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The Finnish National Union Catalogue

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Traditionally a union catalogue has been mainly seen as a bibliographic database, a sort of "inventory" including access information. A next generation union catalogue will also include additional information like book covers and social metadata. It will no longer be just a tool for data retrieval, but a way of participation and creativity.

When completed as planned, the Finnish national union catalogue will be freely available to everyone with an unrestricted access to information. It contributes to the new system architecture of Finnish libraries as a one of the back end systems. It can also be seen as a step towards the next generation library system. The data itself can be shown in various front end systems, e.g. National Digital Library and library's local web services.

The Finnish national union catalogue will have various advantages compared to local library databases. It makes library processes more effective, e.g. cataloguing and description. Bibliographic data can be stored in one place only, which is effective and saves a lot of cost. In the meantime local library systems can be simplified.

The national union catalogue contributes to various upcoming changes in cataloguing and description rules, e.g. FRBR, RDA, ontologies and social metadata. It offers possibilities to develop totally new web services with new partners by using web 2.0-technologies and to make the most of metadata.

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