities near the materials. This way he/she can easily have the back of a book read aloud, by for instance scanning it. Placed on the furniture, the materials are presented with the front facing outwards, next to scanners which are connected to a computer. On the bench it’s possible to use headphones connected to a computer or other equipment.

The new piece of furniture has built-in boxes made of plastic. The boxes are produced at Plastsnedkeriet and are not only removable, but also flexible in use. Materials can be placed in different directions and heights. Also, it’s easy to stick a logo on the plastic boxes. We have ordered boxes in acrylic green, 777 8 mm. thick.

Drawings of dimensional accuracy for the piece of furniture can be found at letbib.dk, under the tab The Library Space.

The furniture is designed by Jens-Christian Nørmark, MAA in architecture and MDD in Industrial Design.

Boxes

Transparent boxes of plexiglas can be used as a supplement to the furniture. They can be placed at regular bookshelves, and turned in order to fit the size of the materials. Order at: Plastsnedkeriet Aps, Thrigesvej 12, 8600 Silkeborg. Measures: 200 (H) x 220 (W) x 300 (D) and 3 mm thick. Price approx. 175 kr. Tax not included.

Banners

For the project we had a banner designed out of cloth, which we hung over the area.



The banner is produced at Shade-n-light. Visit them at www.shade-n-light.com The offered price for a printed banner is 976,75 kr. each, shipment included. The size of the banner is 70 cm. * 70 cm. Contact Steen Knarberg at contact@shade-n-light.com

Carpets

Ege Tæpper has sponsored two kinds of carpets for the area.

One is a runner measuring 115 cm. (W) and 284 cm. (L).



The other is a rug measuring 115 cm. (W) and 160 cm (H).



The intention of the carpets is to create an inviting atmosphere in the area, and at the same time promote recognizability.



Colours

A bright, green colour has been chosen for the logo, wall sheets and so on. If you wish to place an order CMYK is as follows: C 25,1 M 0, Y 69,8 K 0.

Suggestions for where to use the colour in order to promote recognizability: at the end wall of bookshelves, for logos at wall sheets, at materials used for marketing, the boxes for the furniture and at the carpets.

Placing

Place "the furniture" and bookshelves so they are visible from the entrance. If this is not possible, set up a wall sheet or something similar near the entrance, clearly stating relevant information. Use the characteristic green colour to guide the users to the area.

IT

The target group can make use of several tools, which can make them overcome some of their reading disabilities. It is important to be aware of the accessibility of these tools, and how they should be put to use. Some of it demands, that you work quietly and peacefully with the tools. Other parts can be used more immediately and without any initial practice

The scanner. It can be used to scan documents for the program ViTre. After scanning the text it should go through a word processor program. This calls for know-how and practice on the user's part.

ViTre consists of several elements: character recognition, reading aloud and spell feature. See the instructions at www.scandis.dk

The reading pen. When connected to a computer the reading pen will be able to read a text aloud from ViTre.

Dictus (speech recognition): Peace to work is needed, and in relation to the exercise the user must be practiced.

Headphones may be used.

The computer. We have chosen to set up a touch screen, which has the reading pen (C-pen) connected to it.

At the moment we only have a touch screen with the C-pen in our lending department. The user will be able to have liner notes or other shorter texts read aloud to him/her. The front page of the screen is www.letbib.dk.

Website

- Visit our homepage at www.letbib.dk



The website has two different target groups. The communicators and the users with reading disabilities/dyslexia. The website is divided in accordance with these two target groups.

Target group: Users with reading disabilities/dyslexia.

- An example collection in which it is easy to search for materials.

The reflections on how to make the website easily accessible has led to naming the address: www.letbib.dk. It is easy to read and fairly easy to spell. Using the address www.let-bib.dk will also lead to access.

In relation to the philosophy concerning “show the front”, and an easy access to the collections of the public libraries, we have chosen to show alternate titles from our own (the public libraries of Herning municipality) collections of materials for users with reading disabilities/dyslexia. It is possible to search through materials placed in the area of “easy reads”, as well as materials that are either book+cd, MP3 or cassette. There are two displays; one showing 10 random titles, which alternate on a daily basis, the other an overall list based on certain criteria.

