# The Library treasure hunt – introducing the first year student to the landscape of scientific information

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Introducing new students to the library and its resources during the first hectic weeks at university can pose a considerable challenge. We have to compete with many other kinds of introductory activities, making new friends, becoming acquainted with the subject, not to mention all the parties and social functions arranged for new students.

The traditional lecture, or showing large groups of tired students around the library just wasn’t working. So, a few years ago, we started to think about radical new ways of introducing students to the library. We hit upon the idea of arranging a treasure hunt.

Students working in small groups have to carry out various tasks at different stations in different libraries. When each task has been successfully completed, a verbal report is made to the librarian at that library, and students can ask questions, before going on to the next task. By carrying out actual tasks, the students become familiar with the important aspects of library resources; learning by doing and having fun at the same time. The “treasure” at the end of the hunt was an apple, a sweet, a pencil, a small LED flashlight and information brochures about the library and the master program in physics.

One of the decisive factors in the success of this activity was the cooperation with lecturers, who integrated it into their introductory program. It also had high status, as it was a compulsory activity, thanks to the commitment and understanding of lecturers.

The treasure hunt is important in the students’ later studies as they know which library resources are available, and they recognise the librarians. This lowers the threshold for the further development of the students’ information gathering skills.

The success of this activity in one of the subjects taught at the Department of Physics has led to the recommendation to make the library treasure hunt compulsory for all students at the Department, in both the Engineering Faculty and the Science Faculty.

We are now considering the further development of the library treasure hunt to make it more scalable, and to introduce digital aids, e.g. tablet computers.