

The Role of the Library of Parliament in providing access to knowledge

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PARLIAMENT
OF FINLAND

Outline of the presentation

- The history of openness and transparency
- Openness in modern legislation
- The Library of Parliament and measures taken to improve access to knowledge



The history of openness

- 1766 the first Freedom of Press Act was adopted
- Finnish enlightenment philosopher and politician Anders Chydenius (1729–1803).
- The principle of publicity central in the Nordic countries.



The history of openness

- 1917 Finland gains its independence.
- Freedom of Speech is written in the Constitution of 1919.



Openness in modern legislation



The figure representative Law (Lex), Senate Square, Helsinki

The right to Information is ensured in the present Finnish Constitution Section 12 (2)

"Documents and recordings in the possession of the authorities are public, unless their publication has for compelling reasons been specifically restricted by an Act. Everyone has the right of access to public documents and recordings."

Openness in modern legislation

- 1951 Act on the Publicity of Official Documents introduces the modern principle of publicity.
- Replaced by the Openness Act of 1999.
 - right of access to documents
 - the public authorities' duties to disclose information when requested
 - obligation to proactively communicate to the public



Public materials on the web

- Access to parliamentary documents on the website of the Finnish Parliament as of 1995.
- Legal databank Finlex opened to the public in 1997.
- Today a variety of web pages and portals with official data and documents, but the information is scattered.



The Library of Parliament is born

- 1872 The Library of Parliament is established.
- 1913 The Library of Parliament becomes an open public library



Bergholm, Axel Herman 1907-1949

Openness as a strategic core value

- Library of Parliament's Strategy for the services of external clients:

"The vision of the Library of Parliament is to support democracy, fulfill the right to public information ensured in the Constitution, promote the access to legal, parliamentary and political information and advance the possibilities for its clients to function as active citizens in the society."

- Openness and good interaction is defined as one core value also in the strategy of the Finnish Parliament.



Openness in practice

We aim that

- our everyday work reflects the promotion of openness.
- we provide the user tools to understand the Finnish parliamentary and legal system.



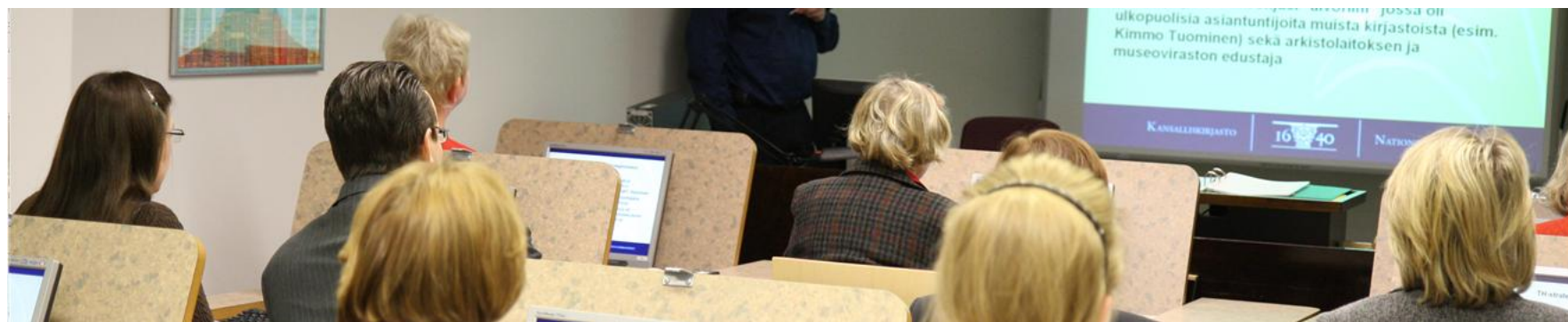
Measures to promote openness

- Generous opening hours
 - A total of 57 hours/week opening hours.
 - Evenings and Saturdays enable broader client groups to use the Library.



Measures to promote openness

- Information management trainings
 - Open to all and free of charge.
 - Also tailor-made trainings to different client groups.
- Strategic goal: development of web based information management trainings.



Measures to promote openness

- Information packages on legislative projects
 - New web based service was launched in November 2011.
 - Legislative projects of particular interest.
 - Packages include preparatory work, parliament documents, news, literature etc.



Challenges for the future

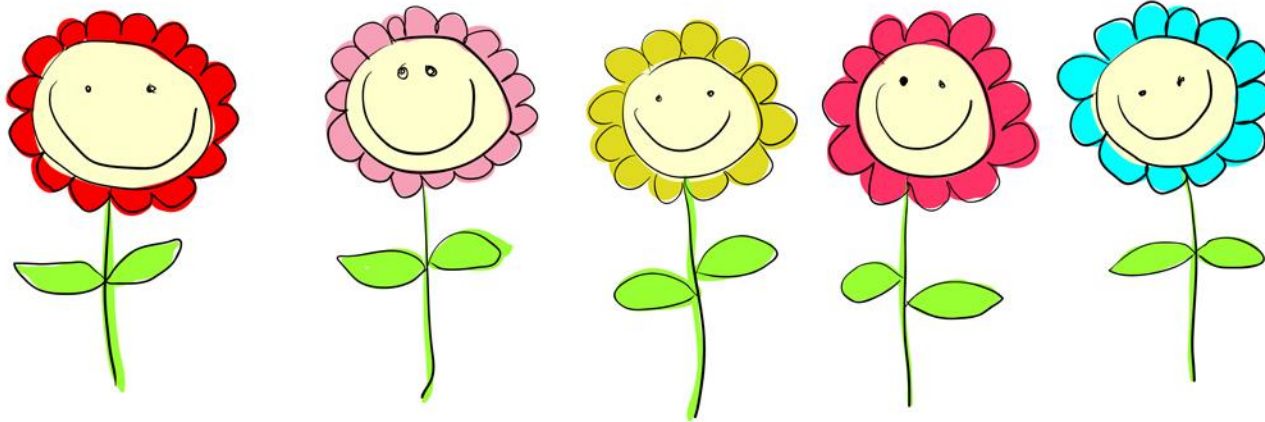
- 100 years openness anniversary in 2013!
- Access to information and knowledge can always be improved.
- Honor of the heritage and innovative thinking.



Challenges for the future



Questions/comments?



Thank you!

