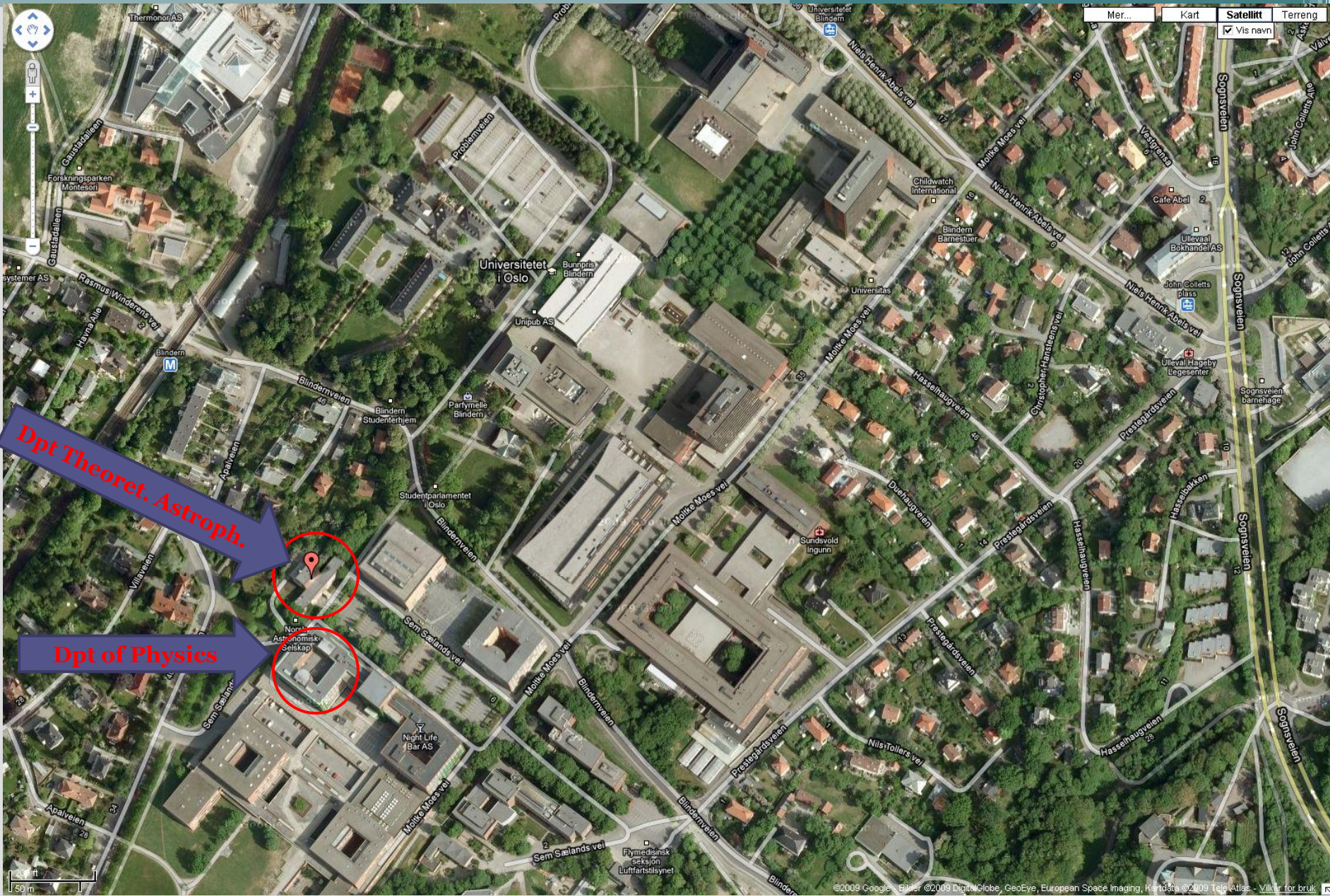


In between or in the middle of everything?