Based on this list there’s a direct link to bibliotek.dk, where an order can made. Since not all libraries have an extensive collection, the example collection gives a larger range of materials to search through.

Target group: Communicators

- At the public libraries of Herning municipality an example collection has been gathered, which is continuously updated.

The example collection is thought to be used by communicators, who wish to be inspired in relation to service. The example collection is arranged systematically – alphabetically – and is directly linked to bibliotek.dk, in case the user wishes to place an order. The collection is divided the same way, as for the group targeted at users with reading disabilities.

Marketing

Logo

- A logo has been made in collaboration with the project “Marketing the library’s service to users with reading disabilities”.

The logo consists simply of an open eye, and an eye half-closed. The logo is meant to illustrate the person having trouble reading.

The logo calls for no lengthy explanations. Recognizability is the most important.



Also, the logo is a contraction of the slogan "Read with the ear, taste the words" (in Danish: Læs med øret, smag på ord).

**LÆS MED ØRET
SMAG PÅ ORD**

Wall sheets

Use a wall sheet to present the area. Place it at the entrance, for instance.

Wall sheets (standard format) can be ordered at the public libraries of Herning municipality, Lene Schrøder:
bible@herning.dk



LÆS MED ØRET SMAG PÅ ORD

For unge og voksne

Lydbøger

Bog + CD

Lette historier

Lette fagbøger

Spørg gerne biblioteket



Welcome-brochure

- A welcome-brochure to users with reading disabilities/dyslexia.

Depending on in which area the cardholder is registered and presented with the library's services, the brochure can be handed out either by the librarian or at the enquiry counter. The brochure is available at www.letbib.dk, and can be edited.

Postcard

- Postcards to be placed outside the library itself. For instance, ask if you can leave some at the pharmacy, the doctor's waiting room, evening classes and other education centers, the job centre, labor union's office, unemployment benefit offices, public service offices and so on.

Commercial

- By commercial we mean a feature promoting the library's service. One, or several, can be uploaded at the computer situated in the area.

At www.letbib.dk there are movies from Nota, where people with reading disabilities/dyslexia tell their stories.



Service and Guidance

Colleagues in between

In relation to servicing users with reading disabilities/dyslexia, it is not easy for all librarians to spend equally time in the area. Based on this knowledge, we have made a check list concerning the essential information. Filling in the list should in some cases be done in reference to local information, and in others it can be done more generally. The text can be found in the document named: Ideas on how to guide dyslexic young and adults. The document is found at www.letbib.dk -> Library Recommendations -> Colleagues in between.

"Reading guides"

The libraries behind gathering best practice recommend that certain employees are dedicated to servicing the area. They are to be the users' primary contact person, although all librarians of course should be able to guide them. In connection with our service "Book your private librarian" it's possible to book a librarian who's especially dedicated to the area.

Collaborating with companies

Ege Tæpper has sponsored the carpets for the "easy reading"-area. At the same time, employees at Ege Tæpper with reading disabilities/dyslexia were offered to participate in classes on how to use Borger.dk and NemID. The classes are especially focused on their employees, and the materials made ready for the target group. We are working on designing course materials geared specifically for the target group.

Best Practice

Collecting data

The project has compiled best practice from libraries all over Denmark in order to prepare for the concept. Best Practice is gathered in a rapport which can be found at www.letbib.dk -> Library Recommendations.

Rapports and links

Several rapports on the subject have already been made, and even though we haven't made use of it in our concept, many of those have contents which are both informative and useable. The intention has been to make the concept easy and accessible, but many great ideas are presented in the rapports, which can be found either attached or as links.

The materials we are referring to under the headline "Rapports" are all published within the last 20 years. This means, that it's materials containing relevant knowledge for librarians servicing young and adults with reading disabilities. As with the literature part, the sample of links to Communicator and User has a brief description concerning the content of the link/material.



Sparring Practice

Forum

Here the opportunity to discuss within a closed forum is given. Ideas can be exchanged, files can be shared and relevant subjects relating to the target group can be discussed.

Librarians will be able to sign up, in order to gain access. A request for admission must be made.