



# **Knotworking as a means to strengthen information skills of research groups**

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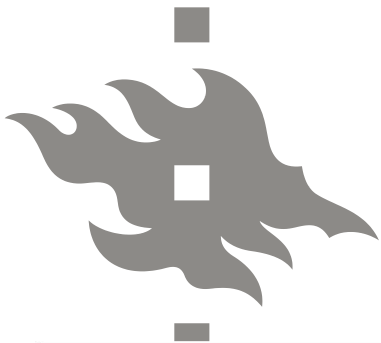


# University of Helsinki

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- 11 faculties
- 35,000 degree students
- 8,160 employees
- including 3,930 researchers and teachers





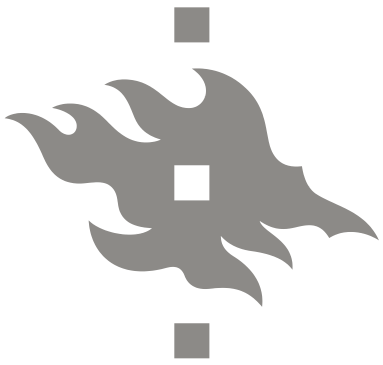
# The City Centre Campus Library



- The City Centre Campus
- Humanities and Social Sciences
- 11 subject specific libraries

- A joint library in 2012





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- Why the Knotworking project
- What is knotworking
- Information literacy in the Knotworking project
- What is good in knotworking
- How to create new information literacy services for research groups



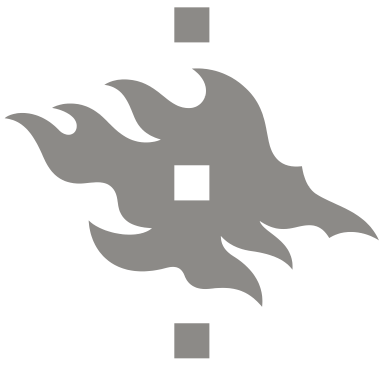


# Why the Knotworking project?

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## 1

- Previous studies have shown that researchers are moving away from the library.
  - The Internet has radically changed the information seeking habits of researchers.
  - Librarians and researchers have fewer meeting points.
  - Libraries are a last resource for many researchers.
- How to develop libraries to meet the needs of researchers



# Why the Knotworking project?

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## 2

- A new library organization 2010 and a new library building 2012
- How does the staff of the different libraries integrate the working cultures?
- Will the researchers find the new library?

## 3

How to create new information literacy services for research groups?



# Courses to researchers at present

- Hands on training courses
  - RefWorks - regularly
  - One-day workshop about information seeking for postgraduates
- Online course
  - on information network skills for researchers
- Tailored courses
- Individual instruction





# The Knotworking project 2009-2011 - Participants

Project Leader Professor of  
Adult Education Yrjö  
Engeström and his research  
group from CRADLE \*



“Pilot customers” – four  
research groups:  
Cognitive Science,  
Communication Law,  
Finnish language,  
Gender Studies

Library employees (17):  
Library Director,  
Librarians, Information  
Specialists, Library  
Secretaries

\* [CRADLE](http://www.cradle.fi) –Center for Research on  
Activity, Development and Learning  
The Institute of Behavioural Sciences





# The theoretical backgrounds (Engeström)

## Co-Configuration

- A new challenge of learning emerges as work is transformed toward co-configuration
- Requires cooperation between producers and customers

## Expansive Learning

- Learning what is not yet there

## Knotworking

- A new form of workplace learning

## Change Laboratory

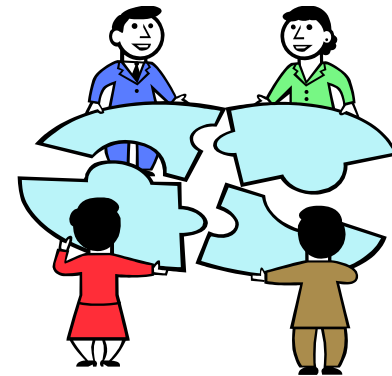
- The Change Laboratory is designed to serve as a place where knotworking can be experienced and experimented.