-finding the pathway for a small department library

Astrophysics Library, Oslo -Norway

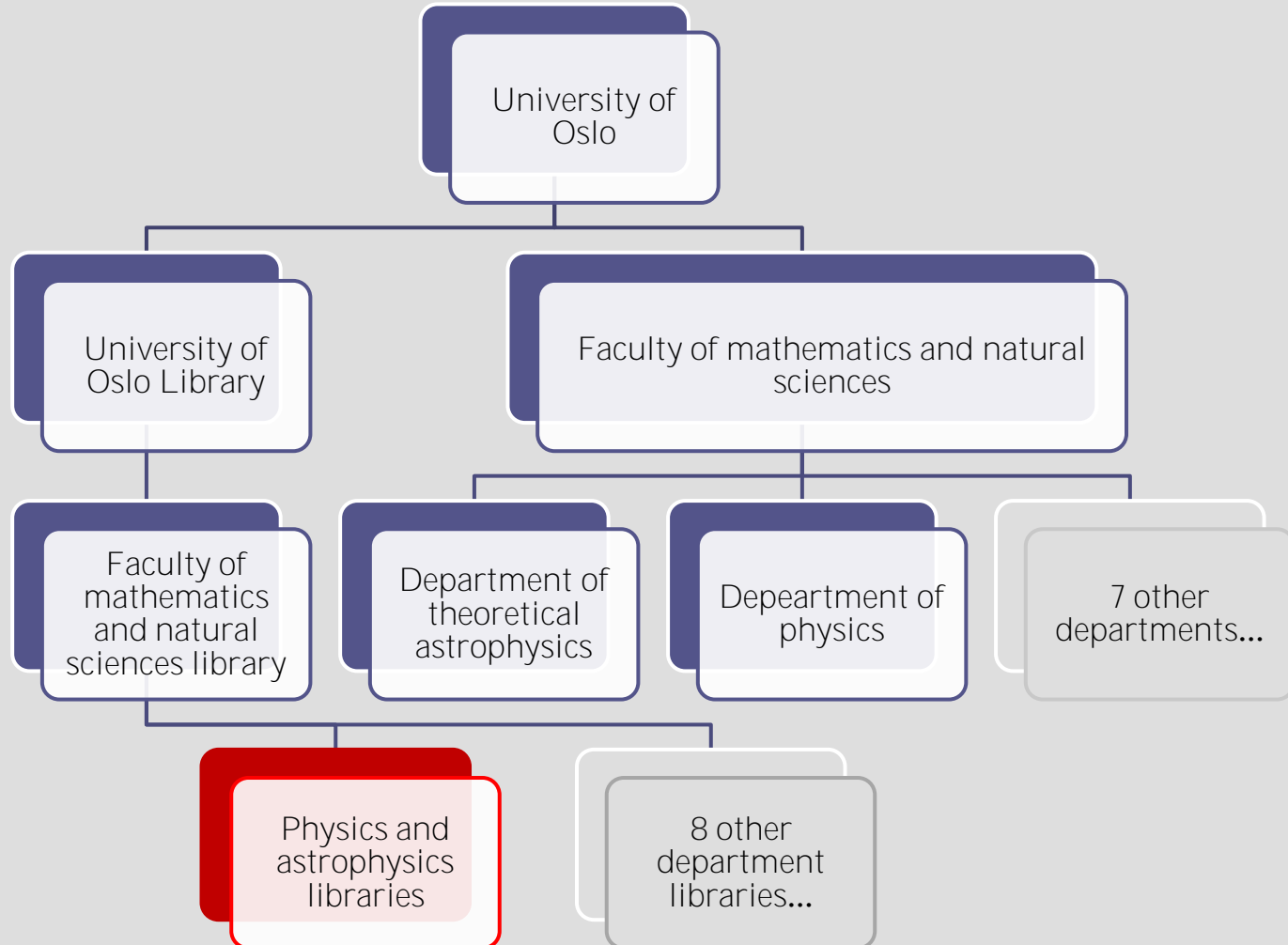




Some facts

- Astrophysics Library
 - 1850 shelf meters, approx. 20 000 books, 1 librarian
 - Most journals now e-only
- Department of Theoretical Astrophysics
 - 10 master students, 50 employees
- Faculty of Mathematics and Natural Sciences
 - 4.600 students, 1.200 FTEs, Budget: 120 mill £, nine departments

Organization



Introduction and definitions

- Change factors: circumstances that influence our routines and the planning of future activities
- Internal change factors – **“originate from our own activities”**
- External change factors – **“originate from activities we have less influence over”**

Internal



External

World in change

- The world around us is in change
(Organizational, Economical, Technological, Work tasks, Communication)
 - External change factors – **”mostly outside our influence”**
 - Internal change factors – **”within our control”**
- And all of these put pressure upon the small department library – both in positive and negative ways

The institutional side of department libraries

- The instrumental perspective
 - The unit is seen as an instrument – we act on grounds that are rational according to the system
- The cultural perspective
 - norms and values exist within the organization – we act on behalf of what we think is appropriate our institutional culture and norms
- The mythical perspective of institutions
 - **norms and values exist in the institution's surroundings** – we act on what we believe is appropriate according to other institutions

Path for the future

- The new technologies and new communication methods have removed **some** of the instrumental justifications for department libraries
- Good decisions includes the establishment of norms and values that correspond to the chosen activities

The new Path calls for

- A strong leadership in institutions with small units
- Important to
 - Acknowledge small units as knowledge containers for collections and knowledge of patrons
 - **Understand the need for “institutional knowledge”** in all levels of organizations
- Bottom level:
 - which values and norms are important to us and communicate these to above levels
- Above levels:
 - be aware of the positive and negative sides of norms and values represented by the bottom level.

Examples of activities that needs to become “infused” with norms and values

- Information overflow
 - Young patrons need help to develop navigation skills for academic information – we need policies for lectures and tuition
 - We have to develop better navigation tools for our e-resources – we need policies for quality of indexing and standards for opac user -interfaces
- Information literacy and plagiarism
 - Increasing need to give lectures in information literacy – we need clear policies and we must adapt these to patrons
- New acquisitions needs an outreach to patrons that are different from our **old “display on the shelf”**
 - How do we infuse 2.0 with values and norms???
- The library as a public room at the department
 - Patrons are leaving, which activities and values will draw them back?
- Contact between the library and the people working at the department (other than the library committee)
 - Informal contact, qualitative interviews, statistics and activities including the department staff (exhibitions) – this needs regularity
- Contact with other institutions that affect our activities
 - In Oslo: National Library, Museum for university history and history of science
 - We need norms for contact i.e. formalized contact

To the Middle

Contact with patrons



Maintain knowledge of collections

- **We have to know the patrons' needs**
- We have to promote collections to different groups of patrons
- In an institutional perspective