# What knots are and how they are created?

(Engeström)

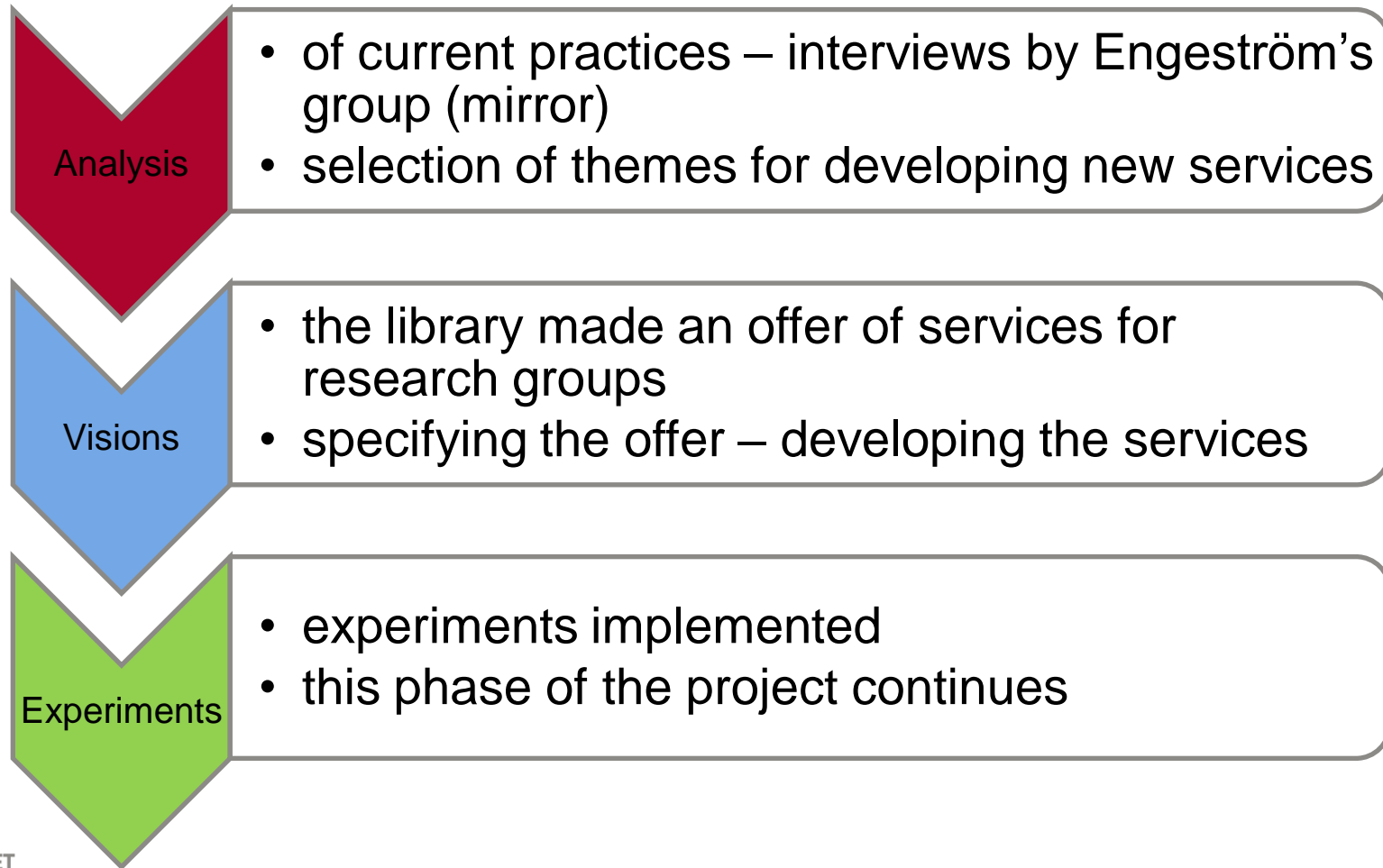
- Various parties work closely together to share knowledge and learn from each other in order to improve the product or the service.
- Knots are created to find solutions to specific problems and dismantled when no longer needed.
- An improvised phenomenon in which no single actor has sole fixed responsibility and control.





# The Change Laboratory - three phases

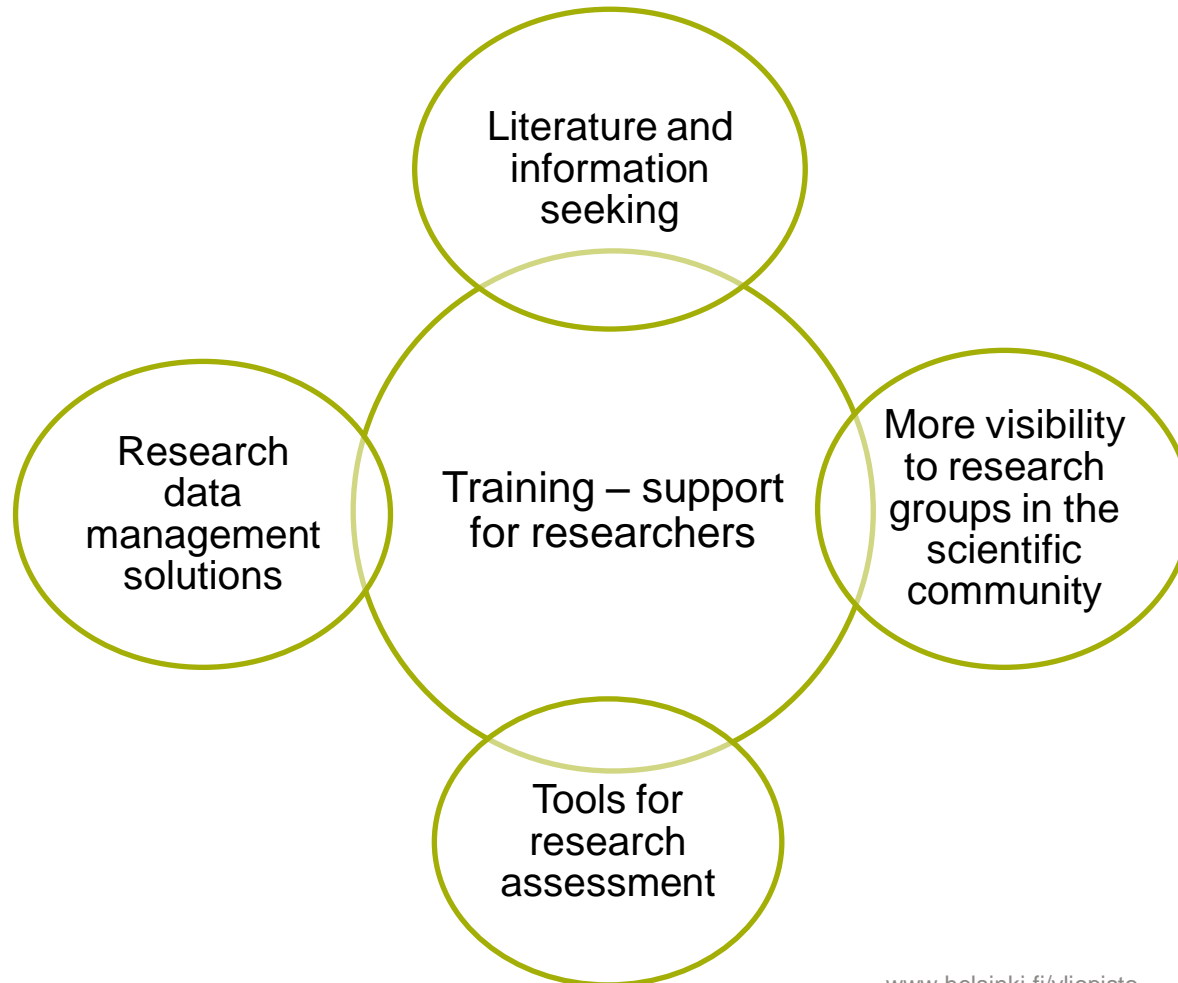
(Engeström)





# The Library's offer to research groups

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# The results of the project

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Program  
developing  
FeedNavigator

A checklist for  
research data  
management

New ideas for  
the library's  
organizational  
model

New work habits  
– working  
together

The Knotworking project will continue  
until the end of 2011



# Information Literacy in the project

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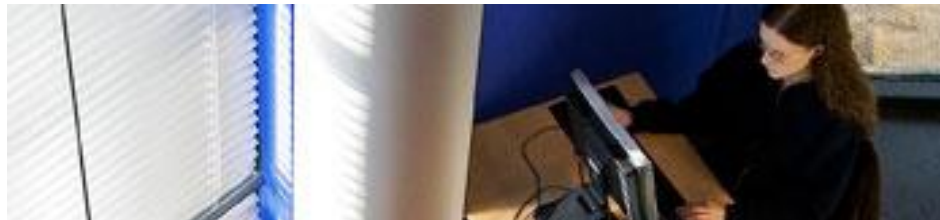
- Information literacy was not the main theme.
- Still much discussion about user training.
  - *Ready made training packages or more tailored instruction?*
  - *Should the library give instruction to all or should the library only train the contact person of a research group?*
  - *It is important to teach research groups to use the library in a correct way*
- The research groups had only a few comments about library instruction.
  - *It is basically a good thing but they don't usually have time for it*
  - *It might be better to train master's students*
  - *It is important to know the lifespan of a research project (Engeström)*



## Some training sessions in the project

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- Presentation of the current awareness service FeedNavigator
- Info sessions on how to use e-books
- Workshop about the research information system TUHAT
- Individual instruction in information seeking





# What is important in information literacy?

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- Learning is a constructivist process
- Collaboration
  - Integration into a subject
- Lifelong learning
- Seven Pillars of IL





# What kind of information skills are important to research groups?

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- Identifying bibliographic tools
- Searching databases effectively
- Keeping current
- Obtaining material not available locally
- Establishing a network of contacts
- Consulting library staff
- Organizing references effectively (East)



# The objective of becoming information literate

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- “... changing an individual’s attitude to their learning and research
- so that they are explicitly thinking about how they use, manage, synthesise and create information
- in a wise and ethical manner, to the benefit of society
- as part of their learning life.” (Bent et al.)



# What we learned in the project?

## Knotworking is a good way of learning what is not yet there

- Daring to start to discuss subjects and services we don't yet have expertise in
- A new way of acting: as the need arises solutions are sought quickly

## Learning together is important

- The possibility to learn to use the same language as the researchers
- Learning more about research groups' everyday life and the research process.
- Both researchers and library staff learned new things simultaneously

## Personal networks are important

- Working with groups already familiar to the librarians was significantly easier
- Researchers want a contact person not a faceless service telephone etc

## Also library staff have to learn to know each other

- A joint project is important for creating a shared vision of the library's services and to find a common language between librarians



# Benefits of knotworking

## A new kind of discussion between librarians and researchers as equals

- Activeness is required also of the researchers
- Librarians have to be able to give up their traditional roles
- Criticality – both groups have to be able to address problems and to question

## Benefits to researchers

- Communication between research groups from different fields
- Working with the library has helped the researchers with grouping
- A possibility to affect the library's services

## Benefits to librarians

- To learn about researchers' work



# How to create new IL services for research groups

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- New work habits - librarians have to leave the library building and start working in the research environment.
- More involved in the research process – the correct timing of intervention.
- Flexible practices of collaboration with research groups – being where they are





## Next steps?

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- The project continues with developing the chosen services
- Identifying the research groups of the campus → groups which have enrolled for research assessment
- Marketing the services
- Clarifying the needs and ideas of research groups
- Creating new knots
  
- Possible obstacles
  - Library resources (staff and budget development, strategic plan)
  - Know-how of the librarians (pedagogic and subject) – What new skills do the librarians need?



# Thank you!

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Helsinki University Library,  
City Centre Campus Library  
[www.helsinki.fi/library/citycentre](http://www.helsinki.fi/library/citycentre)

# Literature

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Website of the Change Laboratory (in Finnish) <http://www.muutoslaboratorio.fi